

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AS INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS: LESSONS FROM THE CUOTEO IN CHILE, 1990-2018*

Nombramientos públicos como instituciones informales: Lecciones del cuoteo en Chile, 1990-2018

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ABSTRACT

This paper engages existing research on informal institutions in Latin America, by analyzing informal institutions related to public appointments in Chile with particular reference to what is known as the *cuoteo*. We extend the analysis from the national to the regional and local levels by considering how these informal institutions shape politics. Our research reveals that the nature and function of the *cuoteo* change according to the level of government at which it operates. Through this analysis we show how the decline of the *cuoteo* can lead to the erosion of its ability to contribute to the operation of high-quality formal institutions. We combine a review of literature with the analysis of 132 interviews in six regions of Chile.

Keywords: Informal institutions, democratization, Chile, clientelism, public appointment.

RESUMEN

Este artículo examina la investigación existente sobre instituciones informales en América Latina, enfocándonos en aquellas instituciones informales relacionadas con los nombramientos públicos, particularmente el cuoteo, utilizando el caso de Chile. Extendemos el

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análisis del nivel nacional al regional y local al considerar cómo estas instituciones moldean la política. Nuestra investigación muestra que la naturaleza y función del cuoteo cambian según el nivel de gobierno en el que opera. Encontramos que la degradación del cuoteo lleva a la erosión de su capacidad de contribuir a la función y calidad de las instituciones formales. Combinamos una revisión de la literatura con el análisis de 132 entrevistas en seis regiones de Chile.

Palabras clave: instituciones informales, democratización, Chile, clientelismo, nombramientos políticos.

I. INTRODUCTION

In October 2019, sustained violent protests plunged Chile into a political and economic crisis highlighting significant discontent with political institutions and social policies. Among the many causes of the disturbances, public opinion surveys taken immediately before the protests demonstrated profound distrust of institutions (Latinobarometro 2018). However, most studies point to the low quality of formal political institutions as a potential culprit, without sufficient consideration of the potential role played by informal institutions, despite significant evidence that informal institutions have important impacts on the functioning of formal institutions, and presumably, public opinion of them (Barozet 2006). In addition, the work that analyzes informal institutions in Chile focuses mostly on national level institutions, overlooking the role of informal institutions on the local level that shape the quality and functioning of democracy. Informal institutions have been recognized as central to the functioning of formal institutions (Helmke and Levitsky 2006) and the potential for democratic legitimacy and governability. There is also evidence that the erosion of informal institutions—though they were not designated as such then—played a role in the downfall of Chilean democracy in 1973 (Valenzuela 1977). While certainly informal institutions and changes in them are not solely to blame for Chile's current crisis, an understanding of the causes of the crisis would be incomplete without at least some analysis of the role of informal institutions and informal institutional change.

In this article, we analyze informal institutions with a particular focus on public appointments, specifically the *cuoteo*—employing Helmke and Levitsky's typology of informal institutions in Latin America as a tool for developing our argument (2006). We make two contributions to understanding the effect of informal institutions in Chile. First, although informal institutions have been analyzed on different levels of government, no work has analyzed how a single informal institution functions differently at the national, regional and local level.¹ Second, we show how the same informal institution (the *cuoteo* in our case) can contribute to or detract from democratization and/or the quality of democ-

¹ Despite incipient interest we lack coherent multilevel, interactional analyses of informal institutions (Silva and Rojas 2013).

racy differently at different *levels of government*, in different ways depending on that level and differently across time. This is important, especially as Chile undergoes the process of writing a new constitution, because while theoretically, the reform of formal institutions or constitutional change should enhance the quality of democracy, this process cannot be taken for granted. In fact, these reforms may be neutralized by the shifting nature of informal institutions, and even backfire, with detrimental effects on the quality of democracy. This article therefore makes a significant contribution by updating the analysis of the *cuoteo* at the regional and local level, with a special focus on the functionality and dysfunctionality of informal institutions at the subnational level.

This article first explains the choice of Chile as a case study, describing the rationale for our methodology. It goes on to explore relevant theoretical literature before examining how the dominant framework for understanding Latin American informal institutions relates to the Chilean case (Barozet 2006). The following section explores informal institutions involving the *cuoteo* in Chile, moving from the national to the regional to the local level. We explore how different sets of formal institutions and political contexts produce differing informal ones and analyze some of the positive outcomes of the *cuoteo* in terms of maintaining coalition unity, enhancing party discipline, passing legislation and implementing policy, as well as delivering resources at the local level: all elements that we and other scholars contend were central to the success of Chilean democracy (Siavelis 2006) until its crisis in October 2019. However, we also recognize some of the negative aspects of informal institutions which have contributed to discrediting political institutions in recent decades. Our work is novel in showing the dynamic transformation of the *cuoteo* across territory, political context, and time, while also contributing to the literature on local and regional government and political appointments in Chile. In addition, the high number and variety of interviews undertaken for this study allow us to focus local realities from the perspective of a more heterogeneous group of actors than previous scholars and also takes into account the voice and experience of multiple actors from various regions and within various hierarchies of formal and informal institutions.

II. INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE LITERATURE

O'Donnell defines an institution as “a regularized pattern of interaction that is known, practiced and accepted (if not necessarily approved) by actors who expect to continue interacting under the rules sanctioned and backed by that pattern” (1996: 36). While formal institutions are “explicitly formalized in Constitutions and auxiliary legislation”, informal institutions are shared understandings and agreements that regulate political behavior and are much less tangible than formal institutions (O'Donnell 1996: 36).

In Latin America, the term “informal institution”—implicitly or explicitly—conjures up normative and negative notions of nepotism, clientelism, patrimo-

nialism, and, often, corruption (Hillman 1994; O’Donnell 1996). Their presence also is associated with multiple forms of institutional weakness (Brinks et al. 2019). In fact, informal institutions are important political mechanisms in the region, where rational choice theories centered on formal institutions often lack explanatory power (Weyland 2002; Stokes 2003). We take a more neutral stance regarding informal institutions’ effects in enhancing or detracting from the quality of democracy. While informal institutions can affect democracy negatively, there are instances where informal institutions *enhance* the functioning of democracy. The *cuoteo* represents such a case.

There have also been attempts at comparative typologies of informal institutions. Lauth (2000), for example, makes three distinctions: complementary, substitutive, or conflictive. Azari and Smith (2012) similarly distinguish between informal institutions that complement formal ones, those which operate in parallel to them, and those which permit coordination between the two.

However, the most significant advance in the study of informal institutions has been Helmke and Levitsky’s work on Latin America. They define informal institutions as “socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels” (2006, 5). Notably, informal institutions shape *incentive structures* and a) do not respond to written rules; b) are understood by all actors; c) sanction non-compliance; d) generate expected norms of conduct; e) are recurrent and routine with repeatable outcomes over time; and f) are mentioned by the media and other social actors (Ostrom 1986; Mershon 1994; Lauth 2000; Siavelis 2000). Informal institutions, thus, change in line with the collective incentives of the actors involved and changing contextual circumstances.

Table 1 summarizes Helmke and Levitsky’s typology, which establishes four types of informal institutions based on whether effective formal institutions exist or not, and whether the outcomes of informal institutions converge or diverge from those intended by formal institutions. Effectiveness signifies the extent to which rules that exist on paper are complied with or expected to be enforced (Helmke and Levitsky 2006).

Table 1. A Typology of Informal Institutions

Outcomes	Effective formal institutions	Ineffective formal institutions
Convergent	<i>Complementary Informal Institutions</i> fill in the gap of formal institutions and enhance efficiency.	<i>Substitutive Informal Institutions</i> respond to ineffective formal institutions but produce outcomes for which the formal institutions were designed.
Divergent	<i>Accommodating Informal Institutions</i> , which exist where formal institutions are effective, but where outcomes are divergent, help to create incentives that alter outcomes associated with formal rules.	<i>Competing Informal Institutions</i> emerge where there are ineffective formal institutions, and the outcomes and effectiveness substantially diverge from that intended by formal institutions.

Source: Helmke and Levitsky 2006.

We also assert that informal institutions are not merely deviations of formal ones: they are the implicit rules of the political game. We seek to show that: 1) the *cuoteo* can operate differently at different levels of government to the extent that it fits into a distinct category within the typology; 2) each of the four types can enhance or detract from the quality of representation, producing positive or negative outcomes for democratization.

III. CASE SELECTION AND METHODOLOGY

Chile is a useful case for understanding informal institutions. Chile's democratic transition obliged governments and political parties to operate under an institutional framework imposed by the outgoing dictatorship in the form of the 1980 Constitution whose fate is now in the hands of the recently convoked Constituent Assembly (Siavelis 2000). Because the constitution was imposed, Chilean political elites were forced to find creative ways to operate in an institutional structure that was neither of their design nor apt for achieving their goals. In particular, with an electoral system designed to penalize small parties and limit the representation of the left, the governing center-left coalition had to find a way to underwrite unity by ensuring the representation of all parties—large and small and left and center.² In addition, any hopes of reform relied on building congressional coalitions, when for most of the transition the *Concertación* lacked a majority due to the institutional vestiges of the dictatorship. It did so through a series of informal institutions aimed at building and maintaining consensus among its constituent parties (Siavelis 2006). While initially successful, these national level informal institutions changed, and their effectiveness eroded with time. It also became clear that similar institutions at different levels of government did not function in the same way or with the same effectiveness that they did at the national level. In particular, at the regional and local levels we find that informal institutions related to public appointments like the *cuoteo* either operate differently or have replaced formal institutions in functional terms (Rehren 2000).

To make our argument we sought an informal institution that exists on all three levels of governments in Chile: informal institutions shaping public sector appointments, i.e. the distribution of cabinet positions and senior positions in the ministries at the national level, and appointed positions in regional and local governments, known as the *cuoteo*. To uncover the functional aspects of informal institutions and their implications for other developing democracies, we present a qualitative case study. Methodologically, the phenomenon requires a qualitative approach for deciphering the multifaceted web of relations between political leaders at different levels of government (George and Bennett 2004).

² For the period analyzed here, Chilean politics was characterized by competition between a multiparty coalition of the center-left (known at different times as the *Concertación* and the *Nueva Mayoría*) and the center-right (known by multiple names, but most recently, as the *Alianza and Chile Vamos*).

This article is based on 132 interviews of senators, deputies, party leaders, and representatives from regional, provincial and municipal governments (including mayors and local council members), as well as academic and electoral experts in six regions of Chile: Metropolitan Santiago, Tarapacá, Valparaíso, O'Higgins, Bío Bío and Magallanes. We chose regions to satisfy diverse criteria, including Northern and Southern remote regions, media competitiveness, degree of corruption, presence of political dynasties, strength of political parties, and urban/rural balance. Interviews were undertaken between July 26th, 2016 and August 17th, 2018. A summary of the interviews by type and region is provided in Appendix 1. We employed the RQDA: R-based Qualitative Data Analysis tool to analyze the interviews (Huang 2017). In Appendix 2, we also include the details of the codes used in the content analysis. In most cases, we chose quotes that highlight opinions expressed by many actors. In the notes we provide information on how many of our interviewees expressed similar sentiments.

IV. UNDERSTANDING THE RULES AND THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CUOTEO

Public appointments are a common political tool for politicians to reward support and cultivate loyalty among followers. However, there is little analysis of how the process of naming public officials varies and provides distinct incentives depending on the level of government. Therefore, we need to be cautious in the superficial assumption that similar informal institutions more generally (and the *cuoteo* for our purposes) perform the same functions up and down the regional ladder without looking more deeply at their complex functionality at these different levels. In addition, we show that formal institutions both shape informal institutions and that the reform of the former can often shape the latter in unexpected ways.

The *Cuoteo* at the national level

Scholars of Chilean politics have analyzed many national level informal institutions. The main ones include: the *cuoteo*, which defined rules of distribution in the composition of electoral lists and government appointments based on party loyalties (Barozet 2006; Navia 2008); consolation prizes (in the form of public appointments), which act as “electoral insurance” for candidates destined to lose elections due to Chile’s binomial election system until 2015 or, more recently, due to the need to carry out internal party and coalition primaries (Siavelis 2006); and rewards for high profile policy advisors, who work *ad honorem* to shape successful candidates’ policy programs. All have been acknowledged to facilitate the success of coalition politics in Chile, and hence, the democratic transition. Because these informal institutions have been widely analyzed their

further analysis is beyond the scope of this article, as we are focusing here solely on public appointments, that is to say the *cuoteo* in its varied manifestations. We chose to analyze the *cuoteo* because: 1) initially it was central to the success of *Concertación* governments; 2) it was long lasting; and 3) it is one of the mechanisms that operated at all levels of government, allowing us to analyze the shifting nature of informal institutions at distinct government levels.

The *cuoteo* at the national level has been widely studied with reference to the four *Concertación* governments between 1990 and 2010 (Dávila 2011) and is based on a few basic rules: First, leaders agreed to distribute cabinet positions proportionally based on parties' electoral weight. Second, large anchor parties would be underrepresented to allow the participation of smaller coalitional partners. Third, the agreement involved *transversalidad*—the assumption that cabinet ministers would be from a different party than vice-ministers whenever possible. *Transversalidad* was respected by all four administrations (with the minister and under-secretary being of a different party in 78 percent of the cases for Aylwin, 71 percent of for Frei, 87 percent for Lagos, and 96 percent of the time for the first Bachelet government). Furthermore, throughout the ministries, and particularly in the “political” ministries, each administration sought to balance party representation among high level staffers and politically appointed ministerial staff (Rehren 2000; Dávila 2011).

As one senior Christian Democrat (PDC) stated:

If the Minister of the Interior was of one color, then the Minister for Foreign Affairs, which was considered an equivalent position, had to be of another; if the Minister of Finance was of one color, then the Minister of the Economy and the Director of CORFO³ (both influential in terms of economic development) were of another. This means there was a balance in terms of numbers as well as responsibilities (PDC party leader, national level, 08/28/17).⁴

The *cuoteo* has been analyzed as an accommodating informal institution in Helmke and Levitsky's (2006) framework, because it operates within what one can consider an effective institutional framework, yet its outcomes diverge from what the operation of formal institutions would produce: in particular, it provided for the full inclusion of parties and the building of coalitional consensus in an institutional framework that militated against it. The major goal of the center-left coalition that ruled for much of Chile's transitional period was to overcome strong limits on the representation of the left and build coalitions within an electoral system that provided strong impediments to doing so (Siavelis 2002). These appointment mechanisms ensured party discipline, guaran-

³ Corporación de Fomento de la Producción—the national economic development agency.

⁴ At least six interviewees shared this view: one national-level public official, two national party leaders, two political analysts, and one deputy (V Region).

teed equitable representation for all parties, giving them a stake in the success of the government and rewarding political and personal loyalty.

Initially, in public discussions and press coverage, the *cuoteo* was painted by experts and national leaders as a sign of democratic maturity and elites' ability to build consensus.

It is my impression that for *Concertación* governments, especially up until Lagos' government despite pressure for the *cuoteo*, that during the Aylwin, Frei and Lagos government there was a demand for technical excellence. Bachelet's first government was also characterized by the same type of excellence. So, there was, I would say, a type of permanent yet positive conflict, between a drive for excellence and the pressure to enforce the *cuoteo* (Political expert, 13/12/2017).

Over time, however, this positive view and the search to combine a focus on partisan credentials and technical expertise deteriorated, as our interviewee went on to acknowledge, coming to be perceived as a way of doling out positions to party hacks:

But from there on [from the first Bachelet government] I would say that I have the impression that this demand for excellence weakened (Political expert, 13/12/2017).⁵

These changes took place not only at the level of highest positions, but also among officials in ministries:

Now, that variation [in the number of quota positions] was not so noticeable during the democratic transition, because laws allowed currently employed career officials to maintain their positions. This changed toward more *cuoteo*-related appointments when Piñera arrives, and it becomes clear that the employment contracts are temporary and sitting officials are expected to leave at the end of the government. Bachelet does the same thing when she comes to office (Center-left undersecretary, 14/12/2017).

Specifically, upon assuming office for the first time in 2006, President Bachelet made an effort to introduce "new faces" into government as well as ensuring gender parity among ministers. Yet, achieving this while maintaining the *cuoteo*'s basic principles proved a complex task, leaving her with a politically weak, inexperienced cabinet that contributed to eroding presidential approval ratings.

A former DC minister detailed: "So, Bachelet opted for some new directions (obsessions) which were the gender issue, civil society, and...people with fewer links to political parties and less political experience" (PDC Party leader,

⁵ Both experts and national politicians shared this opinion, including center-left ones.

national level, 08/28/17).⁶ Bachelet appointees lacked the influence to bring their parties in line with the government, highlighting more strident policy differences. Traditional gender relations within parties left women ministers without the “old-boy networks” traditionally relied upon by male politicians (Staab and Waylen 2020). This forced the president to re-shuffle her cabinet, reverting to more traditional *cuoteo* mechanisms to ensure that coalition members supported her government and had a stake in its success.

Though the *cuoteo* is usually associated with *Concertación* governments, center-right President Sebastián Piñera employed the same logic during his first administration (2010-2014), although circumstances were less complicated as only two major parties – *Renovación Nacional (RN)* and the *Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI)* – made up the governing coalition. Given the *cuoteo*’s negative connotations, Piñera initially appointed ministers with a strong private sector technical profile. A right-wing political expert put it this way:

Curiously, Piñera did something like Bachelet: though both were members of a political party, they preferred to distance themselves from the parties... Piñera preferred to surround himself with ministers who were personally close to him (Political expert, 13/12/2017).⁷

But the first right-wing government since the return to democracy faced another stumbling block:

When Piñera returned, the pressure for the president to have an obviously technical government was manifest, but he confronted a terrible conflict with the parties. They felt abused, diminished and it ended with a kind of surrender, with the president unable to deal with pressure from politicians. Finally, he gave in and said “well, here come the politicians” (Political expert, 13/12/17).

Like Bachelet, Piñera was also forced to abandon his strategy of avoiding *cuoteo* politics and had to replace technocratic ministers with political heavyweights as the UDI—the largest party in the coalition—resented its initial under-representation in the cabinet.⁸

The right-wing analyst of national politics concluded:

Now why has there been so much *cuoteo* in Chilean politics? My impression is that the main factor is the lack of internal party democracy [...] both on the right and the left. Yes, political parties have always been

⁶ Mentioned by at least eight other interviewees: five political analysts, one national-level party leader, one parliamentarian and one former intendente (both from region XII).

⁷ Also mentioned by at least four more interviewees: two political analysts, one national-level party leader, one parliamentarian (XII Region).

⁸ Most notably the replacement of Employment Minister Camila Merino with the experienced UDI Senator Evelyn Matthei.

motivated by ideas, projects, but there is also the motivation to maintain power; it is a power struggle, that is politics, almost by definition.

The initial idealism of consensus politics born of the early *Concertación's* success in toppling the dictatorship gave way to a more cynical view of *cuoteo* politics. Scholars, politicians and the public recognized that the *cuoteo* was a useful consensus-building tool in the early, delicate stage of the transition. However, the politics of consensus that it produced prevented democratic deepening and the passage of more radical, and necessary, reforms (Martínez Mejía and Cardoso Ruíz 2018). A well-known political analyst contended:

One sees the same faces, many times the same people taking turns in positions, small groups. Now, I have the impression that party power factions, the lack of internal democracy and the *cuoteo* have been central factors discrediting political parties and politics in general. And these factors explain the public disaffection we see in survey data; I believe that the *cuoteo* is [...] one of the causes of the loss of prestige in politics (Political expert, 13/12/2017).

In addition, several party leaders developed their own internal fiefdoms (through political appointments and clientelism, as discussed in the following sections). The *cuoteo*, therefore, became more complex to manage as party factions entered the equation. Many interviewees cited political heavyweights like the PPD's Guido Girardoi (Partido por la Democracia), Socialists Camilo Escalona and Fulvio Rossi, RN's Manuel José Ossandón and the UDI's Jacqueline van Rysselberghe as examples. Ministers must, therefore, have good relationships with party barons to remain influential and succeed in passing legislation (particularly "political" ministers: Interior, Presidency, Government and Treasury).⁹

Though party factions and coalition membership changes—including declining vote shares for the PDC and the Communist Party joining the governing coalition during the second Bachelet administration (2014-2018)—complicated things, the logic of appointment mechanisms remained similar through all these years. At the same time, a growing number of young university graduates generated greater pressure from professional people for access to positions in the state based on merit. This occurred precisely when the image of the *cuoteo* was losing its positive patina:

One forgets that there has been a tremendous cultural change associated with greater education, economic modernization and the demand for merit. [...] So, I believe that all these appointments, without questioning each person's merits, are seen as unreasonable. Behind this there is a questioning of the performance of institutions and this questioning also applies to public appointments (Former Piñera Minister, 13/06/2018).

⁹ Belisario Velasco was DC, yet because of bad relations with the president and limited weight in the party, he was replaced by the DC's, more politically powerful Edmundo Pérez-Yoma.

Therefore, the *cuoteo*'s function has not changed in terms of the Helmke and Levitsky (2006) framework: it is an accommodating informal institution because formal institutions are effective in the sense that they would function as designed without informal institutions, yet informal institutions initially produced positive divergent outcomes (consensus, agreement, and a more comfortable context for multipartyism). Nonetheless, over the years the same informal institution's outcomes gradually transformed into personalism, inept ministers, deteriorating public evaluations of governing elites, and the perception that it was used to distribute political spoils, undermining government legitimacy. As a former left-wing deputy stated:

When Peñailillo¹⁰ calls me, he asks me to chair Michelle's campaign program commission. In return, I asked him for several things. I asked him for jobs in the two public universities, the technical training centers [...] blah, blah, blah, I accepted [...] Yes, I had asked for positions in the public universities in O'Higgins and Aysén, and Peñailillo tells me "alright, everything is ready and this Sunday I will draw up the agreement with Girardi." That is, I had to kiss the bastard's ring. I told him "Hey man, I'm not PPD." I said "What? Go to hell dude, I don't accept" (Left-wing former deputy, 13/06/2017).

In this sense, in both cases outcomes are divergent, but what has changed is whether they are positive or negative in terms of their contribution to the democratic quality. Our findings regarding national level informal institutions, thus, suggest the importance of a reality often overlooked in the literature on informal institutions: whether they produce positive or negative outcomes. We found at the national level that the *cuoteo* functions as an accommodating informal institution because it existed within the context of effective formal institutions, yet its outcome diverged from that which formal institutions would have produced with their normal operation. The *cuoteo* was an accommodating informal institution throughout the democratic transition, but its significance for that process was starkly different at the outset compared to the last decade. This brings into question whether simply calling it an accommodating informal institution without some qualification regarding its utility for contributing to the quality of the functioning of democracy is a useful tool for analysis. We return to the importance of this question below.

Public appointments at the regional level

Regional governments in Chile were headed by an *intendente* named by the president, though since 2021 they are elected through universal suffrage. In turn, each of the 16 regions is sub-divided into provinces (between two and eight depending on their size) that are overseen by presidentially appointed

¹⁰ Rodrigo Peñailillo (Bachelet's first Interior Minister (2014-2015)).

gobernadores. There is a clear, but unstated, logic of *cuoteo* at the regional level. As of 2017, the last time *intendentes* were directly appointed by the president, in 10 regions, the *intendente* was of a different party than all the provincial *gobernadores*, while the overall list of governors proportionally represented the five anchor parties of the *Nueva Mayoría* coalition. In all five regions where there was a *gobernador* from the same party as the *intendente*, there were four or more governors (eight in the Region of Valparaíso) and in each case, there was only a single *gobernador* who was from the same party as the *intendente*.

The system of distribution of positions based on the political weight of parties described at the national level also takes place at the regional level:

For example, if the Socialist Party (PS) has 50% of the votes in Araucanía, the *intendente* of that region will not be from the Socialist Party, he will be from any other political party, because other parties have no interest in strengthening that party. But that region will also be compared to regions of similar size. For example, because the Metropolitan Region is the largest, it is worth two or three regions. But I have Bío Bío, which is similar to Valparaíso, and so if the PS gets it, the other one would go to the PPD, UDI or RN, etc. So, you look for that kind of balance (Center-left undersecretary, 14/12/2017).

We have already noted that at the national level, the *cuoteo* is an accommodating informal institution. But, one of our fundamental underlying assumptions is that different sets of formal institutions will also produce different informal ones. However, what we also stress is that in moving from one level of government to another, the classification of essentially identical informal institutions changes. In the case of the national level, outcomes were positive (at the outset of the transition) because the *cuoteo* produced consensus and compromise in a system little apt to produce such outcomes. As the rules of the *cuoteo* are applied identically at the national and regional level, our findings at the regional level suggest that the *cuoteo* is also an accommodating informal institution. In essence, if formal institutions were left to function as designed, they would be quite efficient. However, in stark contrast to how it functioned at the national level for most of the democratic transition, at the regional level the *cuoteo* has produced deeply negative consequences for the quality of public sector appointees, because appointments respond to the more complex demands of deputies and senators (and powerful mayors of regional capitals) to get re-elected; as well as to centralized *cuoteo* rules that do not necessarily take into account regional needs. Regarding regional agency appointments, a regional vice president of the Socialist party points out:

But negotiations are also centralized and nationalized. Because that is not defined by the region either. Nor is it solely defined, for example, by the *intendente* [...] He has to consult the ministers. [...] And the service directors; that's where the aunt, sister, girlfriend, grandparents begin to come in. It starts there, that's as I was telling you just now, in the service

directorates, [...] they are all being *cuoteado* (PS Regional Vice President, VIII Region, 14/09/2016)¹¹.

A 2013 reform established direct elections for regional councilors (*Consejeros Regionales*, or *CORES*). They are responsible for approving regional, municipal and inter-communal regulatory plans and for distributing resources from the National Fund for Regional Development, based on proposals from the *intendente*. In recent years, the *CORES*' function has become more important as the proportion of regional budgets over which they have decision-making power has increased (Elgueta and Espinoza 2015). Candidates nominated to be *CORES* by political parties are also subject to *cuoteo* logics, because they are frequent launching pads for regional actors' political careers.¹² Although regional and local actors point out that they have more freedom of action in choosing *CORE* candidates, the final decision is made in conjunction with national party committees, deputies and senators.¹³

Regional Ministerial Secretariats (*Secretarías Regionales Ministeriales—SEREMIS*) are also appointed according to the *cuoteo*, playing a similar role as at the national level by maintaining horizontal loyalties between parties. A former *Concertación* minister and prominent local politician in Valparaíso details:

Everything in the regions is determined by the *cuoteo*. Regional cabinet positions are distributed between the parties. The same goes for public services. It's amazing, because that explains a good part of inefficiency, right? Often what happens with the *cuoteo* is that people with no technical or professional qualifications get the job (Local councilor, V Region, 09/10/2016).¹⁴

The same process applies to public services for youth, the elderly, customs, etc.:

Yes, you can see this regarding public services. For example, the provincial government of Magallanes is what I would call a fiefdom rather than a source of plunder—because a fiefdom denotes an institutional political space where the party militants or sympathizers linked to a certain political party are more numerous. This widespread practice not only affects the Christian Democrats in Magallanes, it also affects the Socialist Party, and the Radicals (Local expert, XII Region, 07/10/2016).

These mechanisms, which play an increasingly important role in the distribution of fiscal resources, ensure that coalition partners get their fair share of

¹¹ Regional party leaders describe the same situation.

¹² Before that, and since 1991, *CORES* were indirectly elected by municipal councilors. Their number varies, by population (between 14 and 34).

¹³ Interviews with regional party presidents and *CORES*.

¹⁴ Also mentioned by at least 14 interviewees: two political analysts, one deputy (VI Region), one regional-level party leader (VIII Region), one regional councilor (VIII Region), three former intendentes (V, VI, XII Regions), one regional public official (VI) one provincial authority (I), one local councilor (I) one designated local authority (VIII), two social leaders (V Region).

resources and projects (thus maintaining unity), as well as shoring up political parties on the vertical scale (helping to ensure electoral success). However, many regional-level interviewees pointed to the lack of technically qualified candidates for public sector positions.¹⁵ The more removed a regional government is geographically from Santiago, the more difficult it is for the central government to ensure the faithful execution of policies, and to find qualified appointees who are also loyal party members.

Our interviewees indicate that party loyalty is a more important factor in making appointments than technical qualifications, competence, or experience. However, the regional public appointments process has also been subject to formal institutional change to improve its functioning. For example, the *Sistema de Alta Dirección Pública (SADP)*, a system for public appointments) was established in 2003 (and reformed in 2016) to promote transparency and meritocracy in the selection of candidates. Yet most of our interviewees argued that it has made little difference because parties now simply negotiate positions prior to submitting candidates. Informal selection mechanisms prevail, under the camouflage of a formal institution. The process of naming officials by *cuoteo* and personalism represents an informal institution, yet one with negative outcomes, because it leaves poorly trained people in power:

The *cuoteo* continues. We have tried to get as many people as possible elected through the *SADP*. But the process is not being managed transparently. They can choose a candidate pre-selected by a political party and then use the *SADP* to justify the appointment and whitewash their choices. Then when a new government takes over, you're left with an important position filled by a person who didn't obtain the job through a clear and transparent competition, but through a completely manipulated, murky process (deputy, V Region, 08/07/2017).¹⁶

One of the foremost government transparency experts noted:

Now, one would think that the *SADP* is a mechanism to increase the competition of qualified people, that is, it is a way to reduce the risk of *cuoteo*—where cheats and incompetents arrive because they are friends, or vassals of the people who appoint them. The *SADP* was not thought of as a mechanism of independence from power, but rather a mechanism that would enhance the competence of people who entered the public apparatus. There is no need to think about it in another way—it will not end the evils if the *cuoteo* (Transparency expert, 06/11/2017)¹⁷.

¹⁵ Mentioned by at least 14 interviewees: One regional and one national-level political analyst (I Region), two deputies (V and VI Region), one national party leader and two regional party leaders (I and XII Region), one regional councilor (XII) and two former intendentes (XII), two local councilors (V, XIII), and two social leaders (V Region).

¹⁶ Also mentioned by at least six other interviewees: four political analysts, one designated local authority (XII), one social leader (V Region).

¹⁷ This is a common opinion among transparency experts and national politicians.

Furthermore, regional interviewees emphasize that informal negotiations between national party committees (*mesas directivas*) play a key role in regional appointments, circumventing the *SADP*. These national directives are often resented by regional party committees, who complain that this centralized decision-making process does not consider the particularities of regional politics. Politicians from extreme regions complained most about the centralized weight of national party committees (Espinoza and Rabi 2013).¹⁸

Since 2000, it is also becoming clear that members of congress, especially senators, have become key informal actors who influence regional appointments, partly as a consequence of the weakening of the party structures.¹⁹ One parliamentarian from a far-flung region averred: “Most senators transform themselves into a regional employment agency. They are consulted on the selection of *intendentes*, governors, they place the *Seremis*, and have regional networks that allow them to control everything” (09/25/2017).

A senior ex-member of a *Concertación* government, referring to the second Bachelet government, added:

In one region that I know of, there is a committee consisting of the *intendente*, deputy and senator who decide all the positions, whether it’s a *SEREMI* or a chauffeur, or a social assistant in a regional agency (Former left-wing deputy and minister, 10/03/2017).

Another interviewee added: “Here, even the doorman is *cuoteado* (Former *intendente*, VI Region, 10/14/2016).²⁰

Many interviewees describe members of congress as local *caudillos*, who ensure the placement of their collaborators in regional administrations,²¹ sometimes even against the president’s will:

It’s the same throughout the country [...] like the parliamentary broker that you see in Arica and Iquique with [Senator] Fulvio Rossi. So how do you do business? First, take over the public apparatus and second, control and divert public funds. Juan Pablo Letelier was the owner of the *intendencia*, he was the owner of the *SEREMI* of Education and he was the ow-

¹⁸ Also mentioned by at least 15 interviewees: three regional party leaders (VI, VIII and XII Regions), one former *intendente* and one current provincial authority (I Region), five regional councilors (2 of VIII Region and three from XII Region), two designated local authorities (VIII and XII), one local councilor (V) and two social leaders (I and XII Regions).

¹⁹ Mentioned by at least 17 interviewees: three political analysts, two national and one regional party leader (VIII region), two parliamentarians (V and XII), three former *intendentes* (two V Region and one from VI Region), two regional councilors (VI and XII), three local councilors (VI, XII, XIII) and one designated local authority (XII Region).

²⁰ These descriptions were common in interviews in Regions I, VI, and VIII, where there are local and regional *caudillos*, but less common in the Vth and XIIth Region and the RM.

²¹ Mentioned by at least nine interviewees: one political analyst, one national political leader, one former *intendente* (VI Region), two regional councilors (VIII), one regional public official (VI), two local public officials (VI and VIII) and one local level social leader (XII Region).

ner of the director of the *SERVIU* (Housing and Development Service) [...] in the Eighth Region it is the Sabags, in the Eleventh it is Patricio Waker, these days in the Twelfth it's Carolina Goic [...] They are the same characters in every region (Political expert, former local councilor, 11/10/2017).

Interviewees consistently repeated the same names:

The toughest ones are the ones I've named, Fulvio Rossi who owns the I region, Aldo Cornejo and Walker also own their region; Pato Walker in Aysén is the owner, and well, Juan Pablo Letelier. How many key positions does this make? Well, the *SEREMIS*, the three governors, about five or six services and about five regional government positions, and ten other important program positions. So, let's see, 15 *SEREMIS*, an average of five governors per region, 20, five regional government positions, 25, five more influential services, so it would reach 30, and about ten key programs, making for about 40 positions, which puts them at the apex of power (Left-wing former deputy, 13/06/2017).

The role that personal political loyalties plays allows individual party barons or local *caudillos* (often mayors, senators or deputies) to use them to control votes within their party and make appointments in exchange for support in internal party elections.

So, while the *SADP* was created to rein in the *cuoteo* and professionalize public appointments, its impact has been limited by the growing strength of parliamentary figures, who establish personal regional political networks to ensure their re-election. If the *SADP* were left to function as designed, it would be quite efficient. Yet the introduction of the *cuoteo* has produced divergent outcomes, again, making it an accommodating, yet negative informal institution.

Overall, our research shows that there is a fine line between ensuring the effective implementation of a government's political agenda through informal institutions and the abuse of political power. In the next section, we will show that this fine line becomes even more blurred for local governments. However, theoretically, the important point is that accommodating informal institutions, even ones based on the same principles and essential logic, do not necessarily play the same positive roles at different levels of government.

Public appointments at the local level

One of our central contributions is demonstrating how parallel informal institutions operate differently depending on the level of government. Public appointments at the local level are also based on *cuoteo*, with the expectation by national party elites that party labels will be considered when naming local officials and municipal staff. Mayors pass out jobs based on the political stripe of municipal employees, and where town councils are divided and mayors de-

pend on the support of parties in their own coalition, they must distribute jobs to acolytes of their coalition partners:

This whole structure is made up of a university educated elite from outside [the municipality], who control another group of operators who lack these characteristics and live off the *cuoteo*, because in the end, they are the ones who benefit. So, the municipalities have been transformed into true agencies of clientelism and the *cuoteo*; and it is not necessarily an illegal practice (Right-wing political expert, 13/12/2017).

However, our interviews suggest that the local *cuoteo* has become increasingly interwoven with personal loyalties and nepotism. Referring to one of the mayors of Valparaíso, a local councilor from the same coalition, but from another party, bluntly points out:

He stuck in everyone, a lot and a lot of people, stuck in all over the municipality. Wherever there was the possibility to stick in someone, he did it. Well, yeah, you could say, hey that's good—this guy takes care of his people, and therefore, there's goodwill and friendship. But I think that the municipalities should [...] efficiently manage things, and that is not what has come out of this process (Local councilor, V region, 29/09/2016).

Here, the allocation of public sector appointments is no longer an accommodating informal institution, rather it is a competing informal institution as one of the main goals of local government is the distribution of resources from the central state. However, relevant formal institutions relating to oversight and transparency in the use of local resources and budgets are ineffective and badly designed because they provide no incentive for actors to supervise municipal expenditures and assure propriety:

A mayor earns three million pesos in X (a northern rural commune). This determines the team he can bring to the municipality. A mayor does not arrive alone; the mayor arrives with his family, his friends, his acquaintances, at least 30 people get into a small municipality (CORE President, 28/11/2017).

Formally, local councilors are charged with overseeing the municipal budget. However, because they depend on mayors' personal networks for election, they rarely exercise proper budgetary oversight. Also, the recruitment process for *concejales* (Members of Municipal Councils) ignores whether they have the technical expertise necessary to supervise budgets effectively, and most are preoccupied with other full-time jobs outside the municipality, leaving much room for political brokerage and clientelism.²²

²² Fieldwork suggested this is less common in Santiago *comunas*, where journalists, bloggers, and public authorities play an oversight role.

Because formal local institutions are less effective and weaker than at the national level (Brinks et al. 2019), and because the process of resource distribution diverges from that intended by the state (which theoretically seeks transparency and fairness), we argue that the *cuoteo* at the local level constitutes a competing informal institution.

Indeed, at the local level of Chilean politics, the *cuoteo* disintegrates to varying degrees as party membership is intertwined with loyalties to individual local leaders and personal networks of family, friends, and business associates. An influential Christian Democrat leader in Iquique explained that local appointments are not made through

the normal channels of political parties, but through individuals who are influential within the parties, and who sometimes do not even have leadership positions. So, it's quite a strange situation that does not work based on parties as an institutions, that's the problem. It's a kind of generalized nebulosity, that's what's complicated... First family and friends, there's a lot of nepotism in this. (09/26/2016).²³

Although these networks are interwoven with party loyalties, they sometimes cross-party lines, and there are no clear rules for resource distribution. This represents a stark contrast to the political brokers that Valenzuela (1977) described, who were tightly wired into parties because they depended on deputies of the same party to provide “pork” to distribute in local constituencies. This change has occurred mostly because deputies can no longer propose and deliver particularistic spending that in the past cemented the loyalties of local authorities to the party.

Although few interviewees express this idea, a former minister, party leader and former left-wing mayor points out:

Look, the parties care so little about the municipalities that they only meddle when the power of a person is at stake. Do you think that in a municipality like X, where the coalition had been around for so many years that anyone ever asked what they were doing? Nothing, nothing matters. The municipality only matters to win the elections, nothing more (Left-wing former Minister, 10/03/2017).

Transversal agreements between parties in the same coalition also become diluted as personal friendships, and perhaps more importantly, antagonisms, dominate elected and non-elected appointments.²⁴ In smaller municipalities, local actors generally ignore the balance of power between political parties

²³ Also mentioned by five interviewees from the VIII region: one political analyst, one regional councilor, one local authority and one social leader.

²⁴ Many interviewees described the alliance between a DC mayor (Hernán Pinto, 1992-2004) and a later UDI mayor in Valparaíso (Jorge Castro, 2008-2016), as a striking example; despite being from different coalitions, they allied in allocating public contracts to secure votes.

within the same coalition, in favor of relationships established with a personal group of “followers”, who then are rewarded with jobs for their political activism during election campaigns. This ensures the effective building of clientelist networks to underwrite a candidate’s future electoral success.

The 2012 electoral reforms, which replaced voluntary voter registration and mandatory voting with automatic voter registration and voluntary voting, were supposed to enhance democracy by getting more young people to vote. Ironically, the reforms have had the perverse effect of increasing clientelism at the local and regional level (Brieba and Bunker 2019). The drastic drop in voter participation rates, which fell to 35% in the municipal elections of 2016 as a result of this change, makes it is easier for local *caudillos* to control votes in local elections, as the number of voters whom they can reach with clientelist practices has now increased as a proportion of the total voters. The reform made their work easier as they could concentrate on their usual electoral clientele (militants, the elderly and the poor who depend on public benefits) without having to worry about programmatic proposals to attract new voters.²⁵

Recent research on clientelism, however, also shows the focus must go beyond only political parties, but also that of local community leaders or *punteros* who organize associative networks, like neighborhood associations, mothers’ centers, sports clubs and pensioners associations that distribute resources (Barozet et al. 2020). While *punteros* existed before the dictatorship, they were more closely tethered to national party organizations, because deputies could reward loyalty through the distribution of particularistic goods. However, the networks for resource distribution have now been rewired. Our research supports Contreras’ findings on the influence of mayors in helping to assure the election of council members (or to block them, potentially ending careers) (Contreras 2012). Because mayors are more powerful and less connected to national level parties, political loyalties have shifted from parties towards individuals, and now mayors are the recipients of votes delivered by the *punteros* (Luna and Mardones 2017):

Well yes. Van Rysselberghe [Concepción’s former mayor, *intendente* and senator] built all this through the municipality. With a lot of resources, equipment, and a machine of advisors—to the extent that they became known as the “territorials”. I have people, I am mayor, I hire you and you are going to do jobs for me when and where I need them done. [...] But in exchange for what? In exchange for family baskets [of goods and food], in exchange for roofing shingles, for soccer jerseys for the team. In essence, she became a kind of fairy godmother for everyone... and they paid her back later in votes. So, this happened all the time, everywhere (University professor, VIII Region, 13/09/2016)²⁶.

²⁵ Interviews with mayoral candidates and municipal councilors and their neighborhood brokers in Iquique, Valparaíso, Punta Arenas, and Concepción.

²⁶ This description is common across the board for all those interviewed VIIIth Region, even on the right.

However, we do *not* suggest that parties are irrelevant at the local level. Rather, the connections between parties and the role of individualistic loyalties has simply changed. Horizontal networks of clientelism, electoral control of territories and personal loyalties (Toro and Valenzuela 2018) are also extended vertically in some regions from local municipal levels to the National Congress as deputies and senators are often either part of such a clientelistic network or alternatively form one to support themselves. Examples of the former are the UDI's Van Rysselberghe and the DC's Ortiz family from Concepción, and the Soria family from Iquique who all intertwine party and family relations at the local, regional and national level to channel public funds to loyal voters.²⁷ It is even common to find local cross-party alliances. Referring to one of the most salient Socialist Party caudillos, an ex-mayor of the O'Higgins Region argues:

Here there is a clear alliance, not a formal public one, but a visible one between Senator Letelier (PS) and the mayor of Rancagua who is from the UDI... Rancagua is one of the last electoral bastions of the right, and... Letelier understands that if he wants to work in Rancagua he has to go through [the Mayor] Soto (10/14/2016).²⁸

In this sense, the *cuoteo* exists at the local level, but it is interwoven with personal loyalties in a context of weak enforcement. More importantly, the personalized *cuoteo* becomes a competing informal institution, because it has emerged in the face of ineffective local formal institutions, and its outcomes diverge from what one would expect. While in some sense this enhances the functioning of local government and its nexus to national government, on balance it has a negative impact on the fair and transparent distribution of municipal resources. It is important to note that this differs from the phenomenon identified in the 1970s by Valenzuela (1977), who argued that the ability of deputies effectively to determine local appointments as well as the give and take of resource distribution at local government through the mediation of deputies helped to soften ideological conflict at the national level. For Valenzuela, even though he did not consider it as such, this represented a competing informal institution, albeit an effective one. However, the competing informal institutions that we have identified here have a more negative impact, once again underscoring the differential potential outcomes for democracy associated with the same type of informal institution.

²⁷ Mentioned by at least nine interviewees referring to different regions: one political analyst, one national political leader, one former intendente (VI Region), two regional councilors (VIII), one regional-level public official (VI), two local-level public officials (VI and VIII Region) and one social leader at local level (XII Region).

²⁸ This description is common across the board for all interviewees in Region VI, even on the left.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

On January 9, 2022, in a lengthy interview following his election as Chile's youngest president in history (at 35) Gabriel Boric was asked about his cabinet. He replied:

I have complete freedom on the part of the parties of the coalition that support me. I have no requirement to put any particular person in a position or follow a *cuoteo*. Therefore, this will not be a *cuoteado* cabinet, but yes, of course, I have to see it from the perspective of a balance of the forces that support us... But we are forming a team of the most prepared people independent of, as I said before, party impositions (Moreno 2022).

With regard to his regional teams, he noted:

For these decisions I will consider the opinion of the regions. You know that I am from the Magallanes Region and it always bothered us when we could see the regional cabinets named in Santiago. So, we will have a dialogue to name regional authorities that takes into account the will of the regions. This means that no one will be saying "you have to put this guy in". No, we are not going to permit that. We will end the logic of personalism, clientelism and the *cuoteo*.

Boric's very public statements attest to the fact that informal institutions and the *cuoteo* are alive and well, and something that he and other politicians will have to deal with moving forward, even after the potential drafting of a new constitution. All signs point to informal institutions in the area of public appointments remaining salient and crucial to understand with respect to their functioning and outcomes.

This article has demonstrated the important role of informal institutions, and the *cuoteo*, in particular, in Chile's democratic transition and consolidation process, but also provides lessons looking forward. It shows that "informal institutions should not be treated as permanent fixtures in the political landscape" (Helmke and Levitsky 2006: 275) as they are dynamic and adaptive over time and between levels of government. Even successful informal institutions may disintegrate over time. Thus, very similar (and in some cases identical) institutions that are accommodating (and positive) at the national level may become accommodating (yet negative) over time at the same level, may become accommodating (yet negative) at the regional level, and competing (and negative) at the local level.

This is an important finding with relevance for other democratizing countries. This paper demonstrates that a key element missing in the framework is whether informal institutions contribute to successful democratization, governance, transparency and quality representation. This could provide more insights about the current institutional and political crisis faced in Chile and in other Latin American countries. This paper thus adds to a growing literature on

multi-level informal institutions in other countries, where similar phenomena have been analyzed with this more comprehensive perspective (Auyero 2000; Ledeneva 2013; Garrido-Vergara 2020).

In addition, changes in formal rules, which were designed to enhance or deepen the process of democracy have not necessarily brought about the desired improvement in their associated informal institutions. The hope invested in constitutional change in Chile, which is based on a desire for a more legitimate system, must also take account of the fact that many extant informal institutions will persist, and new ones will grow with the potential to have a profound effect on governance, representation and public policy.

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APPENDICES

1: Number of interviews conducted by region and type of position

Position	Tarapacá	Valparaíso	Región Metropolitana	O'Higgins	Bío Bío	Magallanes	National level	Total
Civil society organization, civil society, businessmen-women	1	4	3	2	1	5		16
Local level political position	1	5	3	3	4	5		21
Regional level political position	3	2	3	4	4	5		21
Congressmen and women	2	3	3	3	2	4		17
Leaders, party members and historical political figures	3	0	3	2	3	2	18	31
Experts	4	0	0	0	2	3	17	26
Total	14	14	15	14	16	24	35	132

Note: Local and regional positions correspond to elected positions, appointed or through public competition held at the time of the interview. Candidates for office are also included.

2: Codes

Family	Codes	Description
Informal Institutions	<i>Cuoteo</i>	Distribution rules for the composition of electoral lists and government positions based on the electoral weight and the negotiating capacity of political parties (Siavelis 2006; Navia 2008).
	Informal decision-making mechanisms.	Consultation and decision-making through support networks and political "connections." This involves actors who are not within formal institutions or take decisions outside the spaces designated for taking or regulating them (Siavelis 2000, Espinoza & Rabi 2013). These include alliances between legislators and local and regional authorities outside the logic of parties and coalitions.
	Clientelism and patronage	A form of "personal dependence outside of family connections that rests on the reciprocal exchange of favors between two people, the patron and the client, with asymmetrical control of resources." (Médard 1976: 103). This includes everything dealing with the exchanging of favors in return for votes—within and outside of electoral campaign structures—and the use of public goods to secure voter loyalty, etc.. It includes patronage, the awarding of public positions in return for votes, and various types of support for political campaigns.

Family	Codes	Description
Informal Institutions	Brokers	Everything that has to do with political operators, <i>punteros</i> , intermediaries, and leaders of territorial organizations that act as intermediaries in the distribution of patronage or public goods.
	Political Families	Everything related to political dynasties or family political legacies. (e.g. Soria, Sabbag, Ortiz, Van Rysselberghe).
	Operational differences at distinct levels.	A code that aims to gather differential evaluative judgments about the functioning of politics and the rules of the game at various levels (local, regional and national); for example in some regions the weight of families is more marked, or the coalitional duopoly is weaker at regional and local level, etc.
Formal Institutions	President of the Republic	Everything mentioned by interviewees regarding the role, attributions, functioning and limitations of the Presidency of the Republic.
	Deputies and Senators	Everything mentioned by interviewees regarding the role, attributions, functioning and limitations of deputies and senators; a priori it also includes any mention of the parliamentarization of politics.
	Intendentes and GOREs	Everything mentioned by interviewees regarding the role, attributions, functioning and limitations of the <i>intendentes</i> and regional governments (GOREs). Anything having to do with the direct election of <i>intendentes</i> and the evaluation and reform of regional governments.
	SEREMIS	Everything mentioned by interviewees regarding the role, attributions, functioning and limitations of the Seremis (regional ministerial officials).
	Governors	Everything mentioned by interviewees regarding the role, attributions, functioning and limitations of governors.
	CORES	Everything mentioned by interviewees regarding the role, attributions, functioning and limitations of the by <i>Consejeros Regionales</i> (COREs) or regional councilors..
	Municipal Governments	Everything mentioned by interviewees regarding the role, attributions, functioning and limitations of municipal governments.
	Mayors	Everything mentioned by interviewees regarding the role, attributions, functioning and limitations of mayors.
	Municipal Councilors	Everything mentioned by interviewees regarding the role, attributions, functioning and limitations of municipal councilors.
	Lack of qualified personnel	Mentions of anything having to do with describing or having concerns about the lack of political personnel and qualified candidates, particularly at the regional and local level due to centralism and the flight of qualified people.
Public employment	Everything related to state hiring, as well as layoffs and massive " <i>amarres</i> " (when an outgoing government re-categorizes political appointees as career civil servants to prevent the next administration from firing them). Topics related to the civil service in general. This code was added near the end of the project, when the public employment question was added, so there are few citations.	

Family	Codes	Description
Political Parties	Electoral Machines	Mentions of a political machines or machinery, whether at the subnational or national level, that function within parties, electoral politics, municipalities, regional government, or the national government. It allows for coding of situations in which a politician takes over, co-opts or generates new municipal or electoral networks. These are mentions of political machinery not tied to family connections.
	Internal candidate selection	Everything related to habitual internal candidate selection procedures for public, electoral and appointed office; The <i>cuoteo</i> and compensation prizes may be mentioned, but above all this category encompasses distinct forms of recruitment, selection and formal election. Interviewees might mention designated successors, the strengths of candidacies, and the traits of a good candidate, including references to how these considerations might vary for nationally versus regionally elected offices.

