

Public goods provision and citizen preferences for institutional changes: Evidence from the dictatorship-era constitution in Chile

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Outline:

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Aims and Scope

Aims and Scope

Context

Institutional change and the constitution:

- ▶ Positive constitutional economics argues that constitutions deal with the outcomes of collective action → provision of public goods (Marmolo, 1999; Voigt, 2011b)
- ▶ Constitution implies an equilibrium within an institutional arrangement → permanent deviation from this equilibrium may increase citizens' willingness to support a constitutional change or replacement (Voigt, 2011a)
- ▶ Public acceptance of constitutional changes is desirable and potentially crucial to ensuring social and economic stability
- ▶ Literature has extensively documented the role that social movements play as a trigger for constitutional change (Balkin, 2005; Eskridge, 2002; Friedman, 2010; Siegel, 2006; Yan, 2017)
- ▶ However, less attention has been given to the way mass opinion and voters reveal their preferences for structural reforms (Biggers, 2019; Curtice and Seyd, 2018; Riambau et al., 2020)

Aims and Scope

Context

Replacing the constitution:

- ▶ Common practice during the 1970s and 1980s, especially in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Ghai, 2006; Voigt, 1997)
- ▶ Latin America: most countries replaced their constitutions during the twentieth century (Negretto, 2012; UNDP, 2015b). At the end of the 2000s, a wave of significant institutional changes was carried out in Bolivia and Venezuela.
- ▶ Chile will write a new constitution: institution-based solution to restoring social peace and democratic legitimacy in the wake of massive social demonstrations that began on October 18, 2019

Aims and Scope

Aim of the paper

To assess the effect of citizen satisfaction with the provision of local and global public goods on the willingness to support major institutional changes

In particular:

1. We adhere to a constitutional-economics paradigm by arguing that institutional change is provoked by a deviation in constitutional equilibrium (inadequate governance)
2. We use the constitutional process recently started in Chile to change its dictatorship-era constitution to study the determinants of citizen preferences for constitutional change, distinguishing between amendment and replacement, which is less common in the literature

Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, we hypothesize that:

1. Given that the provision of public goods derives from a constitutional arrangement, a persistent divergence from this institutional equilibrium in terms of efficiency, quality, and/or coverage may encourage citizen demand for constitutional change
2. Citizen preferences for changing the constitution (either amending or replacing) may differ from citizen preferences for a more radical constitutional change

Aims and Scope

The Chilean case is apt for our research question for three reasons:

1. The current constitution did not originate through a democratic process as it was passed during the military-civil dictatorship headed by Augusto Pinochet
2. The existing constitution undermined the provision of public goods through a more limited role of the state.
3. Increasing and dramatic dissociation between the political elites and citizen interests regarding the provision of public goods.

Data and Empirical Strategy

Data and Empirical Strategy

Data

- ▶ Empirical study used individual-level data from the 2016/2017 AmericasBarometer survey conducted in Chile
- ▶ LAPOP survey included question CHICONST1, which provided the following options to Chilean respondents:
 1. Maintain the current constitution
 2. Amend the current constitution
 3. Write a new constitution.

Data and Empirical Strategy

Empirical Strategy

1. Willingness to reform the constitution: Ordered probit model

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{If } y_i^* < \alpha_1 \\ 2 & \text{If } \alpha_1 \leq y_i^* < \alpha_2 \\ 3 & \text{If } y_i^* \geq \alpha_2 \end{cases}$$

$$y_i^* = X\beta + W\gamma + P\pi + V\delta + T\tau + Z\theta + \varepsilon_i$$

2. Differences in citizens' preferences for changing the constitution: Ordered probit model w/sample selection

$$s_i = 1(s_i^* \geq 0)$$

$$y_i = \sum_{k=1}^2 k \times 1(\alpha_k < y_i^* \leq \alpha_{k+1}); \text{ if } s_i = 1$$

$$s_i^* = X\beta + W\gamma + P\pi + V\delta + T\tau + Z\theta + \varepsilon_{1i}$$

$$y_i^* = X\beta + W\gamma + P\pi + V\delta + T\tau + Z\theta + \varepsilon_{2i}$$

Data and Empirical Strategy

Empirical Strategy

Where:

- ▶ X : vector of explanatory variables that measure citizen satisfaction with the provision of local public goods: Streets, roads, and highways (SD2NEW), public schools (SD3NEW), medical and health services (SD6NEW), citizen perception of neighborhood safety (A0J11), and government response in the aftermath of an earthquake (INFRA4TER)
- ▶ W : citizen satisfaction with the provision of global public goods: freedom of the press (LIB1), freedom of speech (LIB2B), the protection of citizens' basic rights (B3), human rights protection (LIB4), right to a fair trial (B1), and the seriousness of climate change (ENV2B)
- ▶ P : regressors linked to political interest (POL1), satisfaction with democracy (PN4), and a dummy variable for right-wing ideological orientations (L1)
- ▶ V : conservative beliefs regarding abortion (W14A), same-sex marriage (D6), religion (Q5B), and patriotism based on pride in national identity (B43)
- ▶ T : Citizen perceptions of corrupt behavior among politicians (EXC7NEW) and trust in democratic institutions, such as the presidency (B21A), the National Congress (B13), and Chilean courts (A0J12)
- ▶ Z : Vector of control covariates, such as age (Q2), years of schooling (ED), household economic situation (Q10D), and dummy variables for gender, indigeneity, and rurality

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Dependent variable					
Willingness to reform the constitution	1,159	2.53	0.63	1	3
Explanatory variables					
Satisfaction with local public goods:					
<i>Streets, roads, and highways</i>	1,153	2.65	0.72	1	4
<i>Public schools</i>	1,097	2.54	0.73	1	4
<i>Medical and health services</i>	1,139	2.14	0.79	1	4
<i>Citizen security</i>	1,159	2.76	0.94	1	4
<i>Governmental response to disasters</i>	1,154	2.61	1.11	1	5
Satisfaction with global public goods:					
<i>Freedom of the press</i>	1,151	1.91	0.80	1	3
<i>Freedom of speech</i>	1,158	1.73	0.72	1	3
<i>Protection of citizens' basic rights</i>	1,151	3.21	1.51	1	7
<i>Human rights protection</i>	1,153	1.58	0.68	1	3
<i>Fair trial guarantee</i>	1,153	3.04	1.47	1	7
<i>Seriousness of climate change</i>	1,152	3.68	0.66	1	4
Political attitudes:					
<i>Right-wing political orientation</i> (Yes = 1)	1,159	0.32	0.47	0	1
<i>Political interest</i>	1,159	2.07	1.04	1	4
<i>Satisfaction with democracy</i>	1,159	2.24	0.73	1	4

Table 1. (cont.)

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Conservative values:					
<i>Attitudes toward abortion</i> (Pro-life = 1)	1,159	0.27	0.44	0	1
<i>Disapproval of same-sex marriage</i>	1,159	4.67	3.63	1	10
<i>Importance of religion</i>	1,159	3.08	1.06	1	4
<i>Pride in national identity</i>	1,159	6.33	1.23	1	7
Corruption and institutional trust:					
<i>Corruption among politicians</i>	1,151	3.87	0.94	1	5
<i>Trust in the President</i>	1,157	3.62	1.91	1	7
<i>Trust in the National Congress</i>	1,148	2.93	1.61	1	7
<i>Trust in the Courts</i>	1,154	1.75	0.98	1	4
Control variables:					
<i>Gender</i> (Female = 1)	1,159	0.48	0.50	0	1
<i>Age</i>	1,159	41.69	16.06	18	94
<i>Years of schooling</i>	1,159	11.42	3.57	0	17
<i>Household's economic situation</i>	1,159	2.69	0.79	1	4
<i>Indigeneity</i> (Indigenous people = 1)	1,159	0.13	0.34	0	1
<i>Rurality</i> (Yes = 1)	1,159	0.12	0.32	0	1

Main Findings and Discussion

Table 2. Ordered probit estimates for the willingness to reform the Chilean constitution

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Political attitudes:				
<i>Right-wing political orientation</i> (Yes = 1)	-0.2713*** (0.077)	-0.2240*** (0.079)	-0.1937** (0.082)	-0.1687** (0.084)
<i>Political interest</i>	-0.0356 (0.038)	-0.0307 (0.038)	-0.0447 (0.040)	-0.0344 (0.040)
<i>Satisfaction with democracy</i>	-0.1334*** (0.052)	-0.1094** (0.055)	-0.0856 (0.058)	-0.0715 (0.060)
Conservative values:				
<i>Attitudes toward abortion</i> (Pro-life = 1)	-0.0988 (0.087)	-0.1036 (0.090)	-0.1171 (0.092)	-0.1153 (0.094)
<i>Disapproval of same-sex marriage</i>	-0.0073 (0.011)	-0.0099 (0.011)	-0.0146 (0.012)	-0.0161 (0.012)
<i>Importance of religion</i>	-0.0294 (0.039)	-0.0338 (0.039)	-0.0228 (0.040)	-0.0165 (0.041)
<i>Pride in national identity</i>	-0.0677** (0.032)	-0.0631* (0.032)	-0.0530 (0.033)	-0.0465 (0.033)
Corruption and institutional trust:				
<i>Corruption among politicians</i>		0.0464 (0.041)	0.0587 (0.043)	0.0521 (0.044)
<i>Trust in the President</i>		0.0236 (0.024)	0.0174 (0.025)	0.0198 (0.025)
<i>Trust in the National Congress</i>		-0.0862*** (0.028)	-0.0816*** (0.029)	-0.0723** (0.033)
<i>Trust in the Courts</i>		0.0697* (0.041)	0.0796* (0.043)	0.0847* (0.046)

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2. (cont.)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Satisfaction with local public goods:				
<i>Streets, roads, and highways</i>			-0.0299 (0.056)	-0.0220 (0.057)
<i>Public schools</i>			-0.1127** (0.055)	-0.1259** (0.057)
<i>Medical and health services</i>			0.0015 (0.054)	-0.0039 (0.055)
<i>Citizen security</i>			0.0056 (0.042)	0.0027 (0.042)
<i>Governmental response to natural disasters</i>			-0.0008 (0.036)	0.0173 (0.037)
Satisfaction with global public goods:				
<i>Freedom of the press</i>				-0.0101 (0.051)
<i>Freedom of speech</i>				-0.0983 (0.060)
<i>Protection of citizens' basic rights</i>				-0.0075 (0.035)
<i>Human rights protection</i>				-0.1755*** (0.061)
<i>Fair trial guarantee</i>				-0.0143 (0.032)
<i>Seriousness of climate change</i>				-0.0430 (0.059)

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2. (cont.)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Control variables:				
<i>Gender</i> (Female = 1)	0.0472 (0.073)	0.0660 (0.074)	0.0311 (0.076)	0.0317 (0.079)
<i>Age</i>	-0.0058** (0.002)	-0.0050** (0.002)	-0.0063** (0.003)	-0.0053* (0.003)
<i>Years of schooling</i>	-0.0296** (0.013)	-0.0262** (0.013)	-0.0271* (0.014)	-0.0225 (0.014)
<i>Household's economic situation</i>	-0.0530 (0.047)	-0.0482 (0.048)	-0.0530 (0.050)	-0.0431 (0.051)
<i>Indigeneity</i> (Indigenous people = 1)	0.1117 (0.105)	0.1221 (0.103)	0.1147 (0.106)	0.0841 (0.109)
<i>Rurality</i> (Yes = 1)	0.0368 (0.129)	0.0623 (0.133)	0.0836 (0.138)	0.0787 (0.143)
α_1	-3.2182*** (0.339)	-2.9194*** (0.395)	-3.1863*** (0.439)	-3.6279*** (0.505)
α_2	-1.9906*** (0.331)	-1.6784*** (0.391)	-1.9478*** (0.437)	-2.3677*** (0.503)
Observations	1,159	1,137	1,062	1,045
Log likelihood	-971.3	-944.8	-883.9	-863.7
Pseudo R^2	0.026	0.034	0.038	0.047
χ^2 statistic	51.22	63.63	65.84	80.02

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. Ord. probit w/sample selection estimates for the willingness to reform the constitution

	Selection model (1)	Constitutional reform (2)	Selection model (3)	Constitutional reform (4)	Selection model (5)	Constitutional reform (6)
Political attitudes:						
<i>Right-wing political orientation</i> (Yes = 1)	-0.3991*** (0.122)	-0.0477 (0.086)	-0.4053*** (0.135)	-0.1635* (0.086)	-0.3597** (0.143)	-0.1306 (0.089)
<i>Political interest</i>	-0.0005 (0.063)	-0.0235 (0.040)	-0.0048 (0.071)		-0.0133 (0.076)	-0.0361 (0.042)
<i>Satisfaction with democracy</i>	-0.2143** (0.089)	-0.0155 (0.059)	-0.1922* (0.100)	-0.0743 (0.061)	-0.1577 (0.102)	-0.0645 (0.063)
Conservative values:						
<i>Attitudes toward abortion</i> (Pro-life = 1)	-0.3579*** (0.131)	0.1261 (0.097)	-0.3800*** (0.132)	-0.0354 (0.095)	-0.3789*** (0.141)	-0.0240 (0.098)
<i>Disapproval of same-sex marriage</i>	-0.0262 (0.017)	0.0043 (0.012)	-0.0347* (0.019)	-0.0092 (0.012)	-0.0431** (0.019)	-0.0111 (0.013)
<i>Importance of religion</i>	0.0140 (0.065)	-0.0587 (0.041)	-0.0342 (0.067)	-0.0483 (0.041)	-0.0059 (0.071)	-0.0345 (0.043)
<i>Pride in national identity</i>	-0.0705 (0.067)	-0.0569 (0.035)	0.0110 (0.067)		-0.0164 (0.066)	-0.0510 (0.036)
Corruption and institutional trust:						
<i>Corruption among politicians</i>	-0.1291* (0.071)	0.1132** (0.046)	-0.0665 (0.071)	0.1031** (0.046)	-0.0702 (0.073)	0.0965** (0.047)
<i>Trust in the President</i>	0.0594 (0.039)	0.0133 (0.024)	0.0225 (0.043)	0.0149 (0.025)	0.0462 (0.046)	0.0203 (0.026)
<i>Trust in the National Congress</i>	-0.1361*** (0.044)	-0.0331 (0.030)	-0.1423*** (0.050)	-0.0767** (0.030)	-0.1123** (0.055)	-0.0651* (0.034)
<i>Trust in the Courts</i>	0.0589 (0.061)	0.0408 (0.044)	0.1279* (0.068)	0.0707 (0.045)	0.1197 (0.074)	0.0769 (0.047)

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. (cont.)

	Selection model (1)	Constitutional reform (2)	Selection model (3)	Constitutional reform (4)	Selection model (5)	Constitutional reform (6)
Satisfaction with local public goods:						
<i>Streets, roads, and highways</i>			-0.2296** (0.101)	0.0168 (0.058)	-0.1935* (0.104)	0.0188 (0.059)
<i>Public schools</i>			-0.1254 (0.098)	-0.1186** (0.059)	-0.1983** (0.097)	-0.1261** (0.060)
<i>Medical and health services</i>			-0.0715 (0.088)	0.0135 (0.056)	-0.0649 (0.094)	0.0115 (0.058)
<i>Citizen security</i>			-0.0217 (0.069)	0.0107 (0.043)	-0.0330 (0.073)	0.0191 (0.044)
<i>Governmental response to disasters</i>			0.0449 (0.059)	-0.0117 (0.038)	0.0624 (0.060)	0.0122 (0.039)
Satisfaction with global public goods:						
<i>Freedom of the press</i>					0.0250 (0.088)	-0.0202 (0.054)
<i>Freedom of speech</i>					-0.1202 (0.103)	-0.0749 (0.061)
<i>Protection of citizens' basic rights</i>					-0.0822 (0.062)	0.0079 (0.036)
<i>Human rights protection</i>					-0.2758** (0.107)	-0.1489** (0.063)
<i>Fair trial guarantee</i>					0.0061 (0.056)	-0.0212 (0.034)
<i>Seriousness of climate change</i>					-0.0644 (0.090)	-0.0392 (0.062)

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. (cont.)

	Selection model (1)	Constitutional reform (2)	Selection model (3)	Constitutional reform (4)	Selection model (5)	Constitutional reform (6)
Control variables:						
<i>Gender</i> (Female = 1)	0.1034 (0.119)	0.0575 (0.081)	0.0783 (0.131)	0.0599 (0.081)	0.0424 (0.138)	0.0485 (0.083)
<i>Age</i>	-0.0057 (0.004)	-0.0042 (0.003)	-0.0017 (0.004)	-0.0074*** (0.003)	-0.0022 (0.004)	-0.0059** (0.003)
<i>Years of schooling</i>	0.0083 (0.021)	-0.0533*** (0.014)	0.0316 (0.020)	-0.0452*** (0.014)	0.0353* (0.020)	-0.0377*** (0.015)
<i>Household's economic situation</i>	-0.1333* (0.078)	0.0244 (0.052)	-0.1490* (0.083)	-0.0196 (0.053)	-0.1412 (0.091)	-0.0131 (0.054)
<i>Indigeneity</i> (Indigenous people = 1)	0.6131** (0.272)	-0.0679 (0.117)	0.5189** (0.252)	0.0519 (0.120)	0.4355* (0.259)	0.0278 (0.121)
<i>Rurality</i> (Yes = 1)	-0.3171* (0.174)	0.3135** (0.138)	-0.1468 (0.183)	0.1894 (0.134)	-0.2014 (0.190)	0.1989 (0.139)
α_1	-1.2744*** (0.433)		-1.3819*** (0.456)		-2.0266*** (0.544)	
<i>athrho</i>	-2.7984*** (0.610)		5.3948 (7.318)		6.4021 (19.673)	
Observations	1,137		1,062		1,045	
Log likelihood	-916.2		-851.3		-827.3	
Wald test statistic	47.91		52.76		64.78	

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Conclusions

Conclusions

1. Main findings show that the desire for constitutional change in Chile is less likely among citizens who declare right-wing political orientations, exhibit a higher satisfaction with democracy, and adhere to conservative values.
2. Preferences for amending the Chilean constitution could be triggered by a greater discontent with public education and human rights protection, whereas higher levels of corruption among politicians were linked with a stronger demand for constitutional replacement.
3. Policy implications:
 - ▶ The constitution will be interpreted as legitimate only to the extent that the government is able to mediate citizens' satisfaction with public goods.
 - ▶ Results support evidence that Chilean citizens have changed their opinions and attitudes about modifying the 1980 constitution.
 - ▶ A generalized discontent with human rights protection promoted citizens' attitudes to reform the constitution in Chile

Thank you