

ARTIGOS

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Two or three levels of contention? Applying explanations of presidential instability in Latin America to the 2010s cases

Dois ou três níveis de disputa? Aplicando explicações da instabilidade presidencial na América Latina aos casos dos anos 2010



ABSTRACT:


The paper reviews explanations about presidential term interruptions in Latin America and applies them to the 2010s cases, which are: Fernando Lugo (Paraguay, 2012); Otto Pérez Molina (Guatemala, 2015); Dilma Rousseff (Brazil, 2016); Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (Peru, 2018); and Evo Morales (Bolivia, 2019). The study sample also includes Legislative decisions to discontinue processes against presidents of Guatemala (2017), Brazil (2017, twice), and Paraguay (2019). The QCA results give support for proposing an alternative to Pérez-Liñán's (2014) two-level theory and adding a third level of contention related to military intervention, an old-fashioned variable that was decisive in the Evo Morales' case. Besides having shields in the Legislative and on the streets, Latin American presidents need a shield provided by militarized security forces to protect them from term interruptions, since these corps have gained influence in the democratic politics of the region. Contrary to literature expectations, the presidential exits of the 2010s have not been enough to disperse political tension.

Palavras-chave: Term interruption; Presidentialism; Latin America; 2010s

RESUMO:

O artigo revisa explicações sobre interrupções de mandato presidencial na América Latina e as aplica aos casos dos anos 2010, a saber: Fernando Lugo (Paraguai, 2012); Otto Pérez Molina (Guatemala, 2015); Dilma Rousseff (Brasil, 2016); Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (Peru, 2018); e Evo Morales (Bolívia, 2019). A amostra do estudo também inclui decisões legislativas para descontinuar processos contra presidentes de Guatemala (2017), Brasil (2017, duas vezes) e Paraguai (2019). Os resultados de QCA dão sustento para propor uma alternativa à teoria de dois níveis de Pérez-Liñán (2014) e agregar um terceiro nível de disputa relacionado com a intervenção militar, uma variável antiquada que foi decisiva no caso de Evo Morales. Além de escudos no Legislativo e nas ruas, as/os presidentes latino-americanos precisam de um escudo das forças de segurança militarizadas para protegê-los da interrupção de mandato, já que estes corpos têm ganhado influência na política democrática da região. Contrariamente a expectativas da literatura, as saídas presidenciais dos anos 2010 não têm sido suficientes para dispersar a tensão política.

Keywords: Interrupção de mandato; Presidencialismo; América Latina; Anos 2010

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INTRODUCTION

The interruption of presidential terms has become frequent in Latin America, serving as a mean that political and social actors can use to bypass the fixed term of presidentialism. In the 2010s, there were five cases: Fernando Lugo (Paraguay, 2012); Otto Pérez Molina (Guatemala, 2015); Dilma Rousseff (Brazil, 2016); Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (Peru, 2018); and Evo Morales (Bolivia, 2019). There were four in which the Legislative decided to discontinue proceedings against Jimmy Morales (Guatemala, 2017), Michel Temer (Brazil, 2017, twice), and Mario Abdo Benítez (Paraguay, 2019).

The frequency of term interruptions in Latin America, whether they be by legislative route or resignation, has led to an accumulation of comparative literature¹, whose postulates need to be tested in the light of new cases. This is what the paper does, encompassing all nine cases of the 2010s in which there was at least a legislative vote to decide if the process against the president would be set in motion.

The literature highlights a set of factors to explain term interruptions in Latin America. The tense relationship between Executive and Legislative is a frequent element (Kasahara and Marsteintredet, 2018). Pérez-Liñán (2007) evaluates that the exploitation of corruption scandals by the media affects presidential approval and stimu-

lates popular protests, which can lead to a term interruption. For Carlin, Love, and Martínez-Gallardo (2015), corruption scandals induce an outcome like a presidential exit when economic performance is poor. Pérez-Liñán (2014) proposes a two-level theory, by which presidents are at risk when their opponents pose a threat in the Legislative or on the streets, and their supporters fail to offer a shield.

Regarding the consequences of interruption processes for the political dynamic and the quality of democracy, a range of authors² evaluates that the legal instruments for term interruption give the presidential systems in Latin America flexibility to bypass or mitigate crises and thus preserve the democratic institutionalality.

The paper applies Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to the nine cases of the 2010s in which the continuation of a term interruption process was at least voted. The results give support for proposing an alternative to Pérez-Liñán's (2014) two-level theory and adding a third level of contention for presidential term interruptions in Latin America. An old-fashioned variable, military intervention, was decisive in the case of Evo Morales, who was shielded in the Congress and on the streets but decided to resign after the commander of Bolivian armed forces suggested that he do so. Besides having shields in the Legislative and on the streets,

Latin American presidents need a shield provided by militarized security forces to protect them from term interruptions, since these corps have gained influence in democratic politics of the region.

In terms of the consequences of an interruption process, contrary to expectations of the literature, the presidential exits have not been enough to disperse political tension and end turbulence after the 2010s cases. This indicates the need to revise the optimistic view on the flexibility that legal mechanisms for removing the Executive's chief offer to presidential systems in Latin America to bypass or mitigate crises.

The next section advances a theoretical discussion regarding presidential term interruptions in Latin America. It is followed by an explanation about the methodology and a description of the study cases, summarizing information about each one and coding the variables highlighted in the theoretical discussion. Then there is a section presenting the QCA results. Finally, the conclusions summarize the findings.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

In the classification of Kasahara and Marsteintredet (2018), presidential term interruptions can occur by institutional means (impeachment and declaration of incapacity or

office waiver), unilateral decision of the president (resignation, followed or not by early elections) and military action (coup). Regarding the period from 1985 to 2016 in Latin America, the authors identify six term interruptions by impeachment, two by declaration of incapacity or office waiver, six by resignation, two by resignation followed by early elections, and two by military coup, totaling eighteen cases. There were two more in the 2010s, Kuczynski in Peru and Morales in Bolivia, whose terms were interrupted by resignation in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

Some points can be highlighted regarding the classification: 1) interruption by military coup, frequent from the 1950s to the 1970s in Latin America, had way less cases from 1985 to 2019, resulting in the removals of Jamil Mahuad in Ecuador (2000) and Manuel Zelaya in Honduras (2009); 2) interruption by institutional means, first adopted in Brazil with Fernando Collor, who resigned yet still has his impeachment being concluded in 1992, lost space to resignations forced by popular mobilization in the 2000s and returned strongly in the 2010s; and 3) interruption by unilateral decision of the president is a category that does not express the whole process and may be determined by both popular mobilization and pressure from militarized security forces, as in the 2019 resignation of Morales in Bolivia.

To address the series of term interruptions in Latin America, Pérez-Liñán (2007) adopts the concept of presidential crisis, an extreme Executive-Legislative conflict in which one branch of power seeks to dissolve the other. According to the author, term interruptions are preceded by a presidential crisis, but it does not lead necessarily to this outcome, since there are cases with a different outcome. For him, the factor that determines whether the term will be interrupted is a broad multiclass coalition against the president, stimulated by corruption scandals. Hochstetler (2008) also considers that popular mobilization is a key factor to term interruptions in Latin America. For Carlin, Love, and Martínez-Gallardo (2015), corruption scandals induce a punishment when economic performance is poor. Martínez (2021) highlights a different component of the equation, which is party institutionalization, and finds that the risk for presidents is greater when parties are moderately institutionalized.

In a later work, Pérez-Liñán (2014) proposes a two-level explanation, by which presidents are at risk when their opponents articulate an effective threat, either in the Legislative or on the streets, and their supporters fail to constitute a shield. Even if elegant, this theory has fallen short in the face of the growing influence of militarized security forces in Latin American democratic politics.

Whether through case studies (Amorim Neto and Acácio, 2020; Martins Filho, 2021) or comparison (Diamint, 2015; Flores-Macías and Zarkin, 2021; Pion-Berlin and Acácio, 2021), the literature has shown the militarization of law enforcement in the region. Also by decision of democratically elected presidents, this militarization process has reached other policy areas. Representatives from different ideological colors, such as Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico, Iván Duque in Colombia, and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, have granted government positions and decision-making power to militarized security forces (Botelho *et al.*, 2022).

The growing influence of militarized security forces in democratic politics does not mean an imminent risk of coup, although this possibility cannot be completely ruled out depending on the case, but they are in a position to put pressure on Latin American presidents and advance their agenda. Considering these developments and their effects to presidential survival, as observed in the Evo Morales' case, a third level of contention must be added to Pérez-Liñán's (2014) two-level theory.

Besides having shields in the Legislative and on the streets, Latin American presidents need a shield provided by the militarized security forces to protect them from term interruptions. Without having all three shields at the same time, a president is not fully protected from having their term interrupted in the region. On the other hand, one

of the shields may be more important than the others. In a context of militarization of democratic politics in Latin America, military support can help the president cast doubt to legislators and protesters on going ahead with their deposition plans. In an extreme case, the military could also be used against legislators and protesters.

The literature on the consequences of presidential term interruptions also needs to be revised in the light of the 2010s cases, since their postulates have been poorly observed. Hochstetler and Samuels (2011) evaluate that countries in which rebalancing has been more difficult are cases whose the presidential exit had little institutional mediation. Marsteintredet (2014) claims that, when complaints against the president are motivated by a legal violation, the removal fulfills demands and ends turbulence.

The political dynamics following the 2010s cases of term interruption in Latin America have not proved these postulates. Mainly the Brazil and Peru's cases have shown that institutional mediation and a removal motivated by an accusation of legal violation have not been enough to end political turbulence. In Brazil, after Rousseff's destitution, her successor resisted two legislative sessions to vote for the authorization to prosecute him for a common crime, and the next president was frequently threatening democratic institutions during his term. In Peru, there have been five presidents since Kuczynski's resignation in 2018.

As observed in Brazil and Peru, there are other factors that need to be considered in assessing the consequences of term interruptions, such as the way to carry out the destitution, the continuation of corruption scandals and the salience of this issue for the population (Botelho and Santander, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The paper uses Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to test combinations of explanatory factors for the nine cases of study. Applying QCA makes it possible to verify whether a certain variable, to which is expected an explanatory power, needs to be present in combination with other ones in order to lead to the expected result. This method is appropriate for small samples and favors the deepening of cases and the testing of theories, as this article does with the explanations for presidential term interruptions in Latin America throughout the 2010s.

The paper applies crisp-set QCA (csQCA), which is the first technique designed to identify multiple set causality patterns. It becomes a tool to simplify complex data structures in a logical and holistic way. With a Boolean binary logic in mind, the value 1 is used when a certain variable is present, and the value 0 when it is absent.

The research problem of this article does not need an increase in the possibilities of variation to more than existing (1) or non-existent (0), by applying fuzzy-set QCA (fsQCA), as the decisive differences between the cases are differences in nature, and not in degree. For Rihoux and Ragin (2009), many social phenomena are of a qualitative nature, which implies that decisive variations among cases are differences of nature or type, rather than differences of degree. The decisions for variable operationalization can be done on the basis of theoretical considerations and familiarity with the cases.

Criticism concerning csQCA revolves around its dichotomized nature, as well as how a threshold value is determined, which dictates the existence or not of the condition within the case. Dichotomization becomes a way of reducing complexity and allowing better understanding of the research topic. In this paper, dichotomization is not a matter of concern because the phenomenon studied, presidential term interruption, is easily identifiable, as well as the conditions being, for the most part, objective.

Five factors were identified in the literature as explanatory conditions for a term interruption in Latin America, which are Executive-Legislative conflict, exploitation of corruption scandals by the media, popular protests against the president, poor economic performance, and military intervention.

To apply the csQCA technique, criteria are defined for coding the explanatory variables in terms of their presence or absence among the cases of study. The coding is based on the following criteria: Executive-Legislative conflict - a systematic legislative action of opposition forces to block Executive initiatives and/or interpellate ministers; media's exploitation of corruption scandals - a constant presence of scandals tied to the president, his/her party, coalition or cabinet in the news; popular mobilization against the president - a broad multiclass coalition of protesters demanding president's exit over a period of time; poor economic performance - negative or no Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the year of presidential removal or vote for; and military intervention - a statement and/or action by militarized security corps to force or hasten the president's exit. The next section presents the nine study cases and their variable coding.

Regarding the consequences of a term interruption, the analysis focuses on the political dynamic after the processes and verifies if preexisting situations of conflict between branches of power and/or fierce animosity between political and social actors are extinguished or significantly mitigated since the presidential exit. The sources for this evaluation are scientific and media articles focusing on the facts of interest.

CASES

Paraguay, 2012

Fernando Lugo (2008-2012) was removed from the Presidency of Paraguay on June 22, 2012, following a two-day trial by the Congress on accusations of failure to fulfill presidential duties and obligations. The final justification for his destitution was the episode known as the Curuguaty Massacre, on June 15, 2012, when eleven peasants and six police officers were killed in confrontations during a land occupation in the municipality of Curuguaty (Mattos, 2018).

Lugo was elected to a five-year term on April 20, 2008, as the candidate of a coalition, the Alianza Patriótica para El Cambio (APC). He was the first non-Partido Colorado president in sixty-eight years. His vice-president was Federico Franco, from the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA), the other traditional Paraguayan party. During his time in office, Lugo never secured a stable majority in Congress and was dependent on the PLRA. Therefore, many government proposals had to be individually negotiated with legislators (Jatobá and Luciano, 2018). There were other factors weakening his administration, as women claiming to have conceived children with him when he was acting as a Catholic bishop and violent clashes concerning land.

In economic terms, Lugo achieved a 4.2% GDP growth in 2011, which was his final complete year as president (World Bank, 2021). In the other years of his Presidency, the percentages are 6.4% in 2008, -0.3% in 2009, 11.1% in 2010, and -0.5% in 2012, which indicates an average growth of 4.18%.

The Curuguaty Massacre, which led to the dismissal of the Interior minister, became an opportunity for the opposition to oust Lugo. As PLRA withdrew itself from the government's coalition, the opposition managed to approve an impeachment trial. Their motion held the president politically responsible for the events in Curuguaty, accusing him of failing to fulfill his duties and obligations (Ezquerro-Cañete and Fogel, 2018; Jatobá and Luciano, 2018; Monteiro, 2018).

This was not the first impeachment request against Lugo, all previously filed. Nevertheless, without a legislative majority in his favor, Congress removed him from the Presidency in a quick trial. Lugo appealed the destitution, on allegations that he did not have the adequate time to prepare and present his defense, but the Supreme Court denied the appeal. During the short impeachment process, there were popular protests in defense of the president (Coelho, 2012).

Franco (2012-2013) completed Lugo's term. The next two elected presidents were from the Partido Colorado, Horacio Cartes (2013-2018) and Mario Abdo Benítez (2018-). In

both terms, there has been political turbulence. Cartes faced violent protests against an attempt to pass the possibility of presidential re-election in 2017. And Abdo Benítez survived an attempt to remove him in 2019.

Guatemala, 2015

Otto Pérez Molina (2012-2015) resigned as the president of Guatemala on September 3, 2015, after the Congress had approved in the previous day a Prosecutor Office's request to suspend his presidential immunity, in order to continue investigating him for an ordinary crime. He had been linked to the case known as "La Línea", a scandal involving tax evasion among customs officials.

As a candidate of the Partido Patriota (PP), Pérez Molina won the presidential runoff on November 6, 2011, and took office for a four-year term in 2012. Despite the GDP average growth during his Presidency being 3.8% (World Bank, 2021), which helped him to have government's approval rates rounding out to 38% the year he resigned (Latinobarómetro, 2015), Pérez Molina was weakened by corruption scandals related to his administration.

According to Pallister (2017), corruption scandals reached a new record with the "La Línea" case. Brought to light by the United Nation's International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala

(CICIG), "La Línea" has involved several politicians, including the first vice-president of Pérez Molina's government, Roxana Baldetti, and Pérez Molina himself. Other charges and arrests linked to his administration, for illegal election financing and money laundering via donations from shell companies, heated up the political crisis.

The demonstrations against the president became larger and stronger as time went on. On April 25, 2015, more than twenty thousand Guatemalans were on the streets demanding his resignation and also that of Baldetti (Peñaloza García and Toscano, 2017), who would resign and be substituted in a few days. This was the scenario in which the Prosecutor's Office requested the suspension of presidential immunity to continue investigating Pérez Molina. The Supreme Court decided in favor, sending it to Congress, which approved the request by a two-thirds majority on September 2, 2015. With legislative elections coming up and a large number of social groups protesting against corruption, even deputies from PP converged to suspend the presidential immunity (Peñaloza García and Toscano, 2017). On the verge of being arrested, Pérez Molina resigned the day after.

Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre (2015-2016), who had been elected by Congress to replace Baldetti as vice-president, completed Pérez Molina's term. The next elected president, Jimmy Morales (2016-2020), faced two voting sessions in

2017 to suspend his immunity also on corruption accusations.

Brazil, 2016

Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) was definitively removed from the Presidency of Brazil on August 21, 2016, on charges of using illegal fiscal maneuvers. She was in her second four-year term, the fourth consecutive of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), after being re-elected on October 26, 2014. Rousseff was able to form a nine-party coalition to begin her second term, with 59% of the seats in the lower chamber of the Congress (Siqueira, 2014). The pillars of this coalition were PT and Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB), from then vice-president Michel Temer.

Rousseff experienced a rapid popularity decrease as a consequence of economic crisis and media's exploitation of corruption scandals, reaching an approval rate of 9% in December 2015 (Ibope, 2015). The economic growth was negative in 2015 and 2016, respectively 3.5% and 3.3% (World Bank, 2021). In addition, the "Lava Jato" operation, conducted by a task force of federal prosecutors, was targeting the state-owned oil company Petrobras and several parties of the government coalition, including the PT.

As part of this operation, Rousseff's ante-

cessor and sponsor, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), was being prosecuted, which led the federal judge in charge of the case to reveal phone conversations between Rousseff and Lula da Silva when she tried to appoint him as minister (Chaloub and Lima, 2018). In that complex scenario, Rousseff faced a wave of demonstrations demanding her departure from office, led by citizen movements (Mendes, 2018).

On December 2, 2015, the then president of the Chamber of Deputies, Eduardo Cunha (PMDB), himself also facing corruption charges, accepted one of the requests to open impeachment proceedings. This was the beginning of a long process which came to an end on August 21, 2016, when the Senate approved Rousseff's removal, granting to Temer the completion of her term. Notwithstanding the impeachment approval, the Senate did not revoke Rousseff's right to be a candidate in future elections. Temer (2016-2018) was able to complete Rousseff's term, but also faced protests against his government and survived two legislative sessions in 2017 to vote for the authorization to prosecute him for a common crime.

Guatemala, 2017

From September 11 to 21, 2017, Jimmy Morales (2016-2020) survived two voting sessions

in Congress to suspend his immunity as president of Guatemala. As a result, the request to continue investigating him for illicit electoral financing in his 2015 presidential campaign, presented by the Prosecutor's Office and endorsed by the Supreme Court, did not get the necessary votes to be approved in the Congress.

Morales was elected for a four-year term on October 25, 2015, as a candidate of the Frente de Convergencia Nacional (FCN), and took office in 2016 replacing Maldonado Aguirre, the Pérez Molina's successor. The president's party was not able to obtain a legislative majority, even with some deputies from other parties switching to FCN and increasing its total of seats in the Congress to thirty three (Pallister, 2017). As a consequence, weak and short-lived coalitions, as in the Pérez Molina's case, had to be formed. Regarding the economic scenario, there was an accumulated growth of 5.7% in the first two years of Morales' Presidency (World Bank, 2021).

On the other hand, the cabinet of ministers was under criticism. There were about thirty minister changes by September 2018 due to different scandals (González, 2018; Pallister, 2017). In March 2017, ahead of the votes for suspending presidential immunity, the government's approval rate was 38% (Latinobarómetro, 2017).

At the same time, scandals involving Morales himself and relatives fueled popular protests

against the president. The CICIG associated Morales to an illicit electoral financing scheme, which led the Prosecutor's Office to request legislative authorization for continuing investigations. Morales reacted to CICIG initiatives, trying to expel its commissioner in September 2017 and later terminating its work in Guatemala (Mendoza and Holguín, 2019; Naveda and Arrazola 2017). This dispute motivated demonstrations against the president and in favor of CICIG.

Despite the unfavorable scenario, Morales was able to resist two legislative sessions to vote for the suspension of presidential immunity and concluded his term. The fear of other politicians being incriminated by CICIG investigations had become an incentive to form a temporary coalition and protect Morales (Elías, 2017).

In the 2019 presidential election, the ruling party won just 4.12% of the vote. Alejandro Giammattei was elected in the runoff and took office in 2020 for a four-year term. Despite campaigning with a tough approach to crime, he has intensified the policy of persecuting officials in charge of investigating corruption (Maldonado, 2022).

Brazil, August & October 2017

Michel Temer (2016-2018) also survived two votes in the lower chamber of Congress, on August 2 and October 25, 2017, avoiding to be

prosecuted for common crimes. Both cases were about corruption related to the president's party. Initially the Prosecutor's Office denounced him for corruption, and then for criminal organization, along with two of his ministers, and obstruction of justice.

Temer took over as president following Rousseff's initial removal on May 12, 2016. Once her destitution was confirmed on August 21, 2016, Temer formed a broad legislative coalition to complete the four-year term initiated in 2015. On the other hand, the presidential approval rate worsened. As early as 2017, only 5.5% approved his government (Latinobarómetro, 2017). He also had to deal with the economic crisis left by Rousseff, with an accumulated GDP contraction rate of 6.8% in 2015 and 2016, which would turn to a 1.3% growth in 2017 (World Bank, 2021).

The situation got worse for Temer when conversations recorded in March 2017 between him and a private executive were released. The revelations of this executive substantiated the two complaints of the Prosecutor's Office against the president for passive corruption and for criminal organization and obstruction of justice (Campos and Coimbra, 2018; Peixoto and Crespo, 2018).

In that scenario, there were protests demanding Temer's exit from Presidency. After the first revelation, demonstrations against him and/or reforms promoted by his government were report-

ed consecutively in several Brazilian states. These protests lost intensity between the two voting sessions in the lower chamber of Congress (Costa and Mendonça, 2017; G1, 2017a; G1, 2017b).

At the end, Temer was able to complete Rousseff's term after getting enough votes in the Chamber of Deputies to avoid being prosecuted for common crimes. Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022), the next elected president, was also a source of political tension by threatening democratic institutions and instigating polarization.

Peru, 2018

Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (2016-2018) resigned as president of Peru on March 21, 2018, in anticipation of a vacancy vote by Congress. He was weakened by accusations of receiving payments from Brazilian company Odebrecht when served as minister in a previous Peruvian government. The scandal fueled two legislative attempts to remove him from the Presidency between December 2017 and March 2018.

Kuczynski won the presidential runoff on July 28, 2016, as a candidate of the Peruanos por el Cambio (PPK), and began his five-year term under a minority situation in the Congress. While Fuerza Popular, the main opposition party, won a majority in the single-chamber legislature, with seventy three of 130 seats, the ruling party ob-

tained eighteen (McNulty, 2017). This configuration generated constraints for the Executive, since the Congress used the mechanisms of legislative control to convene and censure ministers. Despite the accumulated economic growth in 2016 and 2017 being 6.5% (World Bank, 2021), Kuczynski's government had an approval rate of 27.8% in March 2018 (Latinobarómetro, 2018).

The main problem for the president was his ties with Odebrecht. A consulting firm related to Kuczynski received payments from the Brazilian company when he was a member of the cabinet of Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006), which is not allowed by the Peruvian legislation. This case motivated the two legislative attempts to remove Kuczynski from office. In December 2017, he was able to persuade some legislators to abstain from the vacancy vote, leaving the opposition short of the necessary number to approve the removal (Arce and Incio, 2018; Carey *et al.*, 2018).

Just three days after the vote, ex-president Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000), father of two deputies of Fuerza Popular and convicted of human rights violations during his terms, received a presidential pardon. This decision led to protests concentrated at the time of the pardon, opening a new weakening front for Kuczynski (Carey *et al.*, 2018).

A few months later, the Fuerza Popular saw an opportunity for a second vacancy vote and re-

leased videos of government allies persuading an opposition legislator to support Kuczynski with promises of retribution. This episode reduced the government's remaining support in Congress. Thus, Kuczynski resigned the day before the scheduled date for the vacancy vote in March 2018 (Carey *et al.*, 2018; Fowks, 2017).

There have been five presidents since Kuczynski's exit. His vice-president and successor, Martín Vizcarra, dissolved the Congress and anticipate legislative elections, but the new body removed him in 2020. After his destitution, two successors were elected by the Congress in a span of seven days. The popularly elected president in 2021, Pedro Castillo, was removed after a self-coup attempt in 2022 and was replaced by his vice-president, who has also faced turbulence.

Paraguay, 2019

Mario Abdo Benítez (2018-) survived an impeachment vote on August 20, 2019. The Chamber of Deputies rejected the request for the Senate to carry out a political trial against Abdo Benítez, his vice-president and the Finance minister. The three were accused of wrongful behavior concerning a treaty signing with Brazil, which would cause losses to Paraguay in the use of energy from a binational power plant.

Abdo Benítez was elected for a five-year term as Paraguayan president on April 22, 2018. In the same elections, his Partido Colorado obtained the largest blocs of the Chamber of Deputies, with forty one of eighty seats, and Senate, with seventeen of forty five, holding a majority just in the lower chamber (Horwitz, 2019).

In 2018, the year before the case that motivated the impeachment attempt, GDP growth was 3.4% (World Bank, 2021). It was less than the 5% of 2017. The slowdown would be more severe in 2019, with a 0% variation. The government's approval rate was just over 30% in mid-2019. In this scenario, the media revealed the secret energy deal with Brazil. Reports suggested that Abdo Benítez was aware of the agreed terms and that there was also an under-the-table negotiation to sell Paraguayan electricity to a Brazilian private energy company (EFE, 2019). As a result, the Foreign Affairs minister resigned and the treaty with Brazil ended up being canceled.

Even with the resignations and the agreement cancelation, opposition parties and protesters continued with attempts to oust Abdo Benítez from office. An impeachment request was presented by the opposition in the Chamber of Deputies, as well as protests demanding the president's exit persisted (ABC, 2019).

At the end, the factions of Partido Colorado reached a deal to vote against the impeachment

request. Groups led by ex-president Horacio Cartes and by Abdo Benítez united in this direction and obtained enough votes in the Chamber of Deputies to reject the request (Ultima Hora, 2019). In December 2022, Cartes defeated Abdo Benítez in the election for the presidency of Partido Colorado. The primaries for the 2023 general elections in Paraguay were held at the same day.

Bolivia, 2019

Evo Morales (2006-2019) resigned as president of Bolivia on November 10, 2019, following protests against his election for a fourth consecutive term on October 20, 2019. After losing a 2016 referendum in which he sought popular support to run in 2019, Morales appealed to the Constitutional Court and obtained authorization to be a candidate (Anderson, 2020; Faiola, 2019).

At the moment of his resignation, the president had a majority in both chambers of Congress, obtained by the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) in the 2014 legislative elections. In economic terms, there were two consecutive years (2017 and 2018) with a 4.2% GDP growth, which would reduce to 2.2% in 2019 (World Bank, 2021). The government's approval rate was 33.9% in October 2019 (CELAG, 2019).

Morales' resignation came after violent reactions to the results announcement of the 2019

presidential election. The vote count suddenly stopped on October 20 and only resumed the day after. Accusations of voting fraud led to country-wide protests, for and against the president, so the Organization of American States (OAS) proceeded to check the electoral results (Faiola, 2019; Slattery, 2019).

As demonstrations intensified, Morales started losing the support of Bolivia's security forces. On November 10, 2019, the OAS report declared irregularities, of which the president responded announcing that he had agreed to a new election. His proposal was in vain. Following police defections, Bolivian armed forces' commander publicly suggested Morales' resignation (Slattery, 2019). Amid the instability, he resigned that day. The vice-president and the leader of the Senate followed Morales' steps. This chain of resignations led to the rise of the second vice-president of the Senate, Jeanine Áñez, as interim president on November 12.

Protests for and against Morales persisted after his resignation, prolonging the conflictive scenario until the conclusion of the interim government of Áñez through the election and the inauguration of Luis Arce, from MAS, in 2020. The new administration faced violent demonstrations in 2022. Protesters demanded in the Santa Cruz Province, a bastion of the opposition to MAS, the anticipation of the population census, in order to give the region more resources and legislative seats (DW, 2022).

QCA RESULTS

The explanations of literature were applied to the nine cases of the 2010s in which the continuation of a term interruption process was at least voted by a Latin American legislative. In some cases, the voting result was favorable to the presidents, since they were able to assure enough support. In others, the term interruption was not by a legislative vote, since there was a resignation. Table 1 summarizes in a Boolean manner (1 as present and 0 as absent) the variable coding presented in the previous section. The variables Executive-Legislative conflict, media exploitation of corruption scandals, popular mobilization against the president, poor economic performance, and military intervention are simplified, respectively, to EXEC-LEG, CORR, MOBIL, ECON, and MIL. The outcome of term interruption is also simplified to INTERR.

Using the Tosmana software, the nine cases were categorized by similarities in a truth-table, which reflects all possible configurations resulting from causal conditions and classifies the cases based on these configurations. It is worth noting in Table 2 that, concerning the five positive cases, in which a presidential exit occurred, EXEC-LEG and CORR are present. The irregular cases are the Lugo and Evo Morales ones, which do not present CORR or EXEC-LEG, respectively. Among the four negative cases, in which a term interruption did not occur, the absence of EXEC-LEG and the presence of CORR are recurrent.

Table 1 - Codification of Cases

Country	Year	President	EXEC-LEG	CORR	MOBIL	ECON	MIL	INTERR
Paraguay	2012	Fernando Lugo	1	0	0	1	0	1
Guatemala	2015	Otto Pérez Molina	1	1	1	0	0	1
Brazil	2016	Dilma Rousseff	1	1	1	1	0	1
Guatemala	2017	Jimmy Morales	0	1	1	0	0	0
Brazil	Aug. 2017	Michel Temer	0	1	1	0	0	0
Brazil	Oct. 2017	Michel Temer	0	1	0	0	0	0
Peru	2018	Pedro Pablo Kuczynski	1	1	0	0	0	1
Paraguay	2019	Mario Abdo Benítez	0	1	1	1	0	0
Bolivia	2019	Evo Morales	0	1	1	0	1	1

Source: Authors (2022)

Table 2 - Truth-Table

Case	EXEC-LEG	CORR	MOBIL	ECON	MIL	INTERR
Temer 2	0	1	0	0	0	0
E. Morales	0	1	1	0	1	1
J. Morales, Temer 1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Abdo Benítez	0	1	1	1	0	0
Lugo	1	0	0	1	0	1
Kuczynski	1	1	0	0	0	1
Pérez Molina	1	1	1	0	0	1
Rousseff	1	1	1	1	0	1

Source: Authors (2022)

By inclusion of logical remainders, the presence of EXEC-LEG or the presence of MIL leads to term interruption. The inclusion of logical remainders has shown itself essential, since without it the csQCA becomes unharmonious or unable to be simplified. Concerning non-consummated cases, the lack of both, EXEC-LEG and MIL, leads to the maintenance of the president in office. What else do the truth-tables and

diagram tell us? Military intervention is enough to lead to a presidential exit. In addition, conflict between the Executive and Legislative powers may lead to term interruption, especially when the incumbent does not have a majority in the lower chamber, and corruption scandals exposed by the media are a common instigator for presidential exit, since this is valid for all consummated cases except for Lugo.

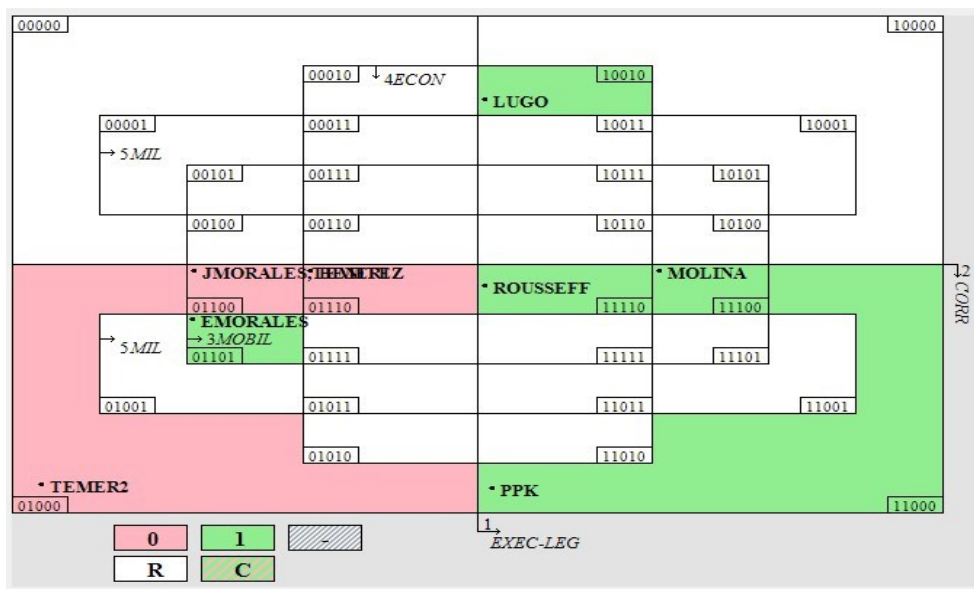
Regarding other explanatory factors highlighted in the literature, poor economic performance, even combined with corruption scandals, as pointed out by Carlin, Love, and Martínez-Gallardo (2015), is not a necessary condition. The same is true for popular mobilization, since this variable can either be absent in consummated cases or present in non-consummated ones. What the analysis shows is that corruption scandals exposed by the media stimulate popular mobilization against the president.

Diagram 1, derived from the crisp-set analysis, highlights how the Evo Morales case would not lead to presidential exit according to Pérez-Liñán's (2014) two-level theory. Despite the then Bolivian president was shielded both in the Congress and on the streets, his term was interrupted in 2019.

Pérez-Liñán's (2014) postulates that presidents are at risk when their opponents articulate an effective threat, either in the Congress or on the streets, and their supporters fail to offer a shield. For different reasons, Jimmy Morales, Temer (twice), and Abdo Benítez were able to constitute legislative shields and protect themselves from the attempts of advancing proceedings for their removal.

In four of the five cases of interrupted term (Lugo, Pérez Molina, Rousseff, and Kuczynski), the presidents were not able to constitute a popular and/or legislative shield to protect themselves. Pérez Molina and Rousseff faced the worst situations, since they were being threatened in both arenas.

Diagram 1 - Venn Diagram



Source: Authors' elaboration

Evo Morales distances himself from the other cases of term interruption in the 2010s, since he is the only ousted president without a previous conflict between Executive and Legislative. Morales was shielded in the Congress and on the streets, yet the action of militarized security forces, an old-fashioned explanation of political instability in Latin America, was crucial for the presidential exit. The public statement of the commander of Bolivian armed forces suggesting Morales' resignation unbalanced the dispute in favor of the opposition groups.

Applying case study (Amorim Neto and Acácio, 2020; Martins Filho, 2021) or comparison (Diamint, 2015; Flores-Macías and Zarkin, 2021; Pion-Berlin and Acácio, 2021), the literature has shown the militarization of law enforcement in the region. Also by decision of democratically elected presidents, this militarization process has reached other policy areas, which leads to a growing influence by militarized security forces in Latin American democratic politics.

The QCA results show that a third level of contention must be added to the explanation of presidential exits in the region. Besides having shields in the Legislative and on the streets, Latin American presidents need a shield provided by the militarized security forces to protect them from term interruptions.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper applies explanations of the literature on presidential term interruptions in Latin America to the nine consummated or not cases of the 2010s. The findings give support for proposing an alternative to Pérez-Liñán's (2014) two-level theory and adding a third level of contention related to military intervention, an old-fashioned variable that was decisive in the Evo Morales' case.

The then Bolivian president did have a shield in both arenas of contention highlighted by Pérez-Liñán (2014) but the military intervention, in the form of a public suggestion of resignation, was the factor that unbalanced the dispute in favor of the groups that was demanding Morales' exit from the Presidency. Besides having shields in the Legislative and on the streets, Latin American presidents need a shield provided by the militarized security forces to protect them from term interruptions.

The militarization of democratic politics in Latin America has been a process advanced by decision of democratically elected presidents from different ideological colors, such as López Obrador in Mexico, Duque in Colombia, and Bolsonaro in Brazil, who have granted government positions and decision-making power to the militarized security forces in policy areas that go beyond public security. The growing influence of

these corps in democratic politics does not mean an imminent risk of coup, but they are in a position to put pressure on Latin American presidents and advance their agenda.

Regarding its consequences, the term interruptions have not produced the effect expected by the literature, in terms of conferring flexibility to the presidential systems in Latin America to bypass or mitigate crises. On the contrary, neither conflict between Executive and Legislative nor animosity of mobilized social groups have ended after the presidential exits of the 2010s. In all the last three cases, the term interruption has not been enough to disperse the political tension.

In Brazil, Temer, Rousseff's successor, was under pressure from control bodies and survived two legislative sessions in 2017 seeking authorization to prosecute him for a common crime. The president elected in 2018, Bolsonaro, was frequently threatening democratic institutions and instigating polarization during his four-year term.

In Peru, there have been five presidents since Kuczynski's resignation in 2018. Martín Vizcarra, Kuczynski's successor, clashed with Congress, dissolved the body, and anticipate legislative elections, but the new Congress voted twice to remove him and approved it at the end of 2020. After his destitution, two successors were elected by the Legislative in a span of seven days. The pop-

ularly elected president in 2021, Pedro Castillo, was also removed by the Congress, after a self-coup attempt in 2022, and was replaced by his vice-president, who has been also a blank of protests.

In Bolivia, demonstrations for and against Evo Morales maintained the political tension after his resignation. The conflictive scenario persisted until the conclusion of the interim government of Áñez through the election and the inauguration of a president from Morales' party, Luis Arce, at the end of 2020.

Hochstetler and Samuels (2011) evaluate that countries in which rebalancing has been more difficult are cases whose presidential exit had little institutional mediation. This postulate applies to Bolivia, but not Brazil and Peru, where there was institutional mediation for the exits of Rousseff and Kuczynski. Marsteintredet (2014) claims that the removal fulfills demands and ends turbulence when complaints against the president are motivated by a legal violation. All the last three cases of the 2010s do not confirm this postulate as well, since there were legal accusations against Rousseff, Kuczynski, and Evo Morales. The findings suggest the need to revise the literature's optimistic view on the flexibility that legal mechanisms for removing the Executive's chief offer to presidential systems in Latin America to bypass or mitigate crises.

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NOTES

¹See Carlin, Love, and Martínez-Gallardo (2015), Hochstetler (2008), Hochstetler and Samuels (2011), Kasahara and Marsteintredet (2018), Llanos and Marsteintredet (2010), Martínez (2021), Marsteintredet (2008, 2014), Marsteintredet and Berntzen (2008), Mendes (2018), and Pérez-Liñán (2007, 2014).

²See Hochstetler (2008), Kasahara and Marsteintredet (2018), Marsteintredet (2008), Marsteintredet and Berntzen (2008), and Pérez-Liñán (2007).