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President Vázquez from Uruguay and President Bachelet from Chile

Political Knowledge Regimes and policy change in Chile and Uruguay

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Abstract

This paper studies the Political Knowledge Regimes (PKR) as an explanation of change in three political areas in Chile and Uruguay between 1989 and 2015. We consider two structural variables: the type of policy making regime and the general evaluation of science in a given political system.

> **Hypothesis:** The combination of the type of policy making regime (open or closed) and the general evaluation of the status of science by the political system (rationalist enlightenment or pragmatist anti-intellectualism) are different in Chile and Uruguay. This gives way to two different knowledge regimes and different policy results.

To test our hypothesis, we used two case studies (Chile and Uruguay) from three different policy fields, in each of these we analysed two events of change[1] (thus having six pieces of analysis per country). These policy fields were: international trade, fiscal policy and educational policy. Through the analysis of the cases of Chile and Uruguay we found that PKR have very different characteristics and outcomes in both countries

Regarding the general evaluation of science within a political system, reforms in Chile are based on academic standards. Likewise, in an effort to build their legitimacy, political figures have strong academic credentials, mainly in economics. On the other hand, Uruguay's political figures have lower academic credentials, political reasoning and arguments are more important than academic credentials.

Regarding the type of policy making regime, it is argued that experts and their knowledge have played differing roles in each country. In Chile, experts have influenced events of change significantly more than in Uruguay. The political system in Chile has given power to specialized knowledge, where experts are trusted on their ability to negotiate agreements and political contracts. Contrary to this, in Uruguay, public policy debates have focused on political issues, rather than technical ones.

These findings support our main hypothesis: the social value of science, which is higher in Chile, directly impacts on the implementation of specialized knowledge in public policies. Chile has a closed policy making regime, and in contrast with the Uruguayan case, specialized knowledge is considered an essential value for policy makers.

Regarding our second variable on study, type of policy making regime, five of the six change events studied for the Chilean case have been identified as closed, and all of them have shown public policies with considerable consensus and legitimacy. In contrast, the six events studied in Uruguay have shown an open type of policy making regime. In pluralist contexts, as is the case of Uruguay, political figures have strong incentives to use available knowledge to maximize their influence. In other words, each group uses specialized knowledge to change the course of politics according to their preferences.

These findings show the analytical performance of the PKR concept as an explanation of the differences in public policies in Latin America and contribute, at the same time, to enrich the debates on technocracy and democracy, adding new information for future research agendas.

1. Events of change are defined as situations in which there is a chance of reframing or reorienting a policy, either in the means it uses or its ends.

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Glossary

Knowledge Regimes (KR)
Policy-making Regime (PMR)
Research Units (RU)
Political Knowledge Regimes (PKRs)
Frente Amplio (FA)
Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

Image: Chile's *Palacio de la Moneda*
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Introduction

This paper focuses on the use of research in public policy as a way of supporting and promoting the debate on democracy and technocracy, particularly in the Latin American context.

It employs the concept of Political Knowledge Regimes (PKR) introduced in the first section of this paper, followed by a methodological review. The next section describes the methodological design and presents the hypotheses. The analysis is divided in two sections: the first presents key information and the second presents an analysis of the case studies to prove the hypotheses. The cases of Uruguay and Chile are analysed through two events of change[2] in three policy fields. These analyses are used to test the hypothesis presented, based on the concept of PKR (Garcé, 2015).

In the conclusion we discuss the primary findings and the performance of PKR, we also offer a reflection on the relation between technocracy and democracy and how this allows to build new inquires for further research.

A step-forward in the theory of knowledge regimes: the political knowledge regime

Specialized literature has identified– and attempted to explain– differences in how political systems in different countries use expert knowledge when developing public policies. Some countries, like Germany, have a strong tendency to implement the use of information and research results. In such countries, citizens and policymakers are inclined to consider objective knowledge important and value its role in the construction of public policies. On the other hand, countries such as the United States of America (USA) show a significant divide between the decision-making context and research. In these countries specialized knowledge, far from being regarded as neutral, is often considered as a tool in the quest for power.

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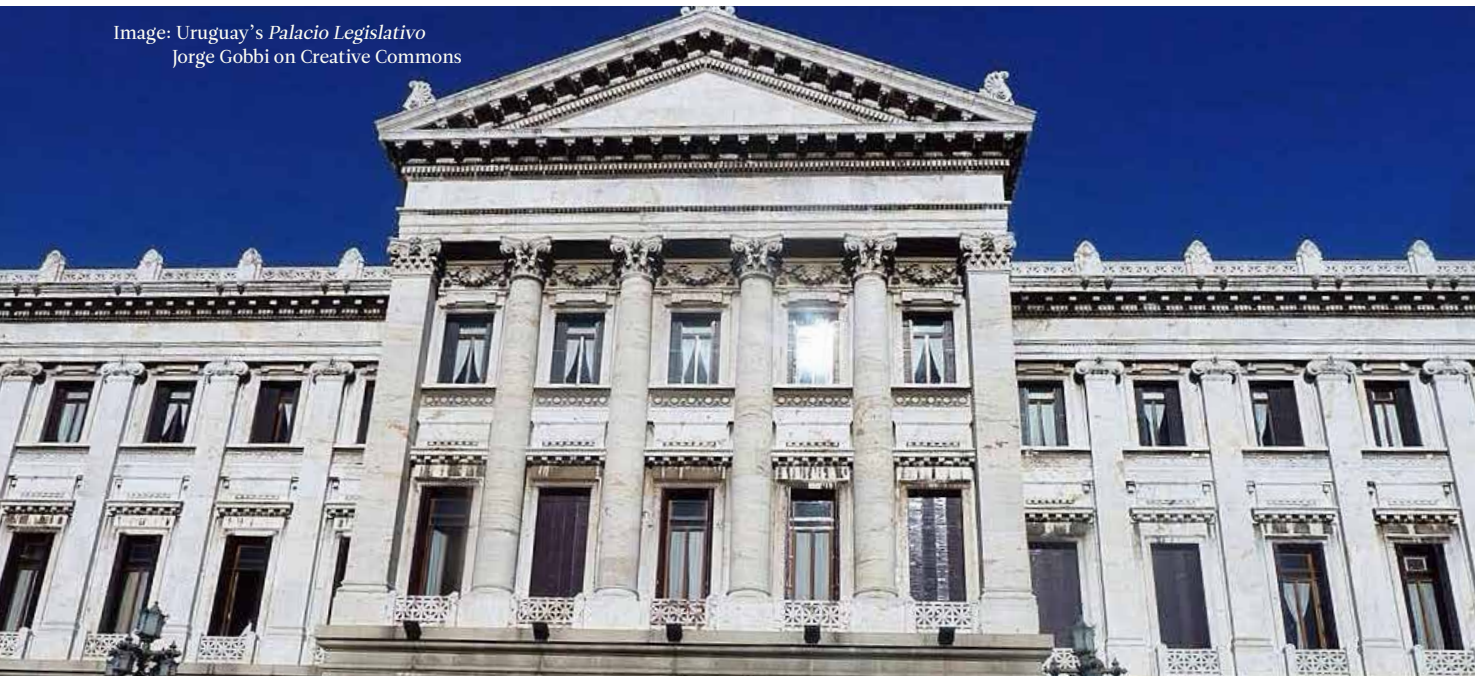

Image: Uruguay's *Palacio Legislativo*
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John Campbell and Ove Pedersen made a great theoretical and practical contribution to political science in developing the concept of *knowledge regimes* (KR)[2]: "*Knowledge regimes are the organizational and institutional machinery that generates data, research, policy recommendations and other ideas that influence public debate and policy-making*" (Campbell y Pedersen 2014:6). According to them, to determine the KR of a country one needs to study the type of *policy-making regime* (PMR) and the type of capitalism. Both directly influence the type of research units (RU) and the dynamics of the market of ideas.[3]

The KR concept provides an analytic global framework, which allows for the construction of typologies of production and use of knowledge in policymaking. However, it has two significant limitations. First, the focus of analysis is on the supply side of research. The demand side, as well as the institutions and actors on this side, receive less attention. Secondly, the KR typology presented by Campbell and Pederson is closely linked to economics, but it would be important to consider the context and role of the State when studying the role that specialized knowledge plays. The emphasis on the economic structure and its central actors (companies) leaves behind political institutions, political parties and their key organisations.

2. The literature on the bridge between research and public policy has been paying increasing attention to the influence of context. The concept of KR is a great step forward insofar as it offers a persuasive explanation as to the concrete way political and economic structures affect the supply of available knowledge for public policies.

3. Public and private organizations that produce several types of knowledge applied to public policies: "*First are academic-style scholarly research units (...). These are staffed with scholars, professional researchers, and analysts, often with joint university appointments. They are often dependent on public funding. They produce expert research monographs and journal articles much like those found in academia. They also tend to be politically and ideologically non-partisan. Second are advocacy research units. They tend to be privately funded and are politically and ideologically partisan. They are less concerned with conducting scholarly research than with packaging and disseminating the research of others in brief policy papers and through the media in order to influence the ideological climate, public debate, and public policy. Third are party research units. These are closely associated with political parties and provide a source of expert advice and analysis for party members. Sometimes they are actually housed within the party apparatus itself. Fourth are state research units either directly affiliated with specific government departments and ministries or created on an ad hoc basis to advise government on a specific matter. Unlike the first three, these are largely apart from civil society.*" (Campbell and Pedersen 2011: 6-7)

These limitations suggest that we need a new concept focused more on politics and less on economics. This suggestion is found in Campbell and Pederson´s model and is proven by the fact that some predictions and hypothesis cannot be verified using the KR model. For instance, the Uruguayan case cannot be properly predicted. If we used Campbell and Pederson's model, we would predict that both Germany and Uruguay will have similar KR: they share the same type of capitalism (a coordinated market) and the same type of regime for the creation of policies (open and pluralist). In both of these cases, the marketplace of ideas is, in theory, less competitive, with a few RUs which promote specific ideas or interests and are perceived by society as neutral. In Uruguay, however, this is not true. As in Germany, Uruguay has few research units. These research units are either in the administration itself or in the University of the Republic, and are both powerful and influential. However, in Uruguay, specialized knowledge is a very useful tool for political parties and their factions[4] in the political context.

Technical reasoning is subordinated to political reasoning in Uruguay. In this sense the role of specialized knowledge in Uruguay is more like the role it plays the USA than in Germany. Both in Uruguay and in the USA, data and research are strong weapons in the struggle for power. The big difference, however, are the actors involved in this struggle. In the USA the actors are interest groups strongly influenced and based on think tanks, while in Uruguay the main actors are political parties.

Therefore, to fully understand the specialized knowledge produced and its role in politics and policymaking, it is necessary to identify how the political market is built and structured. The PKR model keeps one of the two analytic variables proposed by Campbell and Pederson- the policy making regime- but replaces the variable of type of capitalism with a variable that considers social and cultural characteristics.

The socio-cultural variable chosen is the *predominant cultural tradition*, which is based on the *general assessment of knowledge and science*. In our theoretical framework this variable considers two positions: rationalist enlightenment in one extreme, and pragmatism / anti-intellectualism on the other. This variable can help us better understand why there is greater demand for specialized knowledge in some countries than in others. This is variable is a proposal, and we will have to analyse case studies and comparisons to be sure of its usefulness.

The typology of the PKR is shown below:

Chart 1. Typology of Political Knowledge Regimes with country examples

		General evaluation of science in the political system (Predominant cultural tradition)	
		Rationalist Enlightenment	Pragmatism Anti-intellectualism
Type of *Policy Making Regime*	Centralized	**I** Technocratic Elitism (Chile)	**III** Plebeian Majoritarism (Argentina)
	Decentralized	**II** Technocratic Pluralism (Brasil)	**IV** Plebeian Pluralism (Uruguay)

Source: Garcé (2015)

4. In Uruguay the electoral system permits the formation of factions within political parties. These factions are institutionalized and highly visible, their leaders dispute the leadership of the party (as a whole) and are key agents in intra and inter party negotiations.

It is important to state that no normative bias is sought in this discussion. With that in mind, let us examine in greater depth each of the quadrants in the table above.

Type I. Technocratic Elitism.

The combination of centralization and rationalism generates a State-driven use of social research. Political parties frequently turn to experts and tend to delegate important responsibilities to them in the development of public policies. Academic knowledge is very important, and often acts as a trampoline for people's political careers and is a requirement for them to attain positions in government. A good example of this type of PKR in Latin America is Chile, which seems to have a German influence in which science is highly valued.

Type II. Technocratic Pluralism.

The combination of pluralism and rationalism generates an open market for ideas in which alternative policy paradigms compete. Science is highly valued and this generates considerable developments in the social sciences and in research applied to public policy. As in Type I, there are State structures that favour the use of knowledge in policymaking. University education and academic merit are important to attain a position in government. A good example of this type of PKR is Brazil.

Type III. Plebian Majoritarism.

The combination of centralization and anti-intellectualism does not favour the formation of a competitive or demanding market for ideas. While there is not necessarily a low-intensity use of research, it is strictly purposed to the strategies of leading actors who mainly resort to experts when they want to give their decisions legitimacy and strengthen their hegemony. Argentina would be an example of this type of PKR.

Type IV. Plebian Pluralism.

The combination of pluralism and anti-intellectualism generates a comparatively low level of specialized knowledge use. Pluralism favours a market of ideas that is open and competitive, but politics clearly dominate technical rationality. Specialized knowledge is essentially a weapon in the power struggle amongst the main political actors. The way in which the State is structured, like in a type III system, clearly show the predominance of political rationality. A good example of this type is Uruguay.

Hypotheses to understand the Uruguayan and Chilean cases

Recent studies on Latin American political systems emphasize the similarities between the Uruguayan and Chilean democracies (Luna and Alcántara 2014:137). Throughout the twentieth century Latin America was beset by authoritarianism and political instability, which influenced the political development of Uruguay and Chile. Both countries, however, were able to make their political and democratic systems work reasonably for over more than thirty years (Chile from 1932 in Chile, and Uruguay from 1942). During this time, both countries saw the popularity of political parties from the left increase in an astonishing way, building powerful coalitions in the second half of this century. Furthermore, in 1973 both the Chilean and Uruguayan democracies suffered a *coup d'etat*. It was not until the eighties that both countries began the transition process to re-establish and reinforce their democratic institutions. The processes, in both countries, allowed the army to keep their share of power for a significant period of time.

From a comparative approach, Chile and Uruguay regularly head regional democracy rankings (EIU 2014:4, Barreda 2011, Levine and Molina 2007: 40, Altman and Pérez-Liñán 2002:92). Furthermore, during the twentieth century both democracies have enjoyed a strong, stable and highly institutionalized political system (Luna and Alcántara 2004:31,39). In Chile, political parties succeeded in becoming the core link between political matters and society (Garretón 1983:31-32; Valenzuela 1995:6-7). They were also the main actors in the Uruguayan democracy where political parties were created during the independence process and early state formation. Uruguayan parties have achieved a high level of institutionalization and are the oldest of the region (Caetano, Rilla and Pérez 1987; Chasquetti y Buquet 2004: 232-233).

From a functional point of view, the Chilean and Uruguayan democracies share similarities which originate from the political protagonism of their political parties during this period. In the social aspect, they also share a very important characteristic: they have both developed a wide middle class. According to Rodríguez Weber (2014), the expansion of this middle class in Chile started in the 1930s and went on until the 1970s, with a period of progressive distribution of their incomes or earnings.[5] Uruguay experienced the same process: the middle class was predominant at the start of the twentieth century (Solari 1967:62) and it grew in the first fifty years, consolidating itself as a main element of society conforming two thirds of the country´s population (Solari 1991:102).

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As described before, Chile and Uruguay have very important political similarities: their democracies are supported by a strong political system and on the growth of the middle class (particularly between 1930s and 1970s). Therefore, Mill´s (1843) method of difference is pertinent for the analysis. Chile and Uruguay are *most similar cases* as they show different inputs on the use of research on the public policies variable and share inputs on numerous possible explicative variables.

To address this, we turn to Diana Tussie (2009), who showed the impact of research on commercial politics in her book, arguing that the role of research becomes more evident during processes of change: "*The choice of policy change is key to this work, as it emphasizes the capacity of research to modify a status quo and to catalyse the knowledge-based policy discussion to another level*" (Tussie, 2009:2). But, to analyze the factors that explain the use of social research, cases of failure are as important as cases of success.

5. According to our results, between 1938 and 1970 Chile experienced a second period of progressive distribution of income. During this period, it also experienced economic, social and institutional transformations

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This theoretical framework leads to the following hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1:** The value attributed to science within a political system directly affects the use of knowledge in policymaking.
    - The higher the value of the role of science (in society and/or in the elite) then: the more abundant the critical mass of available social research; the more powerful the technical structures in political institutions; and the more specialized knowledge is appreciated as an attribute of political leaders.
- **Hypothesis 2:** The policy-making regime influences how specialized knowledge is used.
    - When the policymaking context is open and decentralized, research outcomes are used by different actors (pressure groups, NGOs, parties and their factions, , etc.) as weapons in the struggle to influence public policies.
    - On its contrary, when the context is closed and centralized, those who oversee decision-making are freer to choose what to consider to create these policies or to legitimize decisions made ex ante.

The two rival hypotheses are:

- **Rival hypothesis 1:** the type and degree of specialized knowledge depends on the policy field and not on the general characteristics of the political system. Moreover, in a political system with the same policy making regime and value attributed to science in the political system, divergent procedures to incorporate research into policymaking can coexist.
- **Rival hypothesis 2**: the type and degree of use of specialized knowledge directly depends on the ideology of the political party. Some political parties prioritize the use of this knowledge and value the role of policy research experts.

The way of measuring how important politics are and the amount of variance that can exist at a given time within a system is to study more than one policy field at a time.To find out if policy fields matter, it is necessary to select different kinds of public policies. Within this framework, we chose to study three public policies: international trade, fiscal and educational policies. Compared to international trade and fiscal policies, educational policy has the most particularities, as it accepts a larger degree of social participation and appeals to different fields of knowledge. Hence, international trade and fiscal policy require a different economic policy. Their costs and benefits are easier to identify.

To assess the relevance of ideology, we chose to compare events of change accomplished by different political actors within the same country. In Chile, we chose events of change implemented by Presidents Frei (centre left), Lagos (centre left), Piñera (centre right) and Bachelet (centre left). In Uruguay, we studied the administrations of Presidents Sanguinetti (centre right), Vázquez (centre left) and Mujica (centre left). The events included in this comparison are similar both in their thematic and time space natures. The selected events of change are sketched out in the following chart:

Chart 2: Selected events of policy change (Chile and Uruguay, post-dictatorships)

	Chile			Uruguay		
	Event	**Outcome**	**President**	**Event**	**Outcome**	**President**
Trade Policy	Free trade agreement (FTA with USA)	Yes	Lagos (2003)	Free trade agreement (FTA with USA)	No	Vázquez (2006)
	Pacific Alliance	Yes	Piñera (2013)	Pacific Alliance	No	Mujica (2013)
Fiscal Policy	Fiscal Reform	Yes	Lagos (2000)	Fiscal Reform	No	Vázquez (2005)
	Tax Reform	Yes	Bachelet (2014)	Tax Reform	No	Vázquez (2006)
Education Policy	*Brunner** Reform	Yes	Frei (1994)	*Rama** Reform	No	Sanguinetti (1996)
	General Education Law	Yes	Bachelet (2009)	General Education Law	No	Vázquez (2008)

*Note: Refers to those in charge of the reforms José Joaquín Brunner and Germán Rama
Source: Authors' elaboration.

To analyse the political process, we used the analytical framework proposed by John Kingdon (1995). Kingdon points out that a shift in a public policy occurs when three streams coincide: the problem, the policy and the political streams. According to the author, there cannot be a sequence between these streams: they do not happen one after the other in perfect order, rather, the policymaking process is more chaotic. When these three streams collide, they create a policy window.

It is important to consider the enabling role of specialized knowledge and its actors in the dynamics of these streams and when analysing the results of the events of change. Focus should be placed on specialists: their academic and political careers, their contributions to the subject itself, their participation in public debates, their networks and coalitions, their institutional affiliations, their links with society in general, and their connection with political parties and the State.

Specialized knowledge, as stated by Kingdon, can play a big role in each of the three streams. It can help to raise an issue onto the public agenda (it can identify it, measure it, and expose possible explanations or causal beliefs) and contribute to the elaboration of alternatives by presenting possible solutions. It also impacts on the current political trend by favouring or hindering the articulation of reformist leaderships and coalitions (building consensus or acting as a weapon in the struggle for influence between competing actors).

We based our study on the analysis of specialized literature produced by academic centres and think tanks, on documents (policy documents produced by the government, experts and other political actors) and on press clippings. We also conducted 73 interviews with key actors (policy actors) and experts in Chile and Uruguay. This research lasted 18 months.

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Three policy fields and six events of change: Highlighting the use of expert knowledge

International trade policies in Chile and Uruguay

In the international trade political scenario, the first event of change was the chance to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the USA. Chile signed the agreement and Uruguay did not (Porzecanski 2010). In the Chilean case, expert knowledge was vital for the three streams: problem, solution and politics. This knowledge provided legitimacy for the subsequent political decision. An epistemic community,whose members had a background in neoclassical economics[6], was structured around an open regionalism concept. This community was formed by members from different political parties, the private sector, and other experts. This context encouraged and allowed the establishment of a coalition, where expert knowledge on economic development and international trade policy played a significant role to create consensus (Porras 2003).

In Uruguay this expert knowledge was perceived as part of the political game, despite being relevant in the same three tendencies. Two epistemic communities, the neo-institutionalist and the neo-structuralist[7], proposed two different ways to address development outlining two strategies for international integration. Both communities had opposing arguments, which were used by political actors as ammunition in their dispute for power. Eventually, the FTA was blocked by the *Frente Amplio* (FA)[8], the ruling political party at the time. President Tabaré Vázquez retired his proposal for international integration with the intention of safeguarding his political capital (Garcé 2015).

The second event of change we considered in our research was the opportunity both Chile and Uruguay had to be part of the Pacific Alliance. As with the FTA, this event also had a different resolution for both countries: Chile became a full member and Uruguay remained as an observer member.

6. Identified with mainstream liberal economics

7. The first ones emphasize the importance of the rules (institutions) as generators of incentives for actors, being key in the growth of trade and investment. The second uphold proposals linked to ECLAC´s (in its most recent versions).

8. Frente amplio is a leftist political party, founded in 1971 from traditional sectors of the left and progressive sectors originated in the Colorado and National parties.

In the Chilean case, expert knowledge occupied a central place in each of the aspects that defined the event of change: it not only defined the problem and the solution, but also implemented a policy mechanism with a high technical content.

For Chile, this event had similar characteristics to the FTA event. However, it is important to note that the decision to become a full member of the Pacific Alliance was not taken with absolute consensus. In general terms, its compatibility with *open regionalism*[9] allowed for this decision to be influenced by experts who analysed the political course of integration as well as its impact on international trade (Rojas de Galarreta 2015).

In Uruguay, the scenario was also similar to the previous event: the two epistemic communities were again set on opposing sides of the debate. The neo-institutionalists of the FA proposed an opening strategy that identified with the Pacific Alliance. The opposition supported, as in the FTA with the US, this position. Finally, the position of the neo-structuralists prevailed, which was closer to party traditions. These arguments were used as a weapon and not to build consensus. As in the case of the FTA with the US, the political calculation of the President, in this case José Mujica, made political logic prevail (López Burian 2015 and Clemente et al 2015).

Fiscal policy in Chile and Uruguay:

In the fiscal policy scenario, the first topic we addressed was the elaboration of a fiscal rule. In Chile, expert knowledge played a vital role in each of the streams which define it as an event of change, identifying the problem and the solution and implementing an innovative political mechanism with high technical content. The Chilean government delegated the power to determine the parameters for the fiscal rule's structural balance to independent committees (DIPRES 2011). In the arena of fiscal policy, the first issue addressed was the elaboration of a Fiscal Rule. In the Chilean case, expert knowledge occupied a central place in each of the aspects that defined the event of change: it not only defined the problem and the solution, but also implemented a policy mechanism with a high technical content. The government of Chile delegated in independent committees the determination of the parameters for the calculation of the structural balance (DIPRES 2011) Finally, the fiscal rule was shaped without any party confrontation, both in terms of the strategy and also on the space it occupied in economic policy in general (Ffrench-Davis 2015).

In the Uruguayan case, the Uruguayan fiscal rule existed as a solution before existing as a "problem". It had been proposed on several occasions by international organizations, the academic community and even by Danilo Astori (a key figure in government) but it was never approved. As a problem, a fiscal rule was not present in the public scenario until 2016, when the government had to face the possibility of making a fiscal adjustment. Finally, after the political system rejected the rule and the lack of relevance of the issue in public opinion, it was replaced by a tax adjustment. On the one hand, Uruguay has technical problems (capacities) to implement a fiscal rule. But also, approving a fiscal rule means that politicians delegate a power that they now have. Then for it to happen, the trust and appreciation of expertise become central elements, and collide with the Uruguayan political system in which politics play a central role.

9. International insertion strategy that takes the region as a projection platform to the global space.

The second event of change was a tax reform. In Chile, experts were key agents on the design, discussion and results of the reform. Expert knowledge is an essential element in the three streams. Even though the definition of the problem was influenced by critical a combination of factors, the experts' contribution was acknowledged for its role in legitimizing the reform.

In Uruguay, expertise legitimized the mechanisms adopted in parliamentary discussion (Rius 2012). The tax reform – almost unchanged in its approach – had been a political bastion of the left since its birth. This reform has an essentially ideological and political character. Its transcendence and permanence on left-wing programmatic ideas, since its origins in the 1970s, coincides with the characteristics of the system in which it is inserted: a reform of political roots in a country where politics predominates over technique and expertise

Education policy in Chile and Uruguay

One of the events of change to study in this policy field is the first reform process conducted in the 1990s. Chile placed expert knowledge in a prominent position in the problem, policy, and political streams. Since the re-democratization (early 1980s), a group of experts built a program of reforms to be implemented during the government of Concertation. This group of experts could participate in academic circles and even in the Ministry of Education. The mechanisms implemented have prevailed over time thanks to the reforms, which developed ways for the State to operate (Cox 2003; Bellei 2015; Elacqua and González 2014). The experts articulated the educational programme with the rest of the social policies, facilitated agreements with the opposition and in some cases with the teachers' union. They also strengthened the capacities for evaluation and policy design, and facilitated interaction with international organizations. The elaboration of technical studies allowed the construction of a diagnosis that gave public legitimacy to the reform proposal (Picazo 2013).

The tax reform in Uruguay had an essentially ideological and political character. It coincides with the characteristics of the system in which it is inserted: a reform of political roots in a country where politics predominates over technique and expertise.

The process in Uruguay was different. Sociologist Germán Rama led a group of researchers from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) office in Montevideo, thanks to an agreement with the government and under the national public education agency best known as ANEP (Administración Nacional de Educación Pública – National Administration fo Public Education)[10]. The project lasted five years and was led by researchers who did not belong to the bureaucratic system. They were incorporated through programmes known as *by-pass*[11] and were funded by external actors to develop evaluation systems and implement new political instruments. However, the education trade union was reluctant to accept the reform, mainly due to its hierarchical model of administration (De Armas 2002; Mancebo 2001; Bentancur 2008).

10. The National government through the Education and Culture Ministry has barely no authority to take action in the decision-making processes related to educational policies. They are stablished by external or independent Board of Trustees. Currently, three Boards coexists: the ANEP; the University of the Republic (UdelaR), and the Technological University (UTEC). The ANEP is a strong independent agency in relation to the Executive Power, and it is the responsible for elaborating and developing educational policies in all of the three levels (kindergarten, primary and middle school). And, nowadays it also embraces teachers' trainings for tertiary non-university levels.
11. Through the creation of a parallel organizational structure, a policy is applied without going through the previously existing institutional structure.

The second event of change focuses on the process to develop a general education law. In Chile, the results of research contributed to the formulation of a critical diagnosis which gained momentum in the public debate with the mobilization of new social actors, such as secondary and university students. Expert knowledge became a strong member in the institutional debate on norms related to the education political agenda (Cox 2012; García Huidobro 2008; Donoso 2014). The inclusion of experts resulted in the construction of more alternatives.

The process which led to the approval of the General Education Law in Uruguay during the first FA government did not prioritize the use of expert knowledge in the formulation of the diagnosis or its alternatives. Public consultation was prioritized, and included corporate participation. ANEP´s management distanced itself from technocratic styles and instead strengthened participation, inviting education staff to partake (Mancebo y Bentancur 2010). However, this happened at the same time as institutional structures were consolidated in the educational field. These structures came from the previous reform process and had changed the way institutions operated especially in regard to educational evaluation.

What do these cases reveal?

Throughout the studied period, Chile and Uruguay proved to be able to significantly innovate their public policies. This contradicts the common-sense debate in Chile, which argued that after democracy was re-instated it was impossible to implement any important changes in public policies. However, in the policies that we studied, we identified relevant changes. For instance, in terms of commercial politics, innovation was based on ideas from the seventies which sought openness of trade.

The fiscal policy also revealed changes, but in different ways. It turned to be more orthodox (and favour economic growth over redistribution) with the fiscal rule and more heterodoxic (emphasizing the income distribution) with the tax reform.

Finally, in terms of educational policy, there were also mixed signals: more continuity than change in the "Brunner Reform" during the nineties. And more change than continuity occurred due to the massive student mobilizations materialized in the second presidency of Bachelet[12].

Image: Simenon on Creative Commons

12. Chilean president elected through a coalition of left and center left parties.

A clear example of innovation in public policy is the Mercosur case, where Uruguay made progress but was unable to achieve a more radical commercial or trade openness; mainly due to the TLC with USA being blocked. Another example is seen in taxes. An ambitious reform was carried out in Uruguay when a tax to the personal income (IRPF) was established, although this was incapable of building a fiscal rule. Finally, although it managed to carry out an ambitious educational reform in the nineties, Uruguay has not been able to take the agenda of innovations any further during the two decades that followed.

A general view of the events of change have shown some steadiness in aspects which are worth developing further:

i. **The academic profile of policymakers.** In Chile, the leaders of the process of change had strong academic qualifications, including PhDs from prestigious universities in the USA. These credentials are vital to gain the rulers trust. Qualifications in economics are still the most required inside the government, and the most legitimate in the public's opinion. Economists were not only key for the tax and commercial policy reforms, but also for the educational reforms. This contrasts to the context in Uruguay, where government advisory and working teams have low academic standards. The FA is a clear example of this, where political consideration weighs a lot more than academic achievements. It is worth to point out that there are some exceptions, like the Rama educational reform and the fiscal politics during the first Tabaré Vazquez administration, which relied on a highly qualified team of experts who played a key role in the public debate. This legitimized the reform and it was rapidly approved by the parliament.

ii. **Actors and strategies.** All the events of change previously discussed affected the interests of important social groups. This put significant pressure on the government. Changes in educational policies in both countries generated the most social conflicts. The educational policies debate, despite being defined as one of the most political ones, was shielded as a technical dispute in Chile. The critique to the neoliberal paradigm of education, for example, only became political when it could diagnose educational problems related to equality. In Uruguay, the criticism of the "Rama Reform", and the Education Law, ten years later, were more based on politcis than on technical aspects. In both cases, the form that the reform and law processes took was more criticized than the content, either due to the absence of consultation with the actors or the low incorporation of their contributions in the policy proposals.

iii. **The weight of knowledge**. None of the events of change are identical– there might be other differences that escape the context of these policies. Experts and the knowledge they produced played different roles in Chile and in Uruguay. Their influence was greater in Chile, where the political system delegated more power to them and trusted them with the ability to negotiate agreements and build contracts. Uruguay showed that in the three fields there was *less expert knowledge involved*. The debate was politically driven and not technical.

The study on the role of specialized knowledge in the events of change which have been analysed credits the principal hypotheses behind this research:

- **Hypothesis 1. The general value of science in the political system come into play on the use of specialized knowledge regarding the public policies.** Chile, contrasting with the Uruguayan reality, has always considered specialized knowledge as an indispensable attribute for a

political leader and a ruler´s profile. This difference is not easily evidenced in poll results.[13] However, it becomes obvious when it is implemented. It cannot be a coincidence that research units, regardless of their affiliation (public and private, state or from political parties), are stronger than in Uruguay. In addition, political teams in Chile have higher academic standards. This type of context logically assumes that specialized knowledge plays a vital role, and is able to influence public policies or reinforce and facilitate agreements (after the re-democratization a process of alignment was identified between the left and right)

- **H2. Policy-making Regime interferes on how the knowledge in policies is used.** Five of the six events of change analysed in Chile relied on a closed PMR. The only exception was the General Education Law. On the other cases, research results built consensus or legitimized the changes implemented. The sixth case, as in most of the events studied in Uruguay, showed an open PMR. In pluralist contexts, actors have strong incentives, which allow them to instrumentally use available knowledge to maximize its influence. Specialized knowledge easily turns into a tool used by competing groups who want to influence the course of politics.

Based on the analysis of the events of change, however, we see that the PMR also influences to what degree social research is used. A technical team with identic academic credentials, doing the same kind of social research but operating in two different public policy regimes can have different degrees of influence by their work. The best example we found to illustrate this was the political power of the Uruguayan Minister Danilo Astori. Astori was the youngest chairman of the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of the Republic. He was the most prestigious economist in Uruguay for decades, and an advocate for the use of evidence and specialized knowledge in public policies. President Tabaré Vázquez appointed him as Minister of Economics and Finance on his two presidential periods, and he was close to becoming a prime minister, leaving a profound trace in many public policies. However, despite having the continued support of the president, he was unable to gain the approval for the FTA or the fiscal rule. If Astori had faced these situations in Chile, where there is a different PMR, it is likely that both agreements would have been signed.

The cases we studied also suggest that neither of the two rival hypotheses can be easily dismissed. Both hypotheses are more significant than what was stated:

- **HR1. The type and degree of specialized knowledge depends on the policy field and not on the general characteristics of the political system.** This point, appears repeatedly in expert literature. Dargent (2015) created a theoretical model and contributed with supporting evidence on the old intuition about the bridge between research and public policies. The events of change studied in this paper add evidence to support this idea- the role of the experts is not the same in each of the policies we analysed. In the same political system, at the same time, we identified variations on the PMR (for each sector) and on the knowledge supply characteristics (on each specific policy).
- **HR2. The type and degree of use of specialized knowledge directly depends on the ideology of the political party. Some political parties prioritize the use of this knowledge and value**

13. The Chilean Political culture is more technocratic tan the Uruguayan. According to the World Values Survey, 46% of the Chilean population agrees on the fact that it is better to "*have experts, not a government, in charge of the country´s decision-making process*". Meanwhile, in Uruguay, the 38% of the population considers this to be "*good or quite good*". Data elaborated adding information from different waves for the years 1981-2004. The possible answers are "*Very Good*", "*Quite Bad*", "*Bad*" See: www.worldvaluessurvey.org

the role of policy research experts. Some leaders trust the role of experts more than others. Some political traditions have a greater inclination to ask for the help of these specialists and delegate power to them. These conclusions were easily identified on the Uruguayan case.

Accepting that ideology and politics matter does not necessarily lead to discarding the proposed theoretical model. Astori and his powerful team of economists failed to carry out reforms that they considered fundamental. Placed in Chile, acting in another political knowledge regime, they probably would have been able to implement the fiscal rule and the FTA with the United States. It is easy to imagine that they would have enjoyed greater authority.

Some conclusions and reflections on democracy and technocracy

From a historical point of view, Chilean politics were born elitist and bureaucratic and they have kept these traits. Uruguayan politics, on the other hand, were born plebeian and inclusive– and have remained this way. In the post– independence context in Chile the struggle for power happened within the elite. In Uruguay, the main political conflict revolved around two political–military groups led by a leader with strong popular roots: defined as *caudillo*. The Chilean elite were able to impose order rapidly and lay the foundations for a modern State. The Uruguayan elite, on the other hand, could not accomplish this for decades. Chilean politics were structured over the value of order (authority), while Uruguayan politics were structured over the value of representation (as an expression of the diverse of people interests).

Over time, the political history of both countries ends to share important coincidental points, but their bases are completely different. In Chile, power and knowledge have always had a close relation: the elite responsible for building the State gained political, economic and cultural power. From the start of the State, order was of the utmost importance and this required, in the opinion of the elite, the support of knowledge. This helps to understand why the positivist ideas of Auguste Comte[14] where widely accepted in Chile. The goals for *order and progress* pursued by the science instrument of science, so eloquently described in this version of positivism, well expressed the vision of *good government* the Chilean elite aspired to. This vision had been implemented from the time of independence. The constant use of specialized knowledge and systematically used resource of *those who know*, of technocrats is evidence of this aspiration.

The Chilean democracy is elitist and technocratic and distrusts participation of the general public. The voice of citizens tends to be minimized or simply not considered, and the expert vision imposes on the government and on the public debate. The Uruguayan democracy, on the other hand, is participative, open to demands of citizens and group, but it is often hostile to experts.

The Uruguayan illustrated elite was also influenced by French Philosophy, however, it chose to feed on Herbert Spencer rather than Comte. The evolutionary vision of both brought them close, but they diverged on the authoritarian dimension. As in the rest of Latin America, positivism left its mark.

14. Imbued with the ideas of progress Comte proposed a central place for an elite that leads the way of progress and in a certain way leads transformations, thus justifying authoritarian actions.

In particular, it was very influential between 1875 and 1890. During that brief period it facilitated the convergence between caudillos and the enlightened political elite (generally formed in laws). Specifically, it made it possible for the latter to accept the caudillista phenomenon, and subordinated to it. But the tendency to convergence did not resolve the differences between knowledge and power. The bridge between the enlightened elite and the political parties was and remains narrow and unstable. Intellectuals and experts tend to rely on political parties. They accept the fact that political parties are the central actors of Uruguayan politics. But they are rarely comfortable within the party structures. Caudillism persists and so does the discomfort with it.

The Chilean democracy is elitist and technocratic and distrusts participation of the general public. The voice of citizens tends to be minimized or simply not considered, and the expert vision imposes on the government and on the public debate. The Uruguayan democracy, on the other hand, is participative, open to demands of citizens and group, but it is often hostile to experts. In Uruguay, thus, there are others mechanism to be heard. Since the nineteenth century political parties have been sensitive to their demands and preferences, but experts have a limited influence on the government and their public policies. In Chile, the debate on public policies lacks the participation of the citizenship, while in Uruguay the public policies debate struggles due to its divide with research. When the two countries are compared, the Chilean democracy reveals its elitism and the Uruguayan shows a need for increased technical content.

Chile and Uruguay have good KPRs, despite their differences. In Chile, where a governor and their team must have outstanding academic credentials, knowledge plays a vital role. This knowledge empowers and creates bonds between political parties and groups of interests. This probably enables the production of a *critical mass* of knowledge relating to the most important policies. In Uruguay, knowledge plays a secondary role. Legitimacy of political actors relies on other virtues: sensibility, honesty, and the will and capacity to participate and represent. Knowledge is used to strengthen the arguments of leaders and political actors during political disputes. There is a lack of demand for knowledge so, compared to Chile, the supply of it is much lower. Consequently, research units are weaker and the development of social sciences is only recent.

Finally, there are some questions that must be answered in the future and some issues that will have to be further investigated. The first refers to the time dimension of the PKR. When theorizing about PKR structures (which, by definition, tend to endure), it is necessary to consider the role time will play. The conjuncture in both countries suggests the following questions:

- At the start of the 21st century, were both knowledge regimes changing?

In Chile:

- Was the PKR being democratized?
- To what extent will the social critic and academic, which has been portrayed as elitist and technocratic in the political context, achieve a significant breaking point?

In Uruguay:

- Is the role of knowledge increasing in the Uruguayan democracy?

Definitive answers cannot be offered. These questions embrace change on the knowledge regimes, transcending the Uruguayan and Chilean cases and suggesting a theoretical challenge. Campbell and Pedersen faced it: since the analysis of the German, French, and American cases from 1980 to 2010, crisis periods have been identified that can trigger significant changes in the knowledge regimes. These changes are generated by the actors themselves when they perceive that the existing knowledge regime is dysfunctional. In their own words:

> "*We explain how when confronted with the end of the Golden Age people changed their knowledge regime when they perceived that it had become dysfunctional in the sense that they suspected that it no longer produced ideas that helped them make sense of their policy problems and therefore no longer facilitated healthy political-economic performance. In the USA, where porous state institutions, private money and lobbying play huge roles in politics this involved an increase in privately funded, partisan, and aggressive research organizations. In France, where the state dominates much political-economic activity, this involved cultivating new ideas outside the state—but largely as a result of the state's own initiatives. In Germany, where corporatist institutions are central to policy analysis and advising these processes became more sophisticated analytically and began to be more competitive even as they retained their basic coordinated structure*" (2015:2-3).

Our findings coincide with Campbell's and Pedersen's work. We also found that agents within the regime can modify PKRs. However, they have not posed one key question: To what extent do the changes imply a structural and stable modification of the knowledge regime that characterizes each country? For there to be a modification of the political regime of knowledge changes should register in some of its constituent dimensions.

It is nor convenient nor sufficient to say that all Latin American countries need more democracy and technocracy. Chile does not need more technocracy: it needs more democracy. Uruguay does not need more democracy: it needs to improve and strengthen the use of knowledge in the design of its public policies.

The second debate refers to the link between a country's KPR and its social structure. According to Silva (2009), the technocratic phenomenon in Chile expresses the values of the middle class: "*One of the central arguments developed in this book is that both the origin and further development of the technocratic phenomenon in Chile during most of the twentieth century have been intimately related to the emergence and further ascendancy of the middle class*" (2009:219). This association is controversial because technocracy in Chile long predates the consolidation of a middle class. The Chilean oligarchy, since the start of the nineteenth century, was technocratic. There are numerous testimonies questioning the concept of elitism associated with knowledge and power, and there is not a close historical relation between middle class and technocracy. Least of all, it can be presumed that a casual relation exists; the existence of the middle class cannot assure or explain the development of technocracy. The comparison with Uruguay strongly ascertains this idea. If the middle-class development was a necessary and sufficient cause, this would have led to an identical situation in Uruguay. This is not the case, however, as there is a middle class in Uruguay but technocracy was and is absent.

Lastly, the relation between democracy and technocracy is desirable, as Aristotle stated, to mix the citizenships and specialists voices. Based on this concept, neither Chile nor Uruguay embrace this idea. Neither of the democracies have a balance between the voice of the citizens and that of the specialists. Chile is characterized by lack of participation from the general public and in Uruguay there is an absence of theoretical considerations when developing public policies. It is important to point this out because it is nor convenient nor sufficient to say that all Latin American countries need more democracy and technocracy. Chile does not need more technocracy: it needs more democracy. Uruguay does not need more democracy: it needs to improve and strengthen the use of knowledge in the design of its public policies.

In light of the research carried out, and in spite of the the need to analyse more cases we can make the following assertion: the main deficit of most Latin American countries is not the lack of technocracy but the weakness of the institutions that should empower the citizens. Democracies in Latin America are more technocratic[15] than plebeian. If this is correct, strengthening the technocracy can only lead to weakening the already weak roots of citizen self-government in the region.

15. The interesting and historic debate about the bond between technocracy and populism, is not address. An excellent discussion about similarities and differences of the different challenges faced by the political parties which belong to technocratic and populist regimes is outstandingly explained by Caramani (2017).

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