

Party System Institutionalization, Predictability, and Democracy

Scott Mainwaring*

This chapter focuses on consequences of differences in the level of party system institutionalization (PSI) for democracy. The reason for producing this volume is that party systems function in very different ways depending on their level of institutionalization. In one of the most famous quotes in the history of political science, Schattschneider (1942: 1) wrote that “Political parties created modern democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties.” Many other prominent scholars have likewise emphasized that parties are essential for modern representative democracy (Downs 1957; Sartori 1976). What happens, then, in contexts where parties are weak, so much so that Levitsky (Chapter 11) speaks of democracy without parties in Peru? If the history of modern democracy is built on political parties, then democracy will function differently with weakly institutionalized party systems. This chapter addresses some of these differences.

I begin with some theoretical, deductively derived implications of PSI for democracy. Institutionalized party systems provide stability and predictability to important democratic outcomes and processes.¹ Greater predictability means that actors can be more confident about the range of likely future outcomes and that time horizons are typically longer. In these systems, parties serve as a major gateway to elected political office; help organize the legislature; and provide critical information cues to voters. These outcomes and processes are less stable

* Fernando Bizzarro, Jaimie Bleck, Omar Coronel, Sarah Zukerman Daly, María Victoria De Negri, Laura Gamboa, Tahir Kilavuz, Steve Levitsky, Noam Lupu, Sean McGraw, Kristin McKie, Gabriela Ippolito O'Donnell, Ana Petrova, George Tsebelis, and Samuel Valenzuela offered valuable comments. I thank Rodrigo Castro Cornejo, María Victoria De Negri, Lauran Feist, Krystin Krause, Ana Petrova, and Adriana Ramírez Baracaldo for research assistance.

¹ A different literature discusses why party institutionalization is important for authoritarian regimes. See Brownlee (2007); Geddes (1999); Hicken and Kuhonta (2015b); Smith (2005). Our volume addresses this issue only in passing.

and predictable in fluid party systems.² Although the empirical evidence in the chapter is limited to Latin America, the theoretical expectations about the consequences of weak PSI should hold for other regions of the world.

The chapter then presents some empirical evidence. First, institutionalized systems create high barriers for political outsiders. In weakly institutionalized systems, political outsiders can more easily win power. In turn, political outsiders are less accountable to their parties and less likely to engage in party building. They are more likely initially to be elected with weak congressional support, and, as a result, they are more likely to have severe conflict with the legislature. By temperament, they are more likely to attempt to undermine democracy.

Second, even beyond the presidency, less institutionalized party systems produce less experienced politicians. In turn, less experienced politicians are less likely to be unconditionally supportive of democracy and less likely to believe that parties are essential for democracy.

Third, as Flores Macías (2012) and O'Dwyer and Kovalcik (2007) show, policy stability tends to be greater in institutionalized party systems. This is in part because outsiders do not win presidential elections in institutionalized party systems, and outsiders are more likely to favor radical policy change. In addition, well-established parties have strong commitments to some constituencies and to programmatic positions, making radical policy change unlikely.

Fourth, weak institutions, of which fluid party systems are a prime example, are associated with shorter time horizons, with more frequent changes in the rules of the game, with less effective provision of public goods, and with greater propensity for corruption. Fifth, electoral accountability is easier in institutionalized systems because the electoral environment is more stable, allowing for clearer cues for voters. And, finally, weak PSI tends to have corrosive effects on the quality of democracy.

Institutionalized party systems do not guarantee good outcomes. Nor does weak institutionalization always produce bad outcomes. Although ever-greater institutionalization is not a blessing for the quality of democracy, the high degree of openness and instability and the low predictability of inchoate systems tend to produce some problems for democracy.

INSTITUTIONALIZED PARTY SYSTEMS, PREDICTABILITY, AND DEMOCRACY: THEORY

Institutionalized party systems give structure to the democratic competition for power. They give citizens stable and predictable vote options; actors and voters have a sense that future patterns are predictable. In inchoate party systems, past

² Levitsky and Murillo (2014) make the broader point that democratic politics functions differently in contexts of weak institutions. Along related lines, see O'Donnell (1993, 1994).

stability is lower, and actors and voters have less clarity about the likelihood of future patterns.

Because politicians win elected office through parties, and because elected politicians govern in democratic regimes,³ institutionalized systems generate stability regarding who is likely to govern and what the range of policies is likely to be.⁴ The boundaries of who is likely to govern are relatively clear. In the United States, voters and politicians can be almost certain that the next president will be a Republican or Democrat and that this president will probably adhere reasonably closely to the median position within her party or the median position in the congress. In 2016, Donald Trump flabbergasted many pundits by winning the Republican nomination despite holding positions outside the mainstream on some issues, including free trade and a few social issues such as same sex marriage. However, even this unconventional candidate hewed closely to mainstream Republican positions on most issues (for example, taxes, abortion, gun control) and depended heavily on the Republican coalition. In the US, months ahead of the actual election, skilled pollsters can predict the results of presidential elections within a few percentage points⁵ – and they know with near certainty who the strongest two contenders will be.

Likewise, in the United Kingdom, voters and politicians have long known that the next prime minister would be from the Conservative, Labour, or (much less likely) the Liberal Democratic parties. In Western European countries with institutionalized but fragmented party systems, it is often not clear which party will lead a coalition government, but the general contours of policy have been fairly consistent and predictable. Change occurs within bounds established by the party system. Dramatic surprises in who holds executive power are unlikely.⁶ As a result, dramatic surprises in policy are uncommon (Flores Macías 2012; O'Dwyer and Kovalcik 2007).

In weakly institutionalized party systems, there is greater uncertainty over electoral outcomes and more flux during the campaign. The turnover from one party to others is higher, and the entry barriers to new parties are lower, resulting in greater uncertainty about who will govern and what policy direction the country will take. Sometimes candidates who look strong a year

³ This is not to deny the important governing powers of administrative and regulatory agencies or, in the case of the European Union, of supranational entities.

⁴ In contexts of high polarization, highly divergent policy options are feasible even in institutionalized party systems. For example, in Chile, before the 1970 presidential election result was decided, it was evident that policy choices would be very different depending on who won a tight contest. However, an institutionalized system, in which it was evident that the socialist left, a left-of-center Christian Democratic party, and the right all had reasonable chances of winning, made this fact clear. With lower institutionalization, the potential variability itself is less clear.

⁵ In fact, this was the case in the 2016 US presidential election. Many people were surprised by the outcome, but the 538 website accurately anticipated a close race.

⁶ Przeworski (1986) famously argued that democratic elections are characterized by uncertain outcomes. This is true, but outcomes are far more predictable in institutionalized party systems.

before the election fade into oblivion, and candidates who were not on the radar screen experience a meteoric rise and win the presidency (Baker *et al.* 2006; Castro Cornejo forthcoming). For example, in December 1997, Irene Sáez, an independent presidential candidate, led Venezuelan public opinion surveys with around 40% of preferences, followed by AD dissident Claudio Fermín with 35%. Both candidates had plummeted in the polls – Sáez to 18% and Fermín to 6% – by April 1998 (McCoy 1999: 66) as outsider and former coup leader Hugo Chávez and later Henrique Salas Römer rose. Ultimately, Sáez won only 2.8% of the vote, and Fermín withdrew when his support collapsed. Chávez seemingly came from nowhere in 1997 to capture 56.2% of the vote, while Salas Römer won 40.0%.

Weak institutions reduce time horizons, increase policy instability, and make inter-temporal agreements and commitments more difficult (Garay 2016; Levitsky and Murillo 2005; Lupu and Riedl 2013; O'Donnell 1994; Simmons 2016; Spiller and Tommasi 2005, 2008). These findings presumably apply to inchoate party systems, which are defined by weak parties, sharp changes in the power of different actors (because some parties lose a high vote share while others gain it), uncertainty about future electoral prospects, and occasional profound change in who the key actors are. These systems are also more likely to experience radical change in the rules of the game.

In institutionalized systems, party labels are important to politicians and to many citizens. Attachments to institutionalized parties extend temporal horizons because politicians want to preserve the value of the party brand. With unusual exceptions under extenuating circumstances of deep crisis (Stokes 2001),⁷ institutionalized parties do not abruptly radically switch positions for electoral gain (Berman 1998; Downs 1957: 103–11; Kitschelt 1994: 254–79). They function with one eye toward protecting their reputations and maintaining connections with key constituencies. Party labels, connections to key groups, and ideological commitments constrain change and hence promote predictability and longer time horizons. Politicians with strong attachments to their parties are less willing to risk burning the party label in order to eke out a short-term personal gain. In systems in which they owe their election win to the party, politicians are accountable to the organization, hence cannot act as freewheeling agents.

In personalistic parties, the organization is subordinate to the whims of the leader. The party brand is useful only insofar as it promotes the leader's agenda. Because electoral outcomes vary more from election to election, and because there is much more space for new parties and outsiders and less policy stability, it is more difficult to gauge who will be important players and what the range of likely outcomes is. Under these circumstances, time horizons shorten (O'Dwyer 2006; Simmons 2016).

In contexts of weak institutions, the absence of binding rules creates uncertainty about outcomes and reduces actors' time horizons (Flores-Macías

⁷ See also Lupu (this volume, 2016); Roberts (2014); Weyland (2002a).

in this volume and 2012; Kitschelt and Kselman 2013; Levitsky this volume; Levitsky and Murillo 2005; Lupu and Riedl 2013; O'Donnell 1994; Simmons 2016; Spiller and Tommasi 2005). Short-term horizons favor clientelistic practices and work against the effective provision of public goods (Hicken 2015; O'Donnell 1994; O'Dwyer 2006; Simmons 2016).

With inchoate party systems, uncertainty is not limited to outcomes. As some parties fade into oblivion and others experience meteoric ascents, there is also more uncertainty about who the players will be.

PARTY SYSTEM INSTITUTIONALIZATION, ELECTORAL UNCERTAINTY, AND OUTSIDERS

Weakly institutionalized party systems make it easier for outsiders to win power. In principle, outsiders could be good for democracy, but, in practice, they more often have pernicious effects. In inchoate systems, the turnover from one party to another is high, the entry barriers to new parties are low, and the likelihood that outsiders can become the head of government is higher than in institutionalized systems. In presidential systems with inchoate party systems, new contenders can burst on the scene and win executive power (Carreras 2012; Flores-Macías 2012; Linz 1994: 26–29; Samuels and Shugart 2010: 62–93). Once powerful parties sometimes fade into oblivion.

Presidential systems usually have more personalized parties than parliamentary systems because presidents are chosen by voters and cannot (except under extraordinary circumstances such as impeachment) be removed by their parties, whereas prime ministers are chosen by, and can be removed by, their parties. Because they do not need to develop long careers within the organization to become the party leader, it is easier for outsiders to win power in presidential systems (Linz 1994: 26–29; Samuels and Shugart 2010: 62–93). Presidents are directly accountable to voters; prime ministers to their parties.

Among presidential systems, there is also a difference between institutionalized and inchoate party systems. Political outsiders do not win the presidency in institutionalized systems. In contrast, in weakly institutionalized systems, outsiders can pop up and immediately become major contenders for executive posts.

Latin American experience is rife with examples of outsiders bursting on to the scene and winning presidential elections in the context of weak party systems. Carreras (2012) developed a dataset of outsider presidential candidates in Latin America from 1980 to 2010. Sixteen of them won the presidency, including eight “full outsiders” – candidates who had never run for office before *and* who ran on new political parties: Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil (1989),⁸ Lucio

⁸ Collor de Mello should be coded as a partial outsider – a political “maverick” in Carreras’s lexicon. He had previously served as appointed mayor of the city of Maceió (1979–82) and as a federal deputy (1983–87), and governor of the state of Alagoas (1987–89), but he created a new

Gutiérrez (2002) and Rafael Correa in Ecuador (2006), Violeta Chamorro in Nicaragua (1990), Fernando Lugo in Paraguay (2008), Alberto Fujimori (1990) and Alejandro Toledo in Peru (2001), and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1998). In addition, Evo Morales ran in Bolivia in 2002 as a full outsider and came in second, and then ran again in 2005 and won; and Ollanta Humala ran in 2006 as a full outsider in Peru and came in second and ran again in 2011 and won. All ten outsiders ran in the context of weakly institutionalized party systems.

Table 3.1 lists these ten presidents and shows the electoral volatility when they were elected and in the previous electoral period. Mean volatility when these presidents were elected was extraordinarily high (59.7%). Because they helped produce the extraordinary party system change, volatility in the election when they won office is not an antecedent, independent measure of PSI. Therefore, Table 3.1 also shows the level of volatility in the electoral period before they won. Although the sample is limited to eight of the winning outsider candidates,⁹ mean volatility was extremely high (49.3%). Even the lowest volatility in the previous period, 37.0%, is very high. No full outsider has been elected in the context of a moderately institutionalized party system.

Carreras also coded “political mavericks” – presidential candidates who had previously run for elected office but were running on new parties. Four political mavericks in his dataset successfully ran for the presidency: Álvaro Uribe in Colombia (2002), Sixto Durán Ballén in Ecuador (1992), Ricardo Martinelli in Panama (2009),¹⁰ and Rafael Caldera in Venezuela (1993). With the partial exception of Caldera in 1993, these mavericks were elected in the context of weakly institutionalized or eroding party systems. Ecuador and to a lesser degree Panama had long had weakly institutionalized party systems. In Venezuela, Caldera’s election in 1993 made visible the rapid erosion of the party system that led to collapse by 2000. The linchpins of the system, AD and COPEI, had already weakened significantly when Caldera was elected. In Colombia, the long-standing two-party system that dominated political life from 1910 to 1991 was greatly eroded in the 1990s (see Chapter 8 in this volume). Uribe’s election in 2002 and the aftermath dealt it a deathblow, but the prior erosion was a necessary condition for his victory.

party to run for the presidency in 1989. Whether we code him as a full or partial outsider (“maverick”) has no impact on the analysis that follows.

⁹ In Brazil in 1989 and Nicaragua in 1990, there was no antecedent electoral period under the current competitive regime. Fernando Collor de Mello was elected in 1989 in the first popular presidential election since 1960. The first presidential election under Sandinista’s rule took place in 1984. Elections under the Somoza regime (1936–79) were too controlled to be a reasonable basis for determining volatility in 1984.

¹⁰ Martinelli was a maverick in 2004, when he first ran for the presidency on his new party label and won only 5.3% of the valid vote. He ran successfully in 2009.

TABLE 3.1 *Outsider Presidents, Electoral Volatility, and Delegative Democracy Scores*

	Successful election	Electoral volatility when they were elected	Electoral volatility in previous electoral period	Mean delegative democracy score	Change in delegative democracy score
Evo Morales	Bolivia, 2005	66.3	56.2	6.0	+6
Fernando Collor	Brazil, 1989	–	–	8.0	+2
Lucio Gutiérrez	Ecuador, 2002	58.7	43.6	8.0	+6
Rafael Correa	Ecuador, 2006	39.0	58.7	7.0	+4
Violeta Chamorro	Nicaragua, 1990	48.7	–	–	–
Fernando Lugo	Paraguay, 2008	51.8	37.0	6.0	0
Alberto Fujimori	Peru, 1990	68.0	50.4	7.2	+3
Alejandro Toledo	Peru, 2001	62.1	44.1	2.0	+1
Ollanta Humala	Peru, 2011	43.4	51.9	–	–
Hugo Chávez	Venezuela, 1998	99.4	52.8	8.0	+3
Mean		59.7	49.3	6.70	+3.1

Note: In Brazil 1989 and Nicaragua 1990, there was no previous electoral period under the new competitive regimes. Electoral volatility scores are for presidential elections. Mean delegative democracy score is based on country years, not on presidents. Change in delegative democracy score shows the change from the last year of the previous president to the first year of the outsider. *Source for delegative democracy scores:* González (2014)

Consequences of Outsider Presidents

Weak PSI paves the way for outsider presidents, who, in turn, frequently undermine democracy. Outsiders promise and deliver different styles of conducting politics. The ten outsiders who were elected under competitive political regimes railed against the establishment and promised to change the status quo in radical ways.

Outsider presidents have important consequences for presidential accountability to their parties, party building, legislative/executive relations, and democracy. As Samuels and Shugart (2010) argue, the ways in which heads of government are elected have important consequences for their relationships with their parties and for how they govern. Because they are elected by popular

vote rather than chosen by their party peers, presidents generally have greater authority over and autonomy from their parties than prime ministers. Presidents are not agents of the party, but of voters.

The incentives and opportunities for presidents to have dominant authority over and autonomy from their parties are exceptionally strong with outsiders, who are not even minimally beholden to their parties. These parties emerged because of the outsider candidates, and in almost all cases were created as personalistic electoral vehicles.¹¹ These parties have neither the desire nor the capability to monitor these presidents, increasing the likelihood of loose cannon presidents who often have deleterious effects on democracy.

Most insider presidents care about their party brand. They have built their political careers through their party, and they need their parties' support to accomplish their legislative agendas. They usually cannot be oblivious to their party.¹² In contrast, outsider presidents have almost no incentive, and usually no disposition, to prioritize party building, at least initially.

Because they won election without a previously existing party, many outsider presidents initially see little utility to building an organization. Some view a party as more of a limitation than an asset, and they might want to reduce the probability of having a viable rival emerge within the party by keeping the organization weak. Few outsider presidents initially engage in party building, leading to the possibility of a vicious cycle: they are elected in a context of weak PSI, and they proceed to undermine the existing parties. All four cases of party system collapse in contemporary Latin America (Peru in the 1990s, Venezuela between 1998 and 2005, and Ecuador and Bolivia in the 2000s) occurred during the presidencies of full outsiders (Fujimori in Peru, Chávez in Venezuela, and Correa in Ecuador) or a partial outsider (Morales in Bolivia).

For example, Alberto Fujimori repeatedly undermined his own party and opposition parties. He ran in 1990 on the *Cambio 90* (Change 90) label. He forged a new label, NM-C90, *Nueva Mayoría-Cambio 90* (New Majority, Change 90), for the 1992 elections for a constituent assembly. Conaghan (2000: 268) summarizes, "The NM-C90 majority in the CCD (constitutional congress) exhibited no signs of being anything other than an executor of presidential directives." Fujimori never delegated power to party leaders, nor did he build an organization.

In light of the dependence of parties on outsider presidents, one would expect that when these presidents leave the scene, their parties would be vulnerable to

¹¹ MAS in Bolivia is an exception. Created in 1998, it had strong roots in Bolivia's labor movement. But even so, Evo Morales has always been the party's supreme leader.

¹² Under the stress of dire economic crises in the 1980s and 1990s, a few Latin American presidents turned their backs on their parties. See Corrales (2002); Roberts (2014); Stokes (2001); Weyland (2002a).

rapid electoral decline. This expectation is often borne out. After Fernando Collor de Mello's impeachment in 1992, his party (the *Partido de Reconstrução Nacional*, PRN) nearly vanished. In 1994, the PRN presidential candidate won 0.6% of the vote. It never fielded a presidential candidate after that. The party won only 0.4% of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies in 1994 and has never reached 1% since then. Likewise, Alberto Fujimori's party in Peru suffered a huge electoral defeat in 2001 – Fujimori had fled the country the year before. It won only 4.8% of the lower chamber vote and did not field a presidential candidate. His daughter, Keiko Fujimori, has subsequently built a party (see Steven Levitsky's chapter in this volume; Meléndez 2015), but if it were not for her, *Fujimorismo* would have evanesced. Fernando Lugo in Paraguay left almost no party legacy when he was removed from office in 2012. After Alejandro Toledo won the presidency in Peru in 2001, his party (*Perú Posible*) was not able to field a presidential candidate in 2006, and it won only 4.1% of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies. It recovered somewhat in 2011 when Toledo ran for the presidency again,¹³ but as Levitsky notes in his chapter on Peru, *Perú Posible* remains closely tethered to and highly dependent on Toledo. Violeta Chamorro's UNO coalition splintered in 1992 in her second year in office in Nicaragua, never to be resurrected again.

Evo Morales and Hugo Chávez are partial exceptions to the norm that outsiders do not invest in party building. Because of its origins as a party based in a social movement that he spearheaded, from the outset, Morales was committed to building the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement Toward Socialism, MAS). Chávez initially kept his party at arm's length. Later he realized that a party could be a useful way of mobilizing support. In 2007, he rebranded his party, after a merger with some minor allied parties, as the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (*Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela*, PSUV). Although it remained strictly subordinated to Chávez, the PSUV developed some organizational capacity, as Jana Morgan shows in her chapter in this volume.

The origin of outsider presidents is likely to generate conflictual congressional/executive relationships, with potential adverse effects on democracy. In their initial successful bid, outsider presidents' coattails are rarely long enough to generate a massive vote on behalf of their congressional candidates. Table 3.2 shows the percentage of seats their parties and coalitions won in their first successful election. On average, their parties won only 18.8% of lower chamber seats and 19.4% of Senate seats. Five of the ten outsiders came to power with parties that controlled less than 10% of the seats in the lower chamber. Governing without a party (Correa and Chamorro) or with very small parties (Lugo, Collor, and Gutiérrez) is taxing. Only one of the ten outsiders – Chamorro – had a majority coalition in both chambers of congress (or in the unicameral chamber) – and it did not last for long.

¹³ The coalition of which *Perú Posible* was part won 14.8% of the congressional vote.

TABLE 3.2 *Outsider Presidents' Share of Seats in the National Congress*

	Successful election	President's party	Party's % of seats in lower or unicameral chamber	Party's % of seats in upper chamber	Other parties in initial cabinet	Coalition's % of seats in lower or unicameral chamber	Coalition's % of seats of in upper chamber
Evo Morales	Bolivia, 2005	MAS	56	44	None	56	44
Fernando Collor	Brazil, 1989	PRN	5	5	PMDB, PFL	49	55
Lucio Gutiérrez	Ecuador, 2002*	PSP	7	unicameral	MUPP-NP PSC	41	unicameral
Rafael Correa	Ecuador, 2006*	Movimiento Alianza PAIS/ PS-FA	0	unicameral	<i>Izquierda Democrática (ID); Partido Sociedad Patriótica (PSP)</i>	9	unicameral
Violeta Chamorro	Nicaragua, 1990*	None	0	unicameral	UNO: (APC, MDN, PALI, PAN, PC, PDCN, PLC, PLI, PNC, PSD, PSN)	55	unicameral
Fernando Lugo	Paraguay, 2008	Christian Democratic Party	2.5	0	<i>Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico, Popular Movement Tekojoja (MPT), Democratic Progressive Party (PDP)</i>	37.5	33
Alberto Fujimori	Peru, 1990	<i>Cambio 90</i>	18	23	IU-IS	29	38
Alejandro Toledo	Peru, 2001*	<i>Perú Posible</i>	37.5	unicameral		37.5	unicameral
Ollanta Humala	Peru, 2011*	<i>Gana Peru</i>	36	unicameral		36	unicameral
Hugo Chávez	Venezuela, 1998	MVR	26	25	MAS, PPT	37	35
Mean			18.8	19.4		38.7	41.0

Notes: Presidents' coalitions are defined by the parties that had cabinet positions.

*Brazil 1989: Presidential and congressional elections were not concurrent. Data for cabinet composition and congressional seat shares are from Collor's inauguration in March 1990.

Ecuador 2006: Correa's party, *Alianza País*, did not run any congressional candidates.

Nicaragua 1990: Violeta Chamorro was elected with a coalition of fourteen parties, but she was not a member of any party.

Peru: From 1979 to 1992, the Congress of Peru was bicameral. Since 1995, it has been unicameral.

Sources: See Online Appendix 3.1.

Because most outsider presidents initially have weak support in congress, they face a dilemma. They can either cultivate support among the established parties, accept limitations in accomplishing their legislative agendas, or try to circumvent congress to pursue their agendas. On the campaign trail, most outsiders railed against the existing parties. Most are reluctant to do an abrupt about face and bring them on board as partners in government,¹⁴ and many are ideologically hostile to them. Of the ten outsider presidents listed in Table 3.1, only Gutiérrez, Toledo, and Humala from the outset cultivated the establishment parties. Nor, given their harsh criticisms of the status quo and in many cases their desire to implement radical change, are outsider presidents likely to accept protracted legislative/executive deadlock. Instead, a frequent path of outsider presidents has been to attack congress and the establishment parties and to attempt to expand presidential powers (Carreras 2014; Corrales 2014; Negretto 2013).

Eight of the ten outsiders (all but Toledo and Humala) experienced severe conflict with congress. Three (Collor in 1992, Gutiérrez in 2005, and Lugo in 2012) were removed from office by congress – an extraordinary number even in an era of a fair number of impeachments and other forms of presidential removals (Pérez-Liñán 2007). The Peruvian Chamber of Deputies nearly voted to remove Fujimori from office in December 1991 (Kenney 2004: 186), and the Ecuadoran congressional opposition attempted to impeach Gutiérrez in November 2004 before removing him the following year.

Other outsiders attacked the legislature because of difficulty working with them. Fujimori shuttered the Peruvian congress in April 1992, producing a democratic breakdown, because of his inability to win support for some proposals (Kenney 2004: 171–210). Violeta Chamorro ran into difficulties when the conservative parties within her broad electoral coalition jumped to the opposition because of her conciliatory policies toward the Sandinistas. Her own vice president, the head of the national assembly, and most of her initial coalition moved into the opposition, leading to fractious conflict within the congress and between Chamorro and the legislature (McConnell 1997).

Almost immediately after taking office, Hugo Chávez and Rafael Correa announced their desire to hold constitutional congresses to create new constitutions. The constitutional congresses diminished the capacity of the sitting congresses, and in Venezuela it replaced the existing congress. In Venezuela, the new constitution greatly expanded presidential powers, helping allow Chávez to eventually dismantle the system of checks and balances and install a competitive authoritarian regime.

Correa also experienced severe conflict with the sitting congress. When he became president, Correa announced his intention to hold a referendum to convene a constitutional assembly. The legislature voted against it on the grounds

¹⁴ Lucio Gutiérrez in Ecuador (2003–05) was an exception, but his turn to the establishment parties led to a rapid rupture with the coalition that elected him and eventually led to him being ousted.

that the process was unconstitutional, leading to a sharp confrontation with Correa. The Supreme Electoral Court (*Tribunal Superior Eleitoral*) terminated the mandates of fifty-seven deputies who had voted against the constitutionality of the constituent assembly. The Supreme Court declared the decision of the Supreme Electoral Court unconstitutional, but the government proceeded with the constitutional assembly anyhow.

Unlike most outsider presidents, Evo Morales came to power with solid congressional backing, but he, too, experienced severe conflict with congress during the constitutional assembly of 2006–08. The MAS approved a new constitution only by violating an agreement it had reached with the opposition that two-thirds of the constitutional assembly would need to approve the new charter before it was submitted to a popular referendum. Lehoucq (2008) called this move a coup.

Outsider presidents are far more likely to govern in a “delegative” style (O’Donnell 1994) in which the president claims legitimacy because he was popularly elected, but regards mechanisms of horizontal accountability (legislatures, courts, and oversight agencies) as nuisances to be circumvented. González (2014) coded the degree to which eleven Latin American countries approximated a delegative democracy or its opposite ideal type, a representative democracy, for every year from 1980 or the establishment of a competitive regime, whichever came later, until 2010. Based on expert surveys, the scores range from zero (representative democracy) to eight (delegative democracy).¹⁵ The eleven countries in his sample include all countries in Table 3.1 except for Nicaragua and all outsider presidents except Chamorro and Humala, who took office in 2011. The average score for forty-three country years for the eight outsider presidents was 6.70. The average score for all 243 country years under other presidents was 2.70.¹⁶ Outsiders are much more likely to promote presidential supremacy and to steamroll mechanisms of horizontal accountability.

Impact on Democracy

Because political outsiders were never previously in leadership positions in the democratic process, they are likely to be less committed to preserving democracy if doing so entails sacrificing some policy preferences. They were not socialized under democratic politics, and some railed against liberal democracy before taking power. Moreover, their relative isolation in congress and other seats of power creates a situation of initial institutional weakness that generates incentives to work against established institutions. Many outsiders (such as Fujimori, Chávez, Morales, and Correa) are indifferent or hostile to democratic checks and balances in principle, and their initial institutional isolation reinforced this indifference. In contrast, insiders develop political

¹⁵ I am grateful to Lucas González for sharing his data.

¹⁶ The difference between these two means is significant at $p = 0.000$.

careers under liberal democracy. In the post-Cold War west, except in minor extremist parties, most insiders are loyal to democratic rules of the game.

A distinction between the eight outsider presidents who won election in the context of existing competitive political regimes and the two (Chamorro and Toledo) who won the foundational elections of new competitive regimes is useful here.¹⁷ Chamorro and Toledo were outsiders, but they came to power with a goal of building liberal democracy where it had not existed.

All eight outsiders who came to power in the contexts of competitive regimes attempted to undermine democratic checks and balances. Chávez and Gutiérrez established their fame by leading high profile military coups (in 1992 and 2000, respectively) that, if successful, would have resulted in democratic breakdowns. This willingness of outsiders to undermine democracy is especially likely when they have radical policy agendas that could be thwarted by the establishment.

Five of the ten outsider presidents (and five of the eight elected under competitive regimes) deliberately undermined liberal democracy. They presided over some of the most important democratic erosions in contemporary Latin America. Alberto Fujimori overthrew Peruvian democracy, dismissing the congress and courts in April 1992 in a palace coup. Evo Morales (2006–present), Rafael Correa (2007–present), and Hugo Chávez (1999–2013) presided over regimes that undermined opposition rights, expanded presidential powers, and extended presidential terms. Very early in their terms, all three began efforts to circumvent the obstacles created by congressional oppositions and the judiciary. They dismantled democratic checks and balances and attacked what remained of the old party systems. All three made extensive use of state resources to create uneven electoral playing fields.¹⁸

Lucio Gutiérrez (2003–05) also undermined democratic checks and balances. After breaking with the left-of-center coalition that initially supported him in 2002, in December 2004 Gutiérrez unconstitutionally replaced the Supreme Court and packed it with his supporters. In April 2005, he was forced to step down in the middle of his term amidst great public dissatisfaction and mobilization, an opposition vote in congress to remove him from office, and the withdrawal of support from the armed forces.

An earlier outsider president who dismantled democracy was Juan Perón in his first presidency in Argentina (1946–55). Perón closed opposition newspapers, tolerated the destruction (by fires and bombings) of opposition organizations, changed the rules of the game so that he could run for reelection in 1951, jailed prominent political opponents, harassed the opposition,

¹⁷ Although the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua allowed for elections in 1984, part of the opposition abstained. The 1990 presidential election was the first since the downfall of the authoritarian Somoza regime (1936–79) to include all opposition forces. Likewise, the 2001 presidential election in Peru was the first free and fair election since Fujimori closed congress in 1992.

¹⁸ On the authoritarian turn in Ecuador, see de la Torre (2013) and Basabe Serrano *et al.* (2010). On Venezuela, see Corrales and Penfold (2011) and Gómez Calcaño *et al.* (2010). On all three countries, see Mayorga (forthcoming), Mazzuca (2014), and Weyland (2013). On Venezuela and the contrast with Colombia under Alvaro Uribe, see L. Gamboa (2016).

terminated the mandates of elected opposition politicians, removed judges who were not favorable to his cause and packed the courts, and changed the electoral rules to favor his party.

The ability of political outsiders to win presidential elections in weakly institutionalized party systems, and their frequent willingness to undermine democratic checks and balances, is probably one reason why Pérez-Liñán and Mainwaring (2013) found that higher democratic PSI before 1978 helps predict higher post-1978 levels of democracy in Latin America. This pattern of outsider presidents undermining democracy is not unique to Latin America, as the examples of Boris Yeltsin (1991–99) and Vladimir Putin (2000–08, 2012–present) in Russia show.

INCHOATE PARTY SYSTEMS, POLITICAL EXPERIENCE, AND DEMOCRACY

Even beyond the presidency, fluid party systems produce less experienced politicians. Outsiders are more likely to win elections, and by definition, they have less political experience. New parties are more electorally successful in less institutionalized systems, and they are more likely to bring in fresh politicians than established parties. Some new parties campaign on the basis of shaking up the political system, and this message is likely to attract newcomers. Established parties are more likely to fade, often ending the political career of veteran politicians. Moreover, institutionalized party systems tend to generate different incentives for politicians. Because party labels and organizations endure, there is a greater prospect of having a political career through the party.

Thus, deductively, it seems likely that Steven Levitsky's argument about amateur politicians in Chapter 11 should be generalizable. Levitsky argues that one consequence of weak parties in Peru has been the rise of amateur politicians, with pernicious consequences on some democratic processes. Amateur politicians are less able to build a strong congress; they lack the know-how and usually the interest. If they are not going to pursue political careers, they have little reason to invest in institution building. Because strong legislatures foster robust democracies (Fish 2006), and because a solid core of experienced legislators is almost a *sine qua non* for a strong legislature (Jones *et al.* 2002), indirectly, a large flock of amateur legislators is likely to make it more difficult to construct a robust democracy. Because they typically have short political horizons, amateurs are likely to be less committed to serving the public and more interested in using office for personal gain. If professional politicians are members of long-established parties and if their electoral and political prospects depend partly on the party label, they have incentives to pay attention to good public policy and to the medium term (Garay 2016; Simmons 2016).

Consistent with this deductive reasoning and with Levitsky's argument about Peru, the linkage between more experienced politicians and PSI holds up in a cross-national sample of seventeen Latin American legislatures (all but Cuba, Haiti, and Venezuela).¹⁹ Fluid party systems have less experienced members of congress. In turn, less experienced members of congress are less likely to support democracy unconditionally and less likely to believe that parties are necessary for democracy.

Surveys of lower chambers (or unicameral legislatures) conducted by the University of Salamanca asked deputies about their political experience. Based on the survey questions, I constructed three variables to measure deputies' political experience. The first variable is Lower Chamber Novice, operationalized as a deputy who was serving his/her first term in the national lower chamber (see the final column of Table 3.3). The percentage of lower chamber novices was over 50% in fifteen of seventeen countries. Leaving aside Costa Rica and Mexico, which have strict term limits that ban deputies from running for reelection and therefore should exclusively have Lower Chamber Novices (Carey 1996), the countries with the highest percentage of Lower Chamber Novices had weakly institutionalized party systems. For the fifteen countries that allow reelection and for which data are available, the correlation between the summary PSI score in Table 2.6 and the percentage of Lower Chamber Novices was -0.72 ($p = 0.00$). As hypothesized, inchoate party systems have legislatures with less experienced members.

The second variable is Elected Novice, operationalized as a deputy who was serving in his/her first term and who had never previously held elected office. Elected novices can have held a party post or an appointed position in the past. For the same fifteen countries, the correlation between the PSI score in Table 2.6 and the percentage of elected novices is -0.46 ($p = 0.08$), consistent with expectations.

A political amateur is a deputy who was serving his/her first term in the national assembly *and* had no prior experience in an elected public position, an appointed public position (such as Minister or Vice-Minister), or an official party position. As Table 3.3 shows, with this stringent definition, most countries had a low percentage of political amateurs. For the seventeen countries,²⁰ a high summary score for PSI is modestly associated with a lower percentage of political amateurs (the Pearson's bivariate correlation is -0.33 ($p = 0.19$), based on the Z-scores in Table 2.6). Although this correlation is not statistically significant, higher PSI is weakly associated with fewer political amateurs.

Levitsky hypothesizes in Chapter 11 that political amateurs probably have pernicious effects on democracy. This seems likely. To function well, legislatures

¹⁹ This wave was not conducted in Haiti and Cuba, and data are not available for Venezuela because the sample was not representative.

²⁰ For this variable, there was no clear reason to exclude Costa Rica or Mexico.

TABLE 3.3 *Prior Political Experience of Members of Lower Chamber, Latin American Countries*

Country	Number of interviews	Legislature	Political amateur (%)	Elected novice (%)	Lower chamber novice (%)
ARG	70	2007–11 and 2009–13	8.7	35.7	72.5
BOL	97	2010–13	32.0	56.7	90.7
BRA	129	2007–10	3.1	11.6	35.7
CHI	86	2010–14	10.5	25.6	44.2
COL	91	2010–14	11.0	20.9	64.8
CR	56	2010–14	9.1	55.4	82.1
Dom. Rep.	78	2010–16	5.3	49.3	57.3
ECU	95	2009–12	17.9	51.6	81.1
ELS	68	2009–11	10.3	39.7	55.9
GUA	97	2008–12	5.2	51.5	63.9
HON	91	2010–14	30.8	46.2	63.7
MEX	98	2009–11	12.4	41.2	89.6
NIC	69	2007–11	2.9	34.8	63.8
PAN	64	2009–13	15.6	54.7	62.5
PAR	72	2008–13	25.0	51.4	72.2
PER	93	2011–16	27.8	55.9	72.5
URU	79	2009–14	3.8	29.5	51.3
Mean			13.6	41.9	66.1

Notes: “Political novice”: A deputy who (1) was serving in the lower chamber (or the unicameral chamber) for the first time; and (2) had no previous experience in an elected political position, as an appointed public official (Minister, Viceminister, etc.), OR in an official party position. “Elected novice”: A deputy who (1) was serving in the lower chamber (or the unicameral chamber) for the first time; and (2) had no previous experience in an elected political post. “Lower chamber novice”: Operationalized as a deputy who was serving in the lower chamber (or the unicameral chamber) for the first time. Source for lower chamber novice: TR₃ of the PELA surveys (“Is this the first legislature in which you were elected deputy/representative?”); sources for Political Novice and Elected Novice: TR₃ and TR₅ of the PELA surveys (wave of 2007 to 2011) (TR₃: “Is this the first legislature in which you were elected deputy/representative?”; TR₅: “Have you ever served as an elected public official (mayor, city council) in addition to your current position as deputy/representative?” “Have you ever served in an appointed public position (Minister, Vice-minister, etc.)?” “And have you served in an official party position (secretary general, delegate, etc.)”); Source for mean number of years as party member: TR₂ of the PELA surveys.

Source: Elites Parlamentarias de América Latina Project (PELA). Universidad de Salamanca, Manuel Alcántara, director. Wave of 2007–11.

need members who are committed to the assembly and who have the experience to help make it run.

To test two attitudinal aspects of Levitsky's hypothesis for seventeen Latin American countries, Tables 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 show the relationship between deputies' prior political experience and their attitudes toward democracy and political parties. Consistent with Levitsky, deputies with less political experience are less likely to unconditionally support democracy and more likely to believe that democracy is possible without parties.

Table 3.4 compares Lower Chamber Novices versus all deputies on unconditional support for democracy and on whether parties are necessary for democracy. For the region as a whole, Lower Chamber Novices were much more likely to question that parties are essential for democracy (the means are 3.59 versus 3.26 on the 4-point scale). On average, Lower Chamber Novices were almost twice as far from the maximum value (0.74 away from it compared to 0.41) as deputies who had previously served in the lower chamber. The two means are statistically different at $p = 0.000$. Lower Chamber Novices score about the same on unconditional support for democracy; this is the only finding that does not support the hypothesis that less experienced politicians have less democratic attitudes.

Table 3.5 compares Electoral Novices to all others on these same questions, with similar results. For the region as a whole, Electoral Novices voice less unconditional support for democracy (the two samples are statistically different at $p = 0.005$) and show more willingness to believe that democracy is possible without parties (the two means are statistically different at $p = 0.000$).

Table 3.6 compares Political Amateurs to all other politicians on these same questions. For the region as a whole, 7.7% of political amateurs and only 2.4% of politicians with prior experience did not unconditionally support democracy. Although both percentages are low, the difference between the two samples is significant at $p = 0.000$. Likewise, politicians with prior experience were more likely to strongly agree that "Without parties there can't be democracy" ($p = 0.001$).

Kenney (1998: 62) reports a similar finding for an earlier Peruvian legislature (1990–95). The equivocal attitudes about liberal democracy and the indispensability of political parties for democracy found among less experienced politicians are likely to be associated with more instrumental attitudes toward democracy.

Although the percentage of deputies who question that "Democracy is always the best form of government" is low regardless of whether or not they have political experience, given social desirability bias in favor of democracy, especially among legislators in democracies, it is remarkable

TABLE 3.4 *Political Experience and Attitudes toward Democracy and Parties – Lower Chamber Novices versus Others*

Country	Democracy is preferable (% yes)			No democracy without parties (mean)		P value if $p < 0.10$
	Lower chamber novices	Others	P value if $p < 0.10$	Lower chamber novices	Others	
ARG	100	100		3.76	3.65	
BOL	97.7	100		2.63	3.33	0.021
BRA	97.8	98.8		3.22	3.69	0.011
CHI	100	100		3.58	3.6	
COL	98.3	100		3.41	3.56	
CR	100	90	0.030	3.61	4.00	0.001
DOM. REP.	95.2	100		3.63	3.81	
ECU	98.7	100		3.03	3.78	0.001
ELS	84.2	93.1		3.08	3.43	
GUA	91.9	85.7		3.08	3.34	
HON	96.5	96.9		3.54	3.58	
MEX	94.2	100		2.73	2.64	
NIC	100	95.8		3.45	3.52	
PAN	97.5	95.8		3.43	3.58	
PAR	94.2	100		3.56	3.5	
PER	97	96.3		3.22	3.69	0.014
URU	100	100		3.63	3.70	
Total	97.4	96.7		3.26	3.59	0.000

Notes: "Democracy is preferable." The question is "With which of the following statements do you agree more?" (1) Democracy is preferable to any other form of government. (2) In contexts of economic crisis and political instability, an authoritarian government might be better.

"No democracy without parties." The question is "Some people say that without parties there can't be democracy. How much do you agree with that statement?" (4) a lot; (3) somewhat; (2) a little; (1) not at all.

Source: Elites Parlamentarias de América Latina Project (PELA), Universidad de Salamanca. Wave of 2007–11.

that there are statistically significant differences on this question between amateur politicians and more experienced politicians. Likewise, it is notable that less experienced politicians express less support for the statement that there can be no democracy without parties.

TABLE 3.5 *Political Experience and Attitudes toward Democracy and Parties – Electoral Novices versus Others*

Country	Democracy is preferable (% yes)			No democracy without parties (mean)		
	Electoral novices	Others	<i>P</i> value if $p < 0.10$	Electoral novices	Others	<i>P</i> value if $p < 0.10$
ARG	100	100		3.68	3.76	
BOL	96.3	100		2.73	2.64	
BRA	93.3	99.1	0.088	3.07	3.58	0.085
CHI	100	100		3.55	3.61	
COL	94.7	100	0.050	3.21	3.53	
CR	100	96		3.68	3.68	
DOM. REP.	94.4	100		3.57	3.84	
ECU	97.9	100		2.90	3.46	0.015
ELS	77.8	95	0.033	3.07	3.34	
GUA	90	89.4		3.20	3.15	
HON	95.2	97.9		3.50	3.60	
MEX	95	94.7		2.65	2.77	
NIC	100	97.7		3.50	3.47	
PAN	97.1	96.6		3.37	3.62	
PAR	94.6	97.1		3.51	3.57	
PER	96.2	97.6		3.37	3.32	
URU	100	100		3.70	3.65	
Total	95.3	98	0.005	3.26	3.45	0.000

Notes: “Democracy is preferable.” The question is “With which of the following statements do you agree more?” (1) Democracy is preferable to any other form of government. (2) In contexts of economic crisis and political instability, an authoritarian government might be better.

“No democracy without parties.” The question is “Some people say that without parties there can’t be democracy. How much do you agree with that statement?” (4) a lot; (3) somewhat; (2) a little; (1) not at all.

Source: Elites Parlamentarias de América Latina Project (PELA), Universidad de Salamanca. Wave of 2007–11.

POLICY STABILITY AND STABLE RULES OF THE GAME

Institutionalized party systems tend to generate longer time horizons, greater policy stability and predictability, and greater stability in the rules of the game. In these systems, the main actors in democratic politics are stable, and their positions are

TABLE 3.6 *Political Experience and Attitudes toward Democracy and Parties – Political Novices versus Others*

Country	Democracy is preferable (% yes)			No democracy without parties (mean)		P value if $p < 0.10$
	Political novices	Others	P value if $p < 0.10$	Political novices	Others	
ARG	100	100		3.33	3.76	
BOL	100	96.9		2.58	2.74	
BRA	75	99.2	0.000	3.00	3.54	0.000
CHI	100	100		3.56	3.60	
COL	90	100	0.004	3.10	3.51	
CR	100	98		3.40	3.70	
DOM. REP.	100	97.2		3.25	3.74	
ECU	94.1	100	0.032	2.82	3.24	
ELS	42.9	93.3	0.000	2.86	3.28	
GUA	80	90.2		2.00	3.24	0.014
HON	92.9	98.4		3.64	3.52	
MEX	91.7	95.3		2.92	2.69	
NIC	100	98.5		4.00	3.46	0.000
PAN	90	98.1		3.40	3.50	
PAR	94.4	96.3		3.44	3.57	
PER	92	98.5		3.32	3.45	
URU	100	100		3.33	3.68	
Total	92.3	97.6	0.000	3.15	3.41	0.001

Note: “Democracy is preferable.” The question is “With which of the following statements do you agree more?” (1) Democracy is preferable to any other form of government. (2) In contexts of economic crisis and political instability, an authoritarian government might be better.

“No democracy without parties.” The question is “Some people say that without parties there can’t be democracy. How much do you agree with that statement?” (4) a lot; (3) somewhat; (2) a little; (1) not at all.

Source: Elites Parlamentarias de América Latina Project (PELA), Universidad de Salamanca. Wave of 2007–11.

relatively stable. This stability and predictability favor longer time horizons that partially counteract the short-term electoral incentives that necessarily also drive politicians’ behavior. In institutionalized parties, politicians have incentives to protect and strengthen the party label. Their own fortunes rise and fall partly on the fortunes of their party.

This is less true in inchoate systems. Mechanisms of electoral accountability are easily vitiated; politicians can escape accountability by shifting from one party to another (Zielinski *et al.* 2005). Even major parties are subject to steep electoral losses, so politicians might jump ship for opportunistic reasons. Politics is more of an amateur affair, and, for political amateurs, developing long time horizons makes little sense.

As Flores-Macías (2012) showed, an institutionalized party system favors greater policy stability than an inchoate system for two reasons.²¹ First, it is easier for outsiders to win the presidency in weakly institutionalized systems. In turn, many outsider presidents favor radical policy change. For example, Collor and Fujimori on the right and Chávez, Correa, and Morales on the left were committed to radical reform.

Second, presidents from well-established parties are typically more constrained than outsiders or other presidents from weak parties. Well-established parties make it more difficult to implement radical reforms, as Carlos Andrés Pérez's (1989–93) presidency and impeachment in Venezuela showed (Corrales 2002: 121–27, 131–68). Pérez wanted to implement far-reaching neoliberal economic change, but his party, *Acción Democrática*, did not go along with this, partly because of programmatic objections, helping to sink his reform agenda and ultimately his presidency.

The prior history of ideological and programmatic commitments, connections to organized interests, the existence of experienced leaders within the party, and organizational structures in established parties constrain presidents and prime ministers. In institutionalized systems, parties generally remain faithful to long-established ideological and programmatic principles (Berman 1998; Downs 1957: 103–11; Kitschelt 1994: 254–79). Radical change tends to be costly electorally because parties would risk losing the support of organized interests, activists, and voters. The interests of funders, activists, and organized groups limit change. They hold influence within the party and contribute time, money, organizational capacity, talent, and votes. Going against these stakeholders entails potentially high costs. Established parties in institutionalized systems are usually loath to risk losing large numbers of partisans by undertaking radical shifts.

In contrast, new parties exercise little constraining effect. Political outsiders create party labels to run for the presidency, but they are not beholden to the party. To the contrary, the party owes its existence to the outsider president. Inchoate party systems “undermine political parties’ ability to prevent the president from conducting drastic changes to the status quo” (Flores-Macías

²¹ O’Dwyer and Kovalcik (2007) make a similar argument for Postcommunist Europe and O’Donnell (1994) did for delegative democracies. For a diverging perspective, see Campello (2015), who argues that more institutionalized parties did not block left-of-center presidents from implementing market-oriented economic policies and that high electoral volatility likewise did not affect the probability that presidents would announce one program as candidates and pursue another in office.

2012: 5). Programmatic principles are not yet strongly established in many young parties, so the cost of radical change is lower. The parties generally have weaker connections to organized interests, few committed activists, and fewer fund raisers and funders. Funders and organized interests are usually less attached to specific parties and more willing to support candidates of different parties. Fewer voters are partisans, so radical party shifts do not disrupt long-established bonds between the party and a strong core of partisans.

Because they were not tethered by their parties' established ties and ideological commitments, outsiders who took power in the context of inchoate party systems – Alberto Fujimori in Peru (1990–2000), Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1999–2013), Evo Morales in Bolivia (2006–present), and Rafael Correa in Ecuador (2007–present) – were able to undertake radical change in economic policy. Conversely, leftist presidents who took office in the context of institutionalized party systems – Ricardo Lagos (2000–06) and Michelle Bachelet in Chile (2006–10, 2014–present), Luis Inácio da Silva (2003–11) and Dilma Rousseff (2011–16) in Brazil, Mauricio Funes in El Salvador (2009–14), and Tabaré Vázquez (2005–10 and 2015–present) and José Mujica in Uruguay (2010–15) – implemented modest reforms. In Latin America, stronger institutions in general, including more institutionalized party systems, helped provide greater policy stability and averted radical policy change that often proved ill-advised (O'Donnell 1994).²²

Although policy stability is not always normatively desirable, high instability often has costs (O'Donnell 1994; Spiller and Tommasi 2005). It induces uncertainty among investors and citizens, with negative economic effects. For investors, policy instability is anathema. It makes it difficult to plan future courses of action, including decisions about investment and employment. It could raise the specter of erratic policy making and radical anti-business policies. For citizens and consumers, too, policy instability has high costs. It makes it difficult to plan major expenses and investments such as education, and it makes it difficult to figure out how to save money for the future.

In some situations, major policy change might be in order. Strong formal institutions generally, and institutionalized party systems specifically, tend to stifle radical change, which means that the possibility of radical political innovation is low. Accordingly, Coppedge (1994) warned of the perils of “partyarchy,” and Schedler (1995) of the potential costs of over-institutionalization. The argument here is not that stability is always good, but rather that chronic instability shortens actors' time horizons and reduces the probability of good collective outcomes.

²² An institutionalized party system does not preclude the possibility of sharp policy change. Sharp change is more likely if the main parties are programmatically polarized. In such circumstances, a change of government can produce significant policy change even in an institutionalized system. The argument here rests on an “all other things equal” clause.

Institutionalized systems also favor maintaining stable rules of the game. The set of actors is stable, and new actors are more likely than established ones to seek a radical change of the rules of the game. They might be ideologically committed to radical change in the rules, and they often have strategic reasons to change the rules. They often railed against these rules as part of the decayed and corrupt establishment. To maintain their political standing with their constituents, they want to follow through on these clamors to radically change the system. Outsider presidents typically come to power with weak congressional support, so they have strong incentives to seek to get rid of the sitting congress and to secure new rules that would help them consolidate power and weaken the old establishment forces.

One of the most radical forms of changing the rules is a new constitution. Corrales (2014) and Negretto (2013) identified twelve new constitutions in Latin America in the post-1980 period: El Salvador 1983, Guatemala 1985, Nicaragua 1987, Brazil 1988, Colombia 1991, Paraguay 1992, Peru 1993, Argentina 1994, Ecuador 1998, Venezuela 1999, Ecuador 2008, and Bolivia 2009. Four of the twelve occurred under the first president of a new democratic or semi-democratic period (Guatemala 1985, Nicaragua 1987, Brazil 1988, and Paraguay 1992) and a fifth shortly before a transition to a competitive regime (El Salvador 1983). Because the presidents in these five cases inaugurated (or were on the verge of doing so) new competitive regimes, there is no score for electoral volatility for the year when they were elected. The other seven presidents who presided over new constitutions governed in already existing competitive regimes.

Based on these seven presidents, radical constitutional change is more likely in inchoate party systems, consistent with the hypothesis that the rules tend to be more stable in institutionalized systems. Mean presidential electoral volatility when these seven presidents were elected was 54.3 compared to 31.3 for 118 elections of presidents who did not oversee the writing of new constitutions in the post-1978 period. The difference between means is statistically significant at $p < 0.06$ notwithstanding the small number (seven) of presidents who were elected and then oversaw the writing of new constitutions.

Four of the ten full outsider presidents mentioned earlier – Fujimori, Chávez, Morales, and Correa – presided over the establishment of new constitutions that enabled them to concentrate power and move toward competitive authoritarian regimes. These presidents account for every single new constitution since 1983 that expanded constitutional presidential powers according to Corrales's (2014) index. In light of Fish's (2006) evidence that strong legislatures are good for democracy, the fact that these outsiders bolstered their own powers at the expense of congress was a bad portent. The other six new constitutions that Corrales (2014) coded, introduced by insider presidents, all reduced presidential powers. All four outsiders who produced new constitutions with expanded presidential powers were impatient with the normal checks and

balances of democratic politics. They sought and achieved constitutions that ended the ban on consecutive presidential terms. All ran for and won reelection. Partly because of their expanded presidential powers, they presided over the emasculation of democratic checks and balances.

EXTENDING TIME HORIZONS AND LIMITING CORRUPTION

Institutionalized party systems generate stability and predictability in electoral competition; in linkages with voters, organized interests, and the state; and in broad contours of policy. As a result, they lengthen time horizons. Conversely, more is up for grabs in weakly institutionalized systems. Parties structure the political process less than with institutionalized systems. As a result, predictability is lower and time horizons tend to be shorter (O'Donnell 1994), easily leading to policy myopia (Simmons 2016; Spiller and Tommasi 2005, 2008). Policies that pay off in the long term but not the short term, such as inclusionary and non-discretionary social policies (Garay 2016) and technology policies (Simmons 2016) are more likely with well-established parties. More generally, programmatic politics is more likely with well-established parties (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013).²³

Although some institutionalized parties have made widespread use of clientelism, on deductive grounds, there is reason to hypothesize that institutionalized systems might be associated with less clientelism. Because institutionalized parties breed longer time horizons that are associated on average with more focus on policies that generate long-term development, they might focus less on clientelistic provision (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013). Parties have less incentive to focus on building programmatic brands in inchoate systems; they might not have the time to do so. Because less institutionalized systems have more amateur politicians with short-term horizons, they might be more conducive to clientelistic exchange. Because institutionalized systems on average feature more programmatic competition (Kitschelt *et al.* 2010), parties might rely less on clientelistic linkages. Weak formal institutions make for bastions of strong informal ones, and they more often than not protect the interests of the powerful.

If weak PSI reduces actors' time horizons and is associated with clientelistic practices, then it might correlate with a high perception of corruption because the particularistic exchange of favors that characterizes clientelism is rife with opportunities for corruption. The widely used Worldwide Governance Indicators include a measure of perception of a government's capacity to control corruption. The scores for a given country–year are the number of standard deviations above or below the world mean for a specific country in a specific year. Figure 3.1 shows the scores for Latin America for 2014. Except

²³ The data in Chapter 4, however, do not show an association between programmatic linkages and more institutionalized party systems.

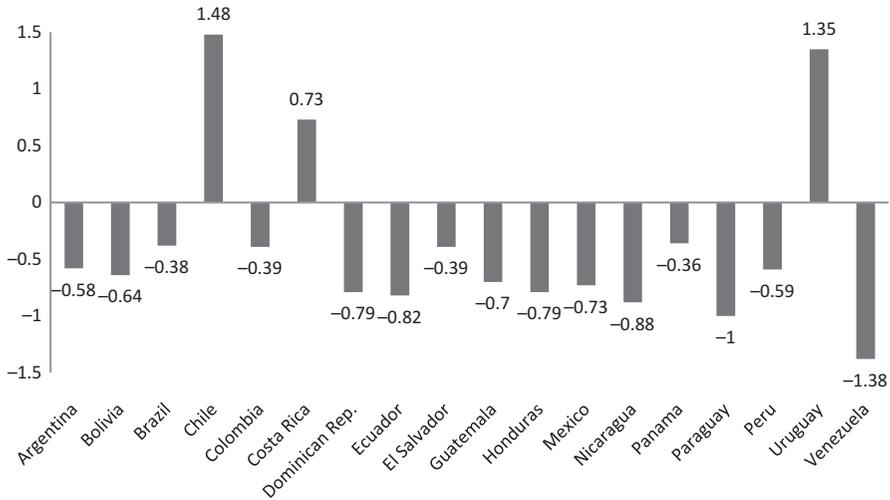


FIGURE 3.1 Perception of Control of Corruption, 2014: Worldwide Governance Indicators

Source: Worldwide Governance Indicators (2015).

Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay, Latin American countries scored below the world mean in 2014. Consistent with the hypothesis, institutionalized party systems are associated with better perception of control of corruption. The summary PSI score in Table 2.6 is correlated at 0.52 ($p = 0.03$) with the 2014 World Governance Indicator for perception of control of corruption, based on eighteen countries (all but Cuba and Haiti).

It also seems likely that, consistent with Garay (2016) and Simmons (2016), the longer time horizons that result from institutionalized party systems are conducive to a better provision of public goods. Consistent with this hypothesis, the correlation between the summary score for PSI in Table 2.6 and the 2014 World Governance Indicator for perception of government effectiveness is 0.55 (significant at $p = 0.02$). Of course, this correlation is merely suggestive and far from conclusive. Factors beyond an institutionalized party system (for example, a solid state and good policies) also affect government effectiveness.

THE EMERGENCE OF PARTISANSHIP AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY

This chapter has until now focused on the effects of weak institutionalization on politicians and elite actors. Weakly institutionalized party systems also provide different environments for voters. In institutionalized systems, voters face a stable electoral landscape. The set of actors, electoral results, and

parties' ideological positions are stable. As a result, it is easier for voters to get a clear sense of what the options are and which is best for them (Marinova 2016). The information environment is more stable and clearer.

The electoral environment is less stable and predictable for voters in inchoate systems. The entrance of major new parties and the exit or sharp decline of major old parties make for changing electoral alternatives. Electoral volatility is higher, so it is less predictable who the winners and losers will be. Sometimes, candidates for executive office experience meteoric rises and declines in a short time (Baker *et al.* 2006). Lower ideological and programmatic stability of the main parties make it less clear how different parties are positioned relative to one another.

For these reasons, weak PSI is inimical to partisanship. Converse (1969) argued that partisanship emerged over time as voters came to more clearly identify the main parties and what they stood for (see also Dinas 2014). In inchoate systems, the main actors change with some frequency, and the parties are less fixed ideologically. Assuming that Converse's and Dinas's arguments are correct, we should have different expectations for the emergence of partisanship in inchoate systems. Voters will not bond to ephemeral organizations; new parties are likely to take time to develop a large contingent of partisans. Voters' attachments to established parties are likely to be disrupted if those older organizations become minor contenders or undertake deep programmatic changes. The instability of the main contenders and their ideological positions creates hurdles for building partisans.²⁴

This argument reverses the normal claim about partisanship, namely that partisanship is a foundation for stabilizing party systems (Converse 1969; Green *et al.* 2002). This is not to argue that the causal arrow works in only one direction or that Converse's and Green *et al.*'s classic claim is wrong. Weak partisanship makes the institutionalization of a party system more difficult and subjects it to greater future uncertainty, and it makes party systems more vulnerable to radical change (Lupu 2016; Seawright 2012).²⁵

²⁴ The time series on party identification is not long enough or consistent enough to statistically test the hypothesis that lower PSI is associated with lower partisanship. A test of this hypothesis would require a measure of partisanship for the year immediately following an electoral period. Otherwise, the time gap between the data on partisanship and the electoral period is too great for a causal mechanism about the effect of PSI on partisanship to be convincing. For most Latin American countries, only one or two data points meet these criteria. Moreover, region-wide surveys often did not use the same questions about partisanship, weakening the comparability of different data points over time.

²⁵ The country correlation between the summary PSI score in Table 2.6 and the percentage of survey respondents who said that they sympathized with a political party in the 2014 AmericasBarometer survey was modest at 0.33 ($p = 0.19$). However, the AmericasBarometer question is not ideal for tapping partisanship because it asks about respondents' *current* partisan identification. Partisanship is better assessed by questions that ask about respondents' identification regardless of the immediate situation. See Castro Cornejo (forthcoming).

Other things equal,²⁶ low PSI might also be unfavorable to electoral accountability (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006; Moser and Scheiner 2012; O'Dwyer 2006; Zielinski *et al.* 2005). In most democracies, parties are the primary mechanism of electoral accountability.²⁷ In turn, electoral accountability is core to the very practice of representative democracy, whose promise hinges on the contract between voters and elected politicians. In principle, politicians should work to further the interests of voters and of the public good, and they should be voted out of office for failure to live up to this contract. Voters use parties as information short cuts to help understand what individual politicians stand for. For electoral accountability to work well, then, voters must be able to identify in broad terms what the main parties are and what they stand for (Aldrich 1995: 3; Downs 1957; Hinich and Munger 1994). In contexts where parties disappear and appear with frequency and where personalities often overshadow parties as routes to executive power, the prospects for effective electoral accountability diminish. Getting elected politicians to faithfully represent voters is challenging under the best of circumstances (Przeworski *et al.* 1999) – all the more so with weakly institutionalized systems.²⁸

For electoral accountability and political representation to function well, citizens need effective information cues that enable them to vote in reasoned ways without spending inordinate time to reach these decisions.²⁹ In institutionalized systems, parties provide an ideological reference that gives some anchoring to voters. Voters can reduce information costs, thus enhancing electoral accountability. The limited stability of less institutionalized systems reduces the information cues that they offer voters (Moser and Scheiner 2012). The weaker information cues hamper the bounded rationality of voters, undercutting the potential for electoral accountability based on a somewhat informed evaluation of policies, governments, and leaders. Where electoral accountability is vitiated, the ideal of representative democracy, that elected politicians will serve as agents of the voters to promote good policy or public goods or to advance the interests of specific constituencies, may break down (Luna and Zechmeister 2005).

²⁶ If an institutionalized system is exclusionary or collusive, such as the Colombian system from 1958 to 1990, electoral accountability suffers for different reasons.

²⁷ Even in democracies in which the personal vote is important, such as the US, partisan cues and identities can be highly important (Bartels 2000; Green *et al.* 2002).

²⁸ Torcal and Lago (2015) correctly argue that the relationship between electoral volatility and accountability is not linear. An ideal type hyper-institutionalized party system would afford little or no accountability because vote shares would be stable regardless of how well or poorly governments performed. Accountability rests on the capacity of citizens to change their votes if they are not satisfied with the government.

²⁹ This paragraph comes from Mainwaring and Torcal (2006).

PARTY SYSTEM INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY

For theoretical reasons already suggested in this chapter, we can hypothesize that low PSI would be associated with lower quality democracy. Weakly institutionalized systems make it easier for political outsiders to win power. Outsiders usually have a cavalier attitude toward representative democracy, and many attempt to undermine it. Weakly institutionalized systems have less experienced politicians, who tend to be less committed to democracy and to parties. Fluid party systems are associated with greater corruption, which can have corrosive effects on democracy. Inchoate systems hinder electoral accountability.

I leave more rigorous tests about the impact of PSI on democratic quality to subsequent scholarship and to already published work (Pérez-Liñán and Mainwaring 2013),³⁰ but the hypothesis holds up in a simple preliminary test of correlation. The Pearson bivariate correlation between the summary score for PSI (Table 2.6) and Freedom House scores for 2015 (based on the 2016 *Freedom in the World*) is 0.48 ($p = 0.04$).³¹ The bivariate correlation between the summary score for PSI and *mean* Freedom House scores for 1990–2015 is 0.55 ($p = 0.02$).

The five cases of democratic erosion in Latin America in the new millennium have been Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Honduras (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2015). In all five countries (and in Mexico), Freedom House scores were at least two points lower in 2014 compared to their highest score during the post-1978 wave of democratization.

In Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, democratic erosion was causally connected to weak PSI (Mazucca 2014). The election of political outsiders and the sharp erosion of the traditional party systems paved the way for the ensuing erosion of democracy. The demise of the traditional parties removed obstacles to the path from representative democracy to competitive authoritarianism in Venezuela and to a degraded representative democracy that borders on competitive authoritarianism in Ecuador and Bolivia. The absence of solid party oppositions enabled presidents with hegemonic aspirations to trample over mechanisms of accountability. All three countries had weakly institutionalized systems in the run-up to the election of the outsider presidents. All three systems show signs of becoming institutionalized in the wake of party system collapse – but under the aegis of presidents with hegemonic aspirations.

³⁰ For an interesting paired comparison along these lines, see Corrales (2001).

³¹ I inverted the Freedom House scores so that a high score indicates a high quality democracy. The inverted scores range from 0 (extremely authoritarian) to 12 (very democratic). The correlation between the summary PSI score and the most recent (as of August 2016) Varieties of Democracy score for liberal democracy was 0.41 ($p = 0.09$) (Coppedge *et al.* 2016a).

Nicaragua's party system is fairly weakly institutionalized (its score for PSI in Table 2.6 was slightly above the Latin American average), but in its case, the relationship between weak PSI and democratic erosion is less clear-cut. The Honduran case reverses the causal direction between PSI and democratic erosion. The 2009 coup and its aftermath provoked a degradation of democracy, and subsequently a previously highly institutionalized party system eroded.

Most Latin American countries with highly institutionalized party systems have high quality democracies. According to the summary score in Table 2.6, Uruguay, Mexico, and Chile have the most institutionalized systems in the region. According to Freedom House and V-Dem, Chile, Uruguay, and Costa Rica have the highest quality democracies in Latin America. The Mexican case underscores that PSI does not ensure good democratic outcomes.

What about the relationship between change in the level of institutionalization and change in the quality of democracy? The three countries (Brazil, El Salvador, and Mexico – the latter with the qualifications discussed in Chapter 2) that experienced a clear increase in PSI since the publication of *Building Democratic Institutions* became higher quality democracies (Brazil and El Salvador) or became democratic (Mexico). The countries that maintained highly institutionalized systems, Chile and Uruguay, are high quality liberal democracies. Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, the cases of inchoate systems circa 1993 that later culminated in party system collapse, moved in divergent directions in the quality of democracy. Bolivia and Ecuador have experienced some erosion of democracy. Peru's party system collapse was also associated with a democratic breakdown when President Fujimori shuttered the Peruvian congress and part of the court system in 1992. Today Peru has a democracy, though as Levitsky argues (Chapter 11), not a robust one. Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica are cases of party system erosion without collapse, although one major party in Argentina (the Radicals) shrivelled and one in Costa Rica (the Social Christian Unity Party, PUSC) collapsed. Democracy has remained robust in Costa Rica and troubled in Colombia, with no major net gain or loss in the quality of democracy.

Overall, then, increasing PSI has been associated with increases in the quality of democracy; persistently high PSI has usually been associated with high quality democracy; and party system collapse has consistently been associated with dips in the quality of democracy – sometimes profound ones, as in Peru in the 1990s and Venezuela in the 2000s.

Notwithstanding the solid association between PSI and higher quality democracy, citizens in Latin America are not enthusiastic about parties even in institutionalized systems. Trust in parties is low in Latin America and most of the democratic world. The AmericasBarometer survey regularly asks, "How much confidence (*confianza*) do you have in political parties?" The scale ranges

from 1 (no confidence at all) to 7 (a lot of confidence). In 2014, the country mean for the eighteen Latin American countries in the survey (all but Cuba and Haiti) was 2.90,³² well below the mid-point (4) on the scale (LAPOP 2014). The country-level correlation between mean confidence in parties (based on the 2014 AmericasBarometer survey) and average PSI from 1990 to 2015 (based on Table 2.6) was modest (0.35 ($p = 0.16$)). High system institutionalization has not rescued parties from widespread negative citizen sentiment. Citizens do not share the enthusiasm of most political scientists for institutionalized party systems.

CONCLUSION

PSI has important consequences for democratic politics. The chapter has highlighted six usually negative effects of weakly institutionalized party systems. They increase electoral uncertainty and make it easier for political outsiders to win the presidency, often with deleterious consequences for democracy; they are associated with more political amateurs; they increase policy instability and instability of the rules of the game; they shorten actors' time horizons and are associated with political systems more permeated by corruption; they make electoral accountability more challenging; and, on average, they are associated with lower quality democracies.

Institutionalized party systems are not a panacea, as countless historical and contemporary cases show. When it is based on exclusion and restricted options (e.g., Colombia from 1958 until 1990), high PSI has high democratic costs. Inchoate systems do not doom a country to bad results on all dimensions, as the Peruvian example today shows (see Levitsky's chapter in this volume). High levels of PSI do not necessarily produce better democratic processes or outcomes than moderate levels. Moreover, throughout most of the region, citizens seem to dislike parties regardless of how institutionalized the system is. However, inchoate party systems are generally associated with the problematic outcomes discussed in this chapter and with lower quality democracy. A major challenge for contemporary democratic politics in Latin America and beyond is that citizens are becoming less attached to parties and more skeptical and even disdainful of them, but they remain essential agents of democratic representation and accountability

³² This excludes non-respondents.