

Explaining and Understanding Formal and Informal Institutions in the Age of Globalization

Abiodun Ghali Issa ¹; Adebimpe Saheed Fagbemi, PhD ²; 'Bimbo Ogunbanjo, PhD ³; and Christiana Ayah Fagbemi ⁴

¹Forbes School of Business and Technology, University of Arizona Global Campus, Arizona, United States of America. ²Department of Criminology and Forensic Studies, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Durban, Republic of South Africa. ³Department of Government, Lagos State University, School of Basic and Advanced Studies, Lagos, Nigeria. ⁴Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, Faculty of Social Science, National Open University of Nigeria, Jabi, Karonmajigi, Abuja, Nigeria.

Corresponding author: abiodun.issa@student.uagc.edu

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Abstract

Our social order is shaped by institutions, which makes them important. Governmental players adhere to the formal or informal regulations that institutions set out. Any political system has informal institutions, albeit it can be challenging to understand how they relate to formal ones. An extensive examination of the many definitions of institutions is presented in this paper. Many instances from many subfields are given, which in turn emphasize how universal the key issues facing political actors in various substantive situations are. Afterward, it is clarified what the ramifications of considering institutions in this way are and how they contribute to these strategic problems by resolving or generating them (consciously or not). Understanding how institutions function necessitates looking at their historical background. Three specific obstacles that arise when attempting to understand and justify the beginnings of institutions are identified; these issues indicate some of the domains in which our understanding of institutions is limited. This paper aims to highlight the common challenges encountered when attempting to comprehend the formation and operation of institutions, offering valid reasons for researchers in related fields to collaborate more to improve our understanding of institutions. Generally speaking, it is untrue to say that there is a boundary between absolutely "formal" and fully "informal" institutions. This paper reveals that this unexpected claim is an invitation for academics to consider several issues. Firstly, to distinguish formal and informal institutions from one another, definitions of each are required. Second, discussing the connection between formal and informal institutions is crucial. By doing this, disparities between various forms of informal institutions and their ranges of complexity are distinguished. Third, it is critical to comprehend how formal and informal institutions affect the sort of regime (autocracy vs. democracy) and vice versa. The subject of how informal institutions are generated, created, and maintained is also discussed in this context. This paper concludes with a discussion of methodological perspectives on formal and informal institutions. It considers the use of typologies that encompass formal institutions and are frequently employed in the study of governance systems for this reason. The discovery by certain researchers that informal structures have a significant and frequently surprising impact on the functioning of formal institutions serves as the foundation for subsequent discussions.

Keywords: Institutions, Formal Institutions, Informal Institutions, Governance System, Regime Types, Democracy, Decision-Making.

Introduction

In political science, almost everything we examine entails considering how an individual's choices and actions balance with those of the group in which they are positioned. With the rebel group and the government putting down their weapons, peace is feasible. For a law to pass, a politician requires the support of his or her colleagues. With the legislative and executive branches' backing, the budget can be approved. A successful coup d'état requires coordination between different military forces to overthrow the government. "In politics, the consequences of my actions are highly dependent upon the actions of others," notes Pierson (2010: 258). What I get is primarily determined by what other people do, not just by what I do. This paper provides an overview of the various shapes this reliance may take.

This paper starts with a thorough examination of the many definitions of institutions. There are also several instances from other subfields that demonstrate how the key issues that political actors face in various substantive situations are universal. The ramifications of seeing institutions in this light are then clarified, along with how institutions contribute to these strategic challenges by either causing them or resolving them (intentionally or not). Comprehending the operation of institutions compels an examination of their historical context. Three specific obstacles that arise when attempting to understand and justify the beginnings of institutions are identified; these issues indicate some of the domains in which our understanding of institutions is limited. This paper aims to highlight the common challenges encountered when attempting to comprehend the formation and operation of institutions, offering valid reasons for researchers in related fields to collaborate more to improve our understanding of institutions. "In general, it is erroneous to believe that there is a distinction between institutions that are fully "formal" and wholly "informal" (Hodgson 2016: 18). Hodgson's startling claim is a challenge to academics to consider several topics. First, to distinguish formal and informal institutions from one another, definitions of each are required (Hayoz 2013). Second, discussing the connection between official and informal institutions is crucial. While doing this, it is important to recognize the many forms of informal institutions and their differing degrees of complexity. Third, it is critical to comprehend how formal and informal institutions affect the sort of regime (autocracy vs. democracy) and vice versa. The subject of how informal institutions are generated, created, and maintained is also discussed in this context. This paper concludes with a discussion of methodological perspectives on formal and informal institutions. It considers the use of typologies that encompass formal institutions and are frequently employed in the study of governance systems for this reason. The discovery of Helmke and Levitsky that "informal structures shape the performance of formal institutions in

important and often unexpected ways" (2014: 726) serves as the foundation for the subsequent concerns.

Defining Institutions

Ever since Aristotle, the structures found in the constitutions of the nations under study have been the main focus of comparative examinations of institutions. It is not clear to scholars what distinguishes legal systems—such as the electoral process or the constitution itself—from institutions like the government or parliament. The interests that led to the creation of legal frameworks and regulations are the main subject of traditional studies in institutional research. Institutional ideas failed to integrate informal rules and institutions in a cogent theoretical manner, even as researchers attempted to illustrate how constitutions functioned in practice. This only started to shift in the 1980s and was brought up in the broader conversation on neo-institutionalism (Peters 2015: 3–21). There are several opportunities to further institutional research that were presented by critiques of the traditional institutional approach. Academics started to view institutions as factors that depend on them rather than just independent ones. Additionally, a far larger number of scholars started doing comparative assessments. In conclusion, researchers also began to investigate institutions lacking a formal and legal framework, incorporating these institutions into their study.

All neo-institutionalist theories have a common foundation for defining institutions. Similar to Douglass North (1990: 3), an institution is defined as "a norm or set of norms that have a significant impact on individuals' behavior" (about or consisting of the institution). Therefore, institutions limit what people can do. Various interpretations of limits associated with sanctions exist in the neo-institutional discussion, notwithstanding North's lack of emphasis on their function.

Institutions are generally acknowledged to limit individual conduct to some degree (Peters 1999: 18). There are variations in both the degree and the processes behind this. March and Olson (2016), among other scholars, draw attention to how norms are internalized via primary or secondary socialization processes (family, kinship—school, military, corporations). In this instance, breaking the rules results in guilt, and doing so is approved by an internal system. Additionally, there are external punishment mechanisms (arrest, status loss, social isolation or discrimination, etc.). Since rational choice methods have taken into account the potential for negative consequences when norms are broken, rational choice perspectives encompass the latter. In this instance, incentives associated with the institution will not be advantageous to players who breach it. All forms of enforcement mechanisms have one thing in common: breaching the norms established by informal institutions entails consequences for the rule-breaker. It seems sensible to treat norms as institutions only insofar as they uphold (their own) external sanction mechanisms, to avoid creating a catch-all category that would encompass all kinds of annoyances (induced by a specific sanction mechanism). Formal institutions are affected by this.

Institutions are followed by actors for reasons other than only punishments, even if this is one of their distinguishing characteristics. Actors adhere to institutions because they see them as "natural" or given. Actors also adhere to institutions because they are seen as legitimate or because they exhibit a lawful demeanor. According to North, these analyses of penalties and the motivations behind actors' adherence to regulations are related to the primary objective of institutions: "A fundamental tenet of an institutional perspective is that institutions produce elements of predictability and order" (March and Olson 2016: 4). In conclusion, institutions are described as follows: A system of rules is made up of institutions. There are rights and duties implied by the set of regulations. Additionally, a social order is created and shaped by the set of norms in a way that makes the conduct of all of its participants predictable. Institutions can influence performance by choosing to abide by the norms freely or by using the prospect of punishment as motivation.

The Problem of Collective Decision-Making

Making decisions as a group is one task that political actors—whether they are part of a court, junta, legislature, or party—must perform. Collective decision, however, is fraught with issues that may result in unfavorable consequences. For instance, Arrow's Theorem informs us that, aside from dictatorship, no preference aggregation rule—like the simple majority—can concurrently satisfy a limited number of essential desiderata. However, even in cases when agents' choices are rational on an individual basis, collective choice in a multidimensional space suffers from perverse issues, particularly those related to cycling and intransitivity, as demonstrated by the different chaotic theora, particularly those proposed by McKelvey (1976) and Schofield (1977). Academic institutions have been suggested by scholars as a means of comprehending potential remedies for such unsettling outcomes.

This analysis mostly assumes that cycling is normatively unacceptable. As a result, policies become unstable, which makes the government ineffective and makes individuals unpredictable when they base their conduct on what the government does. Institutions, like legislative committees or parties, can help players break out from this cycle and reach solid group choices under these kinds of circumstances. An alternative approach to arrive at this conclusion is to make the explicit assumption that political players prioritize collaborating with others above not cooperating at all. The crucial challenge in the traditional coordination problem is locating a focal point. This relationship is best illustrated by comparing Bach and Stravinsky: you enjoy Stravinsky more than Bach, and I like Bach more than Stravinsky, yet we would both rather attend the same concert. According to Hardin (1989), people living in a society that takes into account how a polity is organized may find themselves in a similar circumstance. Although they may have varying preferences for certain types of constitutive rules, they all want to reach some sort of consensus on any collection of rules. These guidelines are provided by constitutions, which also act as a center of gravity to keep us from living in anarchy or in a society where fundamental laws are

continuously changed. We may enact laws and make other actions that result in more effective governance when we agree on a set of constitutive norms (Holmes 1995).

Institutions can assist actors in deciding on policies or outcomes when they are faced with the challenge of preference aggregation or result coordination. This is likely preferable to dealing with policy instability or anarchy. However, institutions nonetheless have distributive implications notwithstanding their efficiency-enhancing qualities (Knight 1992). Long-term political party coalitions may lower the transaction costs involved in enacting laws, but they also provide the dominant parties the ability to serve as gatekeepers. Although they may aid in reducing cycling, legislative committees arranged according to policy jurisdiction also provide certain assembly members the authority to decide the agenda. Policy results frequently diverge greatly from the preferences of the median group member as a result of gatekeeping and agenda control exercised by a small number of group members (e.g. Romer and Rosenthal 1978). To put it briefly, there is often an institutional efficiency frontier. Generally speaking, there are just many approaches to managing competing tensions rather than ideal answers to communal problems. In such cases, institutions devise a way to offset one inefficiency against another. There are institutional ways to mitigate concerns about policy instability and excessive transaction costs, but they can require embracing unfavorable results like non-median policies.

The Problem of Interdependent Action

Political actors operate independently or in concert with others, in addition to reaching choices as a group. This description applies to several strategic dilemmas, including delegation, commitment, and collective action. The classic frameworks of these problems were taken from the field of economics. However, as the substantive examples show, we typically need to mix and complicate these frameworks to examine political environments. One thing unites the prisoners' dilemma, the collective action problem, and the common pool resource problem: they are all instances where individual reason is insufficient to ensure collective reason. While a cooperative solution could benefit all parties, individual incentives put individuals in a worse situation (Sandler 1992). Citizens face such a conundrum when it comes to upholding the proper limitations on governmental authority (Weingast 1997). Certain citizens' rights may be violated by the state, and those individuals must choose whether to accept or oppose such violations. The twist is that certain people's assets may be taken by the state and distributed to other people in part. As a result, even though it would benefit all citizens if they opposed all state wrongdoings, some non-targeted individuals assist the government in infringing on the rights of others. The state cannot guarantee not to enforce such infractions if people have incentives to stray from any collective challenge of them.

In a coalition administration, political parties deal with a comparable structure in a different setting. Creating the budget under coalition governments is an issue with shared resources. The coalition would benefit from adhering to aggregate budget caps, but because each party controls a ministry, it is incentivized to overspend on projects for which it gets credit

from its supporters and accuses the other parties of "overspending." As more parties join a coalition, the quantity of fiscal expenditures grows, and coalition governments often spend more than single-party administrations (Bawn and Rosenbluth 2016). Several fiscal institution kinds might fix this issue. Parties might not be able to "free ride" if, for example, the finance minister has sole authority over budget development or if floor changes to budget measures are forbidden. When there are such constrictive budgetary mechanisms in place, government spending does not rise when more parties join the coalition (Martin and Vanberg 2013).

The introduction of time poses a unique set of challenges for political actors. Because what would maximize their utility in a given period would not be the same as what would maximize it if the entire time route were taken into account, their preferences might be time-inconsistent (Shepsle 1991). Two crucial issues arise when consistency and optimality are at odds: first, verifiability—the actor committing must be able to confirm that the other actor is keeping it; and second, enforcement—there needs to be a way to penalize the original actor if they break their word. Parties to a civil or interstate battle typically sign a peace treaty that may include commitments to share power, disarm, or relinquish territory—all of which are necessary future steps. The issue is that future shifts in the actors' power dynamics or the appearance of spoilers might make a deal that is agreeable for all parties currently unsatisfactory (Fearon, 1998; Heger and Jung, 2014). As a result of the actors' incentives to renegotiate or break the agreement, peace is unlikely to be reached shortly and at the moment since parties might not be prepared to compromise if these difficulties are not handled. Third-party mediators are one possible answer; they may confirm that actors are keeping their end of the bargain and impose steep penalties on them if they cheat (Walter 2012). Although mediators may raise the chances of peace by raising the costs of repeated conflict, their long-term impacts are less certain (Beardsley 2018).

Vote brokers may also buy votes for their parties and candidates in developing democracies. They promise voters they will support the candidate or party offering these items at the polls in exchange for cash and in-kind advantages before the election. However, since the introduction of the secret ballot, it has been more challenging to ensure that the voter keeps their word on election day. Brokers may utilize social sanctioning or benefit withholding as a kind of punishment, focusing on communities with strong social links to confirm voter behavior individually (Stokes 2015; Magaloni 2016). However, there is a difficulty with collective action that coexists with the voters' commitment issue. Voters who wish to vote for their chosen politicians and accept bribes have an incentive to take advantage of other voters' acquiescence, as noted by Rueda (2013). The more people who vote at the same polling place, the simpler it is to get away with this kind of free-riding. This might explain the negative correlation between vote purchasing and the degrees of election result aggregation (Birch 2011; Chandra 2014; Schaffer and Schedler 2017).

Delegation is an additional option for actors looking to increase the credibility of their promises. Actors looking to create a credible pledge can simply delegate control to others

instead of manipulating the consequences of acts to prevent reneging. By giving parliament control over the money, the King of England was able to resist the urge to expropriate following the Glorious Revolution (North and Weingast 1989). Likewise, by giving a central bank authority over monetary policy, a government might stop controlling the economy. Naturally, it is crucial that the actor to whose authority has been assigned be, in reality, separate from the actor attempting to establish the legitimacy of his pledge. However, delegating brings with it a unique set of challenges (Sánchez-Cuenca 1998; Miller 2015). Two general groups of issues are highlighted by the principal-agent framework: those involving concealed acts (moral hazard) and hidden knowledge (adverse selection). The principal loses some agency, regardless of whether the agent is more informed about his acts or personality. Such agency loss may be proof of the legitimacy of the commitment if delegation takes place in an attempt to bind hands. In exchange for some loss of control over the agent, the principal forfeits control if he transfers power to the agent to make up for his lack of knowledge, experience, or time. The principal-agent paradigm exhibits sufficient flexibility to include the diverse range of trade-offs that political players are compelled to contemplate, as well as the circumstances surrounding them (Gailmard, 2023). This flexibility is essential because political actors sometimes find themselves in circumstances where agents have more than just better knowledge about acts or kinds, as the following instances show. Significant departures from the conventional principal-agent paradigm occur when agents are unable to enforce principals to comply with their choices and when compliance by the agent cannot be taken for granted.

For instance, courts have the authority to utilize their decisions to address fundamental issues with policymaking and institutional reputation (Staton and Vanberg 2018). The goal of policy outcomes for justices is to be as near to their ideal positions as feasible. However, in an uncertain environment, their capacity for formulating policies may be restricted, which may motivate them to express ambiguous ideas to let those with greater competence carry out policy results. However, the court as an institution is affected by how clear or unclear decisions are. Vague rulings, on the one hand, provide other actors a way to evade following the court's judgment, which is particularly frustrating for an organization lacking the authority to enforce its conclusions. Nonetheless, if it seems improbable that the other arms of government would follow the court's judgment, the court may employ ambiguous wording to preserve its institutional standing. On the other side, a vague rule might conceal outright disobedience.

A crucial act of delegation lies at the heart of representative democracy: individuals appoint their representatives to decide on their behalf or by their preferences (Manin 1997). Because of this, citizens have to deal with issues of moral hazard as well as adverse selection. They have to pick agents based on better information about their competency, honesty, etc., and they have to manage these agents without having complete awareness of their behavior. Elections are the only tool available to people to address these issues, which might make matters worse since voters may be less able to effectively inspire the candidate who is chosen to take office if they use the elections to separate candidates based

on certain characteristics (Fearon 1999). Given that in this case of delegation agents genuinely have the power to make decisions that bind their principals, the process by which citizens choose and manage their elected officials is not a meaningless matter (Moe 1990).

The Role of Institutions

Institutions play several roles in this image because players confront a wide range of strategic difficulties whether they are acting cooperatively or in concert. To put it mildly, institutional structures can either be the source of the strategic issue or act as a platform for its emergence. The cycle problem arises, for instance, in a group choice environment (like a legislature) with particular proposals and decision procedures (such paired options subject to majority rule). The agency dilemma between voters and elected officials arises from the very structure of representational governance. In a similar vein, there would be no commitment issue for voters about vote brokers if there were no secret ballot elections.

Scholars have a long history of analyzing political institutions to see how well institutional arrangements address issues with coordinated action and strategic interdependence. The study of the law merchant by Milgrom, North, and Weingast (1990) is among the most well-known and perceptive instances of this tradition. They contend that as global conditions changed and commitment issues that all business transactions intensified, merchant law developed to support economic activity. In particular, they demonstrate that whereas regular interaction among merchants in a small community fosters an incentive for honest behavior, relative anonymity among dealers in larger communities that mimic modern society diminishes that motivation owing to the capacity to locate new trading partners. Large-community merchants understand that the likelihood of running into their same trading partner again is minimal, and they also know that the ability of a deceived partner to tell others about their wrongdoing is constrained. A trader does not, therefore, dread the repercussions of acting dishonestly. The law merchant evolved as a way to offset the negative effects of bigger communities on economic activity. This organization established an information clearinghouse that prospective traders could use to compare each other's trading histories and get permission to pass judgment on suspected dishonesty. It is feasible to create an information clearinghouse such that traders would utilize it and abide by its rulings, as demonstrated by Milgrom, North, and Weingast.

Others in this tradition have addressed almost every conceivable issue about social and political interaction, as seen by the examples presented in the preceding section. Scholars have assessed how political parties might stop cycling in intricate policy areas, among other ways. They have looked into how committees can resolve informational (Krehbiel, 1991) and distributive (Weingast and Marshall, 1988; Shepsle and Weingast, 1995) issues that arise in legislative settings, how a system of separation of powers can enable more credible commitments by leaders, and how litigation and investigation can resolve agency loss in the bureaucracy, the judiciary, and federalism. Scholars have examined how legislative institutions enable governments to manage the interests of the many groups that make up their constituents in different contexts. In regions where coalition administrations are in

place, for instance, the various political factions inside the government may face contradictory demands from both their coalition partners and their voters. According to Martin and Vanberg (2011), the government can permit member parties to cater to their electoral constituencies without compromising the coalition by implementing certain institutional procedures.

In other situations, the problem's potential remedies are limited by the institutions involved. In certain instances, institutions only prohibit behavior patterns that are harmful or counterproductive, in contrast to the preceding cases when organizations encouraged individuals to cooperate to solve their shared societal problems. For instance, there are explicit institutional restrictions governing the kinds of conflicts that courts will consider and decide throughout a large portion of the law. These laws prohibit employing the judiciary to settle conflicts that do not fall under the purview of judicial settlement. Similar to this, the U.S. Constitution outlines a power structure between the several departments of government as well as a set of powers that are expressly designated for particular political bodies. For example, the House of Representatives is prohibited from approving presidential nominees by these regulations. These are only examples of regulations that may, of course, be altered; the important thing to remember is that the institution works to restrict conduct rather than encourage desirable decisions.

The important thing to remember is that institutions enable players to manage trade-offs, regardless of whether they are seen as answers to societal problems or as tools to help choose a solution—for example, by limiting the alternatives accessible to political actors. They provide actors with a framework for weighing conflicting interests, organizing their alternatives, and giving them a way to select conflicting solutions to societal problems. Not every institutional answer to a strategic conundrum exists. However, the history of institutional analysis offers a deep, comprehensive understanding of how social behavior is shaped by institutions.

Institutional Origins

The main focus of these research avenues is how institutions affect issues with social coordination. However, the social science approach relies on the creation of counterfactuals to conclude causal effects. What would have occurred if the establishment had not been approved? The most robust model for drawing such a conclusion is predicated on the idea that the institutions were established at random; that is, that certain locations have independent courts and property rights while others do not and that the distinction between the two is random. Regretfully, it is improbable that institutions are formed at random. As a result, the topic of how institutional arrangements came to be must be addressed from the outset.

In particular, we need to consider the purpose of institutions. Are the organizations we see in the world designed with the express purpose of providing the best solution for the problem we are researching? The answer is most likely yes in some situations. Politicians may deliberately choose a set of constitutional norms to function as a focal point if they

wish to prevent the inefficiencies brought about by ambiguity or renegotiation about the fundamental structures of governance, for example. However, the precise clauses included in constitutions are typically the result of political agreements, crafted by parties well cognizant of the distributive consequences of their actions and giving the implications for the welfare of the group only secondary, if any, consideration (Elster 1993). Similar to this, a society's chosen norms for enacting laws can help solve issues involving collective choice, but they also have significant effects on which social groupings often do better throughout the legislative process. Institutional frameworks are known to have significant consequences for distribution (Knight 1992). There are two ramifications. First, there are distributive repercussions to every institution, even one that aims to enhance the benefit of all. On the Pareto frontier, there are several potential institutional solutions, each implying distinct distributional outcomes. Distributive concerns can also—and possibly more frequently—lead to an institutional configuration that is not best suited for the other tasks that the institutions serve.

Take the American Congressional Committee structure, for instance. The question of whether distributive or informational limits in the legislature are the primary focus of legislative committees is hotly debated (see, for example, Shepsle and Weingast 1987; Krehbiel 1991). According to the distributive account, granting committees' authority over certain substantive areas permits a type of logrolling wherein the representatives of Silicon Valley control technology and patent law policy, while the representatives of farmers may control agriculture policy. Both parties can maintain a mutually beneficial agreement wherein they each receive what they desire on the issues that matter most to their people. Relatedly, when a group votes collectively on multi-dimensional policy domains, the committee system can assist resolve the social choice pathologies that exist—like cycling—by dividing policy into distinct dimensions that are debated and acted upon independently. According to the informative account, a legislature as a whole lacks experience in every area of policy, thus it would be preferable to assign the task of creating agricultural policy to the representatives of farmers and the task of creating patent policy to the representatives of Silicon Valley. Those representatives will have a motivation, absent in others, to gather data and cultivate competence in each of their distinct policy domains as they have substantial interests in those areas. This example is crucial because it shows us that the conclusions we make about the committee system's capacity to handle informational issues, for instance, may change if it were meant to handle distributional conflicts as opposed to informational constraints. It is not sufficient to look at the committee structure and determine whether it is loaded with preference outliers who support radical policies to conclude that the system is more about distributive issues than informational obstacles. It is necessary to start with a theory of the issues that a legislature faced before the existence of the committee system, the objectives of lawmakers, and their options. We can start thinking about how institutions affect incentives and behavior once we have examined the *a priori* decision-making process for institutional configurations. Diermeyer and Krehbiel (2013) make a critical remark here.

Scholars must first analyze how actors behave under various institutional arrangements, based on presumptions about their preferences, before concluding the consequences of an institutional structure on political conduct. In turn, understanding the reasons for such institutions' existence necessitates taking a step back from that reasoning, assuming certain preferences of political players, and assessing the institutions that those actors choose to embrace in different scenarios. While it is evident that the second analytical objective is more difficult than the former, it also presents several difficult research questions that we will address in a moment and has the potential to provide significant insights.

But first, we draw attention to a second, related difficulty in researching institutional origins. To be more precise, institutions are typically not created by one actor's fiat. Thus, comprehending the real emergence of these institutions—which address the communal problem—is a necessary step in the process. A government party, for instance, can help distribute rewards and prevent internal strife amongst authoritarian elites. However, it also means that each of them must cede a portion of their fiefs. So how does the party come into being? Do they understand that in the long term, it will benefit them all together? Or does it have to be forced onto certain people but not others? Furthermore, may it not be the case that the institutional founders had a harder time agreeing on institutions in the first place if they anticipated that any given institutional arrangement would have long-term distributive consequences for those subject to the institution—for instance, by leading to policies that tend to favor special interests over median voters?

Essentially, this means that because groups have to agree to institutions in the first place, progressive political actors will probably anticipate future developments in their initial negotiations. For example, they might not be able to agree to institutional solutions to short-term issues because of long-term concerns, or vice versa. Therefore, it is crucial to take into account the whole spectrum of potential concerns when researching institutional origins—concerns about distributive politics, social efficiency, and the political fallout from finding a solution to the social conundrum. The difficulty is that, at least in the eyes of some, there are instances when the remedy is worse than the issue.

Complications of Studying Institutional Origins

Numerous difficult possibilities arise when one begins to investigate the roots of institutions and the degree to which political preferences, distributive concerns, and contextual variables are endogenous to them. These conceptual conundrums include (1) unexpected repercussions; (2) institutional modification; and (3) the impact of institutions on desires directly. These, in our opinion, are some of the most significant, if elusive, subjects being studied in the field of political institutions today.

Unintended Consequences

One problem facing academics who study the origins of institutions is that the most important outcomes of an institutional arrangement could not be the same as the social

problem the institution was created to solve. For instance, the military frequently lies about whether or not it intends to permit the return of civilian authority after it seizes power. At first, Chile's military regime, which took control in 1973, was no exception. However, there was a dispute within the junta over the return of a civilian government, with Pinochet advocating for military control to last indefinitely (Barros 2012). However, the junta crafted the 1980 constitution to regularize its rule-making and, more crucially, to limit the extent to which future administrations could implement policy decisions that deviated from the military's choices since other members favored going back to the barracks. The junta decided to implement as much of the constitution as possible to ensure its legality before a transition. But what it failed to anticipate was the predicament that would arise if other institutional players questioned the junta's legitimacy in light of the new constitution's provisions. The junta's proposed presidential candidate had to be approved or rejected by a vote, according to the constitution. The junta started planning such an occasion for October 1988, when people would be able to cast their votes for Pinochet to serve as president for eight years, "yes" or "no." However, the electoral system, as fully stated in the constitution, had to be put in place before the referendum, and the constitutional court knocked down a temporary measure that would have left the contest under the control of an ad hoc electoral court. After that ruling, the junta was forced to choose between defying the court and undermining the constitution by manipulating the plebiscite in favor of Pinochet's victory or complying with the court's decision, which would have meant a fairer election and a higher likelihood of losing. Pinochet was subsequently forced to accept the court's decision by the other junta members, which ultimately resulted in his election defeat. As noted by Barros (2012), the establishment of an institution meant to bind others eventually resulted in the junta being restrained and forced from power.

This and other instances of unanticipated effects emphasize how crucial it is to establish actors' wishes ex-ante. Apart from Pinochet, junta members intended for civilian government to eventually return, but they did not draft the 1980 constitution with the idea of being bound by it while in power. We would not be able to find that the institution had unintended effects from their perspective if we had concluded, based on their conduct, that their goals and objectives were to comply with the court's ruling as a sign of their intention to be constitutionalists.

Institutional Change

The study of institutional change is closely associated with the research of unintended consequences. As previously said, equilibria in social contexts can be thought of as institutions; one characteristic of equilibria is their stability. Nevertheless, we frequently witness modifications to legislative regulations and even the rewriting of constitutions about political institutions. What causes change if institutions are stable equilibria? Although, as it shall be revealed, the distinction is not always as apparent, academics frequently distinguish between endogenous and external institutional change in the literature. Moreover, academics frequently differentiate between various forms of

institutional evolution, with a specific focus on the institutional development's route dependency.

Changes to an institution must originate from one of two places if the arrangement serves to address a societal issue. One possibility is an external shock to the strategic context or the inclinations of the people under that institution. For example, the discovery of vast mineral and oil reserves may allow the ruling class of a nation to repress or buy off opposition, leading to an increase in authoritarianism. This example shows how players may adjust the institutional arrangement, or regime, in response to a shock to the system since they now have new options or tactics at their disposal. Similar to this, it is possible to envision a scenario in which an institution's larger contextual characteristics shift—for instance, as a result of a financial crisis or a shocking election result—which might produce the same type of disruption to equilibrium outcomes and spark institutional reform. Exogenous shocks might, in a way, offer brief explanations for certain institutional changes. However, even the most "exogenous" causes of change appear to have their origins in the current institutional framework. Resources may have been discovered externally, but the nation's contemporary institutions, especially its regime, most likely had a role in the choice to grow this economic sector, turn into a resource exporter, and use resource rents for political objectives (Haber and Menaldo 2011; Schrank 2014). However, a lot of institutional change seems to come via methods that make sense after the fact.

It is stated that institutional change in these circumstances is endogenous to the institutional framework. An institutional framework creates incentives for people to engage in ways that both challenge the institution and effect change. Carrubba's (2019) model of the endogenous establishment of judicial independence in a federal framework is a noteworthy illustration of this type of endogenous institutional transformation. According to Carrubba's model, courts are tasked with settling conflicts in a federal context, which entails disagreements between sovereign bodies that have their political support bases. However, they are not empowered to enforce their rulings. Only when both parties are prepared to willingly comply can courts resolve disputes—they don't like to make rulings that are disregarded. Simultaneously, the political constituencies of the sovereign bodies exhibit a lack of clarity on their preference for the state to adhere to the rulings of the court. The constituents gradually grow to assume that the court acts in their best interests as they see compliance and (usually) positive results. Due to the political pressure that this shifting view puts on the sovereign plaintiffs, the court can make more assertive rulings that result in compliance. To put it briefly, Carrubba's model is one in which equilibrium behavior itself changes over time as a result of the court's equilibrium strategy changing beliefs.

However, investigating institutional change often prompts further inquiries concerning the relationship and connections between novel institutional arrangements and earlier institutional configurations. The path-dependent character of institutional evolution is one intricate and fascinating field of study. According to this perspective, the decisions made about institutional norms at one moment in time have an impact on the incentives and alternatives available to institutional designers later on. According to one perspective, path

dependency may jeopardize the systematic study of institutional change since it would be impossible to build a predictive, all-encompassing theory of institutional change if comprehending institutional growth depends on particular, idiosyncratic circumstances. However, a more optimistic interpretation of path dependency could forecast the types of variables regarding institutional choice, the decisions and results that most likely occur in predictable situations, and the long-term effects of beginning conditions or decisions.

A closely related theory holds that when institutions grow and change, they "layer" on top of one another rather than having new policies or procedures replace outdated ones. Institutional innovations typically coexist with legacy regulations or alter them. As a result, each given institutional development interacts with existing arrangements rather than generating a new set of incentives or norms that exist in a vacuum. Since individual institutional norms can only be understood in the context of the existing institutions on which they are built, this approach further complicates the aim of understanding institutional impacts. But it also offers a way to comprehend why we observe institutions changing in ways that seem sudden even when they have been gradually altered.

The analyst of institutional transformation has several obstacles, as this brief discussion suggests. This field of study is still crucial and has the potential to have a significant impact on institutional analysis. We do, however, still have more questions than answers in this area of study at the frontiers of the discipline, so we anticipate seeing a lot more institutional change research in the future.

The Effect of Institutions on Preferences

One last task completes the circle in our examination of institutions. As previously mentioned, preferences are often held constant when evaluating the effects of political institutions. According to Diermeyer and Krehbiel's (2013) institutional analysis model, we first make assumptions about people's motivations, or preferences, and then we assess how people's decisions and behaviors differ under different institutional settings, either theoretically, empirically, or both. But occasionally, an institutional setup has the unintended consequence of altering preferences, which makes the inference model that initially directs the investigation more difficult to understand.

This kind of phenomenon is examined in the context of bureaucratic competence by Gailmard and Patty (2017). According to their analysis, bureaucrats at an agency tasked with enforcing policy may or may not be motivated to become policy experts—that is, they may be "zealots" or "slackers." According to their model, which is cyclical, the legislature has to determine how much latitude in policy it will grant the agency. Subsequently, bureaucrats determine how much to spend on developing policy knowledge and whether to stay in government or leave for private employment. The discretionary powers bestowed upon zealots encourage the development of competence and continued government service, but they do not foster the same outcomes for slackers. The result is a selection process that keeps bureaucrats in power only because they are driven by policy. Therefore, as the game progresses, the bureaucracy's preferences alter endogenously, and both the

legislators and bureaucrats make logical decisions about discretion, specialization, and career opportunities.

It is not difficult to recognize how these and related processes operate in a variety of political contexts. Our institutions, such as public service, delegation, and Gailmard and Patty, incentivize players to prioritize some objectives over others. However, this poses a serious issue in the context of the institutional analysis model developed by Diermeyer and Krehbiel. The bureaucratic preferences that guide agency behavior cannot be fixed *a priori*. The legislature logically reacts to the agency's activity of creating expertise and carrying out policy by exercising discretion, which allows it to influence the agency's hiring decisions in a way that is not random—that is, by concentrating bureaucratic preferences. As noted by Diermeyer and Krehbiel, it is unclear how to assess the influence of institutions on behavior if the way they function influences the fundamental objectives of players.

One way ahead is to develop endogenous preference models, emulating the work of Gailmard and Patty, but these theoretical exercises are difficult and stay at the forefront of the research. We anticipate a lot more studies in this area in the future since we see the possibility of endogenous preference change as one of the main barriers to institutional analysis in the current literature.

Formal vs. Informal Institutions

To distinguish between formal and informal institutions, it is helpful to start with the following: Institutions that are not legally codified in official documents—such as laws or constitutions—are referred to as informal institutions. Written papers serve as the official codification for formal institutions. Thus, in addition to standing orders and norms that have legal ramifications, rules that have the same status as laws and constitutional articles are also included. This school of thinking holds that any legally protected private agreements or association bylaws are formal institutions. State agencies ensure the integrity of formal institutions, and the state condones any departure from these. Sanctions are in effect in informal institutions as well. These penalties take the form of social exclusionary systems or restrictions on access to essential commodities and services. Publicly recognized and acknowledged, informal institutions are frequently formalized. Their legitimacy is derived from several origins. First, informal institutions have a minimal level of legitimacy since they are socially acceptable. When actors adhere to the social behavior norms set forth by these unofficial organizations, they are greatly motivated by the fact that these institutions are socially acceptable. When actors engage in these patterns of behavior, they seek various goals, which can be characterized as either specific or general. These goals may be connected to specific behavioral patterns as well as results. Institutions make it easier for individuals and organizations to interact. By establishing recognizable and socially acceptable behavioral norms that are immutable, they promote stability. Actors comply with these structures even when they disagree with them since, logically speaking, the costs of rejecting them can only be justified in situations where behavioral alternatives are offered.

The majority of informal institutions develop naturally via social interactions (the "invisible hand"); an additional deliberate method of emergence is covered later. Formal institutions, on the other hand, are sanctioned by the state and, at least in democratic regimes, by the sovereignty of the people. While individuals with the power to make rules may influence and modify the structure of formal institutions (Mayntz and Scharpf 1995), this is not the case for informal institutions, which are based on deeply ingrained social practices. They don't have a central body that oversees and coordinates their activities, for the most part. Informal institutions vanish if they are no longer acknowledged as such. On the other hand, ineffective formal institutions are still needed and, at least nominally, still exist. According to Helmke and Levitsky's suggested definition (2014: 727), informal institutions are defined as socially shared rules—which are often unwritten—that are established, communicated, and upheld outside of formally recognized channels. These factors align with that description. Table 1 lists the most important traits of both formal and informal institutions.

Table 1: Formal and Informal Institutions

Categories	Formal Institutions	Informal Institutions
Formally Codified	Yes	No
State Sanctions	Yes	No (Social Sanctions)
Legitimation	Sovereignty of the People (Democracy) or State Authority	Self-Creation (Social Acceptance)
Modus of Change	Action of Political Decision Makers	Change of Incentives / Public Discussions / By Force
Timing of Change	Short-Term	Long-Term (Mostly)
Coordinating Center	Yes	No (or Seldom)

Institutions are social phenomena at the macro level, but knowing them at the micro level is necessary to fully comprehend the macro-level phenomena they represent. Only when informal rules are based on people's attitudes and/or beliefs do they exist. Positive normative evaluation is not the only factor that contributes to their acceptability. An informal institution's existence only signifies that its operation is anticipated. It makes little difference if the organization and its products are thought to be excellent. Individuals' attitudes and opinions constitute informal institutions. They do not exist if they are not there. The gradual evolution of informal institutions can be explained by their distinct roots. The process of change within these socially based institutions is very time-consuming since informal institutions are absorbed by the participating actors and replicate themselves by influencing future behavioral expectations, whereas formal institutions can only be altered by state authorities. Informal institutions, albeit unofficial, can be comprehended and characterized at the analytical level since they exhibit unique rules of identity and operational logic that set them apart from other types of institutions. According to Zintl

(1993: 89), "We are dealing with systems which, rather than merely dealing with statistical aggregates, have a clear difference between the internal and external perception of actors as well as in terms of the type and density of interactions."

Differences Between Informal Institutions and Related Concepts

The distinctions between formal and informal institutions have been highlighted in this brief talk. As North pointed out, the differences are not only in degree when it comes to their ideal kinds (from a methodological standpoint) (1990: 46). The reflections also show that informal institutions, which encompass all non-formally defined behavioral patterns, are more than just a residual category. In the debate that follows, informal institutions are set apart from other ideas to emphasize this even further.

More than regularities (as in habits or routines, such as the particular order of the US presidential primary), structures (such as social stratification patterns), or fashions and trends (we do not consider something as an informal institution just because the majority of people wear the same style of clothing during a given season), informal institutions are more than that. Although structures and regularities are crucial components of informal institutions, they are insufficient. Routines and cultural patterns are viewed as informal institutions in various neo-institutional methods. It appears that informal institutions and culture are the same thing. However, to equate informal institutions with culture would be to overlook significant differences. Culture and informal institutions are never the same. While there isn't a single widely recognized definition of culture, all of the ones that do exist have two things in common. First, the term "culture" refers to a wide range of concepts, such as laws, morals, traditions, and practices. Collectively, these point to patterns of a shared identity, which in turn offer a particular reading (or construction) of the world and inspire the adoption of shared lifestyles (or limit the range of behaviors that may be taken) to some extent. However, individual behaviors are not determined by culture as a whole in the same (concrete) manner as they are by informal institutions. Secondly, and this is directly related to the previous point, cultural patterns lack means for punishment, whereas informal institutions may be imposed through them. Cultural norms do not penalize actors for deviating from their particular patterns of behavior, even when such departures occur. It is imperative to incorporate a third element: the differentiation between values and expectations. "Informal institutions reflect shared expectations, but not necessarily shared values," according to Helmke and Levitsky (2012: 38). Informal institutions signify the cognitive aspect of culture in this view.

Concepts of culture and informal institutions intersect. It is possible to view informal institutions as an essential component of cultural norms. Both are present in certain social phenomena, including customs. But not every kind of custom needs to be regarded as an institution. Customs can sometimes be associated with the regular actions of lone people or small groups. For others, they signify nothing at all. Routines followed by very large groups can also be considered customs. This does not imply that these traditions—such as "many people are used to going on vacation" or "many people are used to participating in

elections"—constitute informal institutions. These conventions are easily modifiable at the individual level due to their relatively modest transaction costs. However, customary law unmistakably denotes a certain kind of informal entity. Although some authors use the terms interchangeably, informal politics and informal institutions are not the same thing (Eisenstadt 2013). Different sets of acts are included in informal politics, and they do not always have to be connected to institutions. In addition to having a spontaneous or unpredictable nature, informal behaviors can also be guided by norms. Coalition talks, corporatist gatherings, and secret conversations held behind closed doors are a few instances of informal politics. Like cultural norms, there are no notable punitive mechanisms in place for informal politics.

A small portion of the informality world consists of institutions. The distinctions between informal institutions and these other forms of informality are notable, if not particularly great, as the discussions of other forms of informality have demonstrated. It is conceivable for politics, informal practices, and regular practices to combine to build strong informal institutions in this way.

Relationship Between Formal and Informal Institutions

Significant differences exist in the relationships between official and informal institutions. There are three possible outcomes for the interplay between informal and formal institutions: (1) competition; (2) reinforcement; or (3) neutrality. Of the examples, only the first two are important to scholars. Relationship type (2) illustrates a situation that is typical of many well-established democracies, in which the official and informal rules support one another. When the current structure of official institutions is inapplicable, informal institutions offer direction. The inflexibility of formal institutions can also be lessened by informal institutions. Formal institutions are undermined when informal and formal institutions compete with one another (relationship type (1)). The rules established by formal institutions are altered, weakened, or subverted by informal institutions. Formal institutions lose their major ability to affect actors' conduct once this happens to a large extent. As a result, formal institutions can no longer ensure that actors will behave in a certain way.

Formal institutions may even be eliminated or displaced as a result of competition between formal and informal institutions. A tenuous cohabitation between the two may also result from it. Informal institutions in these circumstances rely on the presence of formal institutions. Formal institutions are sacrificed for the existence of informal institutions, which make use of them for personal gain. Informal institutions either fully penetrate or occupy a portion of formal institutions. Informal institutions are hence parasitic establishments. One example of an unofficial institution like this is corruption. It is important to see informal institutions as "penetrating" surroundings (Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 13). They significantly avoid any empirical examination that is quantitative since they do not alter the formal institutions' legal framework. Informal institutions are similarly frequently invisible in this sense.

An additional differentiation between formal and informal institutions is provided by Helmke & Levitsky (2014: 728). They distinguish between four categories of non-formal institutions: (1) substitutive; (2) accommodating; (3) complementary; and (4) competitive. Differentiating between forms of informal institutions based only on how they relate to formal ones is not persuasive since it subjects any categorization to a specific context. The aforementioned associations align with two of the four categories that Helmke and Levitsky conceived. Formal and informal institutions work best when they complement one another. Informal and formal institutions are in a competitive relationship when they face off against one another. The substitutive type proposed by Helmke and Levitsky describes an environment in which formal and informal institutions work in concert. In such instances, it's unclear if formal institutions exist or are just inefficient.

The accommodating type of Helmke and Levitsky is interesting. In this case, informal rules affect the results of the formal regulations in place rather than directly affecting them. As per the assertion made by Helmke and Levitsky (2014: 729), "they contradict the formal rules' spirit, but not their letter." However, the examples the authors used to show the accommodating type suggest that when we distinguish between two levels of abstraction (governance vs. regime type), this type may be categorized as the complementing type. In this specific instance, coalition presidentialism, which is predicated on unofficial coalition agreements, runs counter to the spirit of presidentialism as a system of government but not to the ethos of democracy as an institution. Therefore, when the informal institution's goal is in line with the formal institution's normative intention, the accommodating type is equivalent to the complimentary type. Coalition presidentialism has also been connected to other types of unofficial institutions, such as "clientelism" and "perverse elite agreements" (Thiery 2011: 17). Even if they might not necessarily be crimes, these behaviors are unquestionably against the spirit of democracy. These informal institutions have to be categorized as competitive institutions rather than accommodating ones if their goals conflict with democratic values. Thus, a closer look into Helmke and Levitsky shows that it's important to acknowledge the normative nature of informal institutions. It is also important to build an informal institution typology on an institution's internal characteristics rather than how formal and informal institutions relate to one another.

Types of Informal Institutions

Just one aspect of the universe of political informal institutions is represented by the several manifestations and forms of informal institutions that were discussed in the preceding paragraphs. To organize the complexity that exists in the formal world, categories are required. There are several instances of informal institutions that are classified in the social science literature. Some, like trust or distrust, are typified by a high degree of abstraction (Putnam 1993). Such fundamental standards, or dispositions of conduct, have a big impact on how actors behave in a lot of different contexts. Others provide a highly particular meaning in some contexts or are connected to unique conditions (low degree of abstraction). One instance would be the particular way that common people in Germany

were required to greet one another under the Third Reich. Another example of this kind of informal institution that dictates how a family or clan would respond to a capital crime is a vendetta, often known as a blood feud. Each of these behavioral characteristics has a certain context attached to it. These informal institutions are irrelevant outside of a particular setting. Informal rights systems, corrupt systems, and clientelism are examples of a third category of informal institutions, which are situated at the meso level of abstraction. Compared to the first kind, these institutions are more focused, but they also cover a wider range of activities.

Thus, as the following examples show, several subtypes of informal institutions are incorporated into informal institutions like clientelism and corruption. Every one of these particular subtypes has a distinct significance. The situation of clientelism serves as an example of this, where we may differentiate between four groups: (1) autocratic cliques and clientelistic parties; (2) mafia; (3) kinship; and (4) nepotism. There are two categories of corruption that we can identify. The many traits corruption can take on are the basis for the subtypes. In one case, social players attempt to sway political outcomes by providing a financial donation (*bribe*). In a second case, public servants request financial contributions from the public in exchange for performing an administrative duty that they would have to perform otherwise (*extortion*). At a higher level of abstraction, aggregated institutions like corruption and clientelism could provide common patterns in addition to subtypes. These loose institutional arrangements have the potential to produce a secret constitution, a cronyism or rent-seeking system, or a neo-patrimonial system. An institution's level of abstraction can be gauged by the range of acts it permits. The variety of actions covered increases with increasing abstraction level. As abstraction levels drop, so does the range of possible actions. The abstraction category is used in a way that is similar to Sartori's classification of formal institutions along the abstraction ladder.

In addition to their degree of abstraction, informal institutions can be distinguished by a second normatively based criterion, which is their ties to *civic traditions*. This distinction is comparable to that made between democracy and tyranny. The latter are embodied in the defense of the rights that all people are entitled to. As O'Donnell (1996) points out, non-civic traditions, on the other hand, uphold the notion of difference and, with it, particularistic patterns. There is, generally speaking, a constant conflict between particularism and universalism. Long-standing civic traditions are deeply rooted in fundamental values such as trust, solidarity, tolerance, and justice. Distrust, egoism, intolerance, or injustice (at least about unknown and foreign groups) are characteristics of the particularistic viewpoint. The term "civic pool" (CP) refers to the former, and "anti-civic pool" (ACP) to the latter. Both of these can be connected to more precisely defined institutions at lower abstraction levels.

There are more instances of the civic pool as well as the anti-civic pool in addition to the unofficial institutions that have already been discussed. Unwritten constitutional norms that exist in Great Britain are among the features found inside the CP. Informal norms can be found in other political systems as well, even though this one is frequently cited in the

literature and is thought to be an uncommon example. One thinks of coalition presidentialism in Brazil and Chile or the consociational systems of Austria and Switzerland. Simultaneously, there are more particular unwritten norms that may be observed that influence a nation's laws and governance. These particular, informal rules harmoniously coexist with formal institutions. They modify the formal rules' substance, which is intended to organize the administrative process. Two instances among many include the president of the United States' actual legislative authority and a coalition agreement among political parties (as in Germany, for example). Civil disobedience is another informal institution in the civic tradition. This institution is unique since, by definition, it is unlawful even yet it derives much of its legitimacy from civic norms and principles.

Customary law is an additional example of law that coexists alongside the rule of law. However, certain customs may not align with the idea of the rule of law. Any non-codified laws and customs that are recognized by public or private courts are considered customary law. This covers customary, nonreligious, and conventional legal frameworks, such as Sharia law in Islam. This covers hundreds of different (sub)types in a very broad field. A number of the informal institutions connected to these legal systems are consistent with the rule of law; others contradict it or are at odds with its fundamental ideas. Customary law, which is still based on folk customs, can even be used in non-state or even partially state-controlled tribunals. This is evident in several West African nations.

In the realm of commercial interactions, particularly internationally, a significant new profession has emerged: private companies handle conflict arbitration. Due to these arbitration procedures, business law was developed, which is well-known in the banking industry's self-regulation (Basel Accords). Neighborhood networks, such as self-help groups, migrant and savings clubs, or burial societies, are examples of informal legal systems that govern certain facets of social security. Numerous developing nations have these kinds of networks. In terms of how they interpret the law, self-help networks are informal institutions that either mimic or correspond to agreements created under the rule of law.

The ACP also provides political players with the weapon of violence as a method of influencing the political process. Violence does not have to be used consistently to be considered an informal institution. Actors threatening to use violence anytime political choices are about to be made is sufficient. It is possible to identify many forms of violence, just like in other institutions. Their objectives, methods of operation, and outcomes are different. The following circumstances might be classified as "identifiable forms of violence-based participation": organized crime, rioting, and the possibility of a coup d'état, to which Valenzuela (1992) alludes in his astute analysis of "perverse institutions."

Table 2: Map of Informal Institutions

Level of Abstraction	Civic Pool Universalism	Anti-Civic Pool Particularism
High	Trust / Solidarity Tolerance / Fairness	Distrust / Egoism Intolerance / Unfairness
Middle	Conventions Informal Parts of Constitutions Customary Law Compatible with the Rule of Law Civil Disobedience	Hidden Constitution (Delegative Code) Customary Law in tension with the Rule of Law Corruption, Clientelism, Power Threat / Threat Perception (Organized Crime)
Low	Administration Rules, Representation Quotas	Vendetta

Table 2's comparison between CP and ACP institutions is a little too stark. As customary law suggests, certain institutions fall under both groups. Alternatively, certain kinds (such as clientelism at the intermediate level or the headscarf at the lesser level) at the very least exist that straddle the boundary between both. The question of whether the basic codes—that is, institutions with a high degree of abstraction—should be regarded as institutions is also up for debate. Although they have external enforcements in place, these penalties are not always effective. Because of this, even if neo-institutional methods refer to them as institutions, the term "basic codes" appears more fitting than "institutions." One strategy to categorize informal institutions is to differentiate between the realm of informal institutions and the two aspects shown in Table 2.

Regimes Types and Informal Institutions, Developments, and Performance

Regime types, such as autocracies and democracies, are unique institutional structures that control how political power is distributed and organized. According to Fishman (1990: 428), the corresponding rules are formal institutions that undoubtedly have a significant influence on the populace. As previously said, formal and informal institutions can have distinct interactions with one another in all sorts of regimes.

Researchers looking at the interactions between formal and informal institutions should be aware that these interactions vary depending on the kind of regime. Informal institutions like corruption and clientelism create a tense dynamic in democracies. They can be categorized as complimentary in autocracies, as the analysis of sultanistic and neo-patrimonial regimes shows. However, under totalitarian regimes, corruption and clientelism undermine formal institutions and the ruling class's hold on the political system. The same logic holds when we distinguish between various forms of democracy and autocracy and associate them with subtypes of clientelism and corruption. Because of this, the relationship between formal and informal institutions varies depending on the kind of regime that is in existence. In varying political systems, the same institution might have rather diverse results.

This discovery holds significant relevance in the field of transition process research. Formal institutions alter during political changes. Consequently, the dynamic between formal and informal institutions undergoes modifications. Clientelism is one of the main informal institutions that support authoritarian governance. These same informal institutions might impede democratization both during and after the transition process. The impacts of other informal institutions, such as organized crime's violent intimidation, are the same as they were before the shift. There will also be new informal institutions and practices throughout the transition period, with mixed results. Analyzing informal norms in detail is necessary to determine if they help or hurt democracy. The analysis is around the influence of non-formal establishments on democratic institutions, which are those that guard and govern the three characteristics that makeup democracy: liberty, equality, and judicial and political authority. Every one of the ACP's informal institutions has a detrimental effect on democracy. Other non-formal institutions (like civil disobedience or coalition presidentialism) can work as functional substitutes for (distorted) official participation channels, so enhancing the quality of democracy (Lauth 2010). Therefore, informal institutions do not automatically make democracy worse. To a certain extent, different informal institutions have different effects on democracy. Informal institutions may genuinely assist democratic institutions, as demonstrated by customary law. By permitting greater common political engagement than in official democratic institutions run by elites, clientelist participation might indicate a good defensive reaction.

Thus, the battle for democracy is fought inside the informal sphere itself rather than based on the division between formal and informal institutions. A democracy cannot avoid the effect of informal political institutions, which operate in a variety of ways. For this reason, it is important to stress that an examination of a democracy's functioning would be insufficient without taking into account these institutions. For autocratic systems, the same logic holds.

Informal institutions that are part of the CP surely help formal democratic institutions or provide a buffer against the inflexibility of formal institutions, even though the issue is clearer when informal institutions threaten democracy. Studying informal institutions is essential to comprehend the processes of democratic consolidation and the operational mechanisms of democracies that are flawed. Evaluating emerging democracies necessitates a comprehensive examination of all informal institutions. The first step in doing empirical research is to list every institution in a certain political system. Given the intricate dynamics of the institutional network that makes up the regime, this endeavor occasionally appears never-ending (for instance, in the case of Russia, see Gelman 2013; Ledeneva 2016). The next line of inquiry is to structure and analyze the cohabitation of formal and informal institutions; the categories discussed above should aid with this analysis, which should improve our knowledge of the dynamics of both newly founded and long-standing democracies.

As suggested by Köllner (2012), are informal institutions more significant in autocracies than in democracies? There is some support for this as informal norms are specifically

mentioned in the majority of definitions of authoritarian governance. However, as little is currently known about the function of informal institutions under dictatorships, we are unable to draw broad conclusions from these definitions: There are not many empirical studies on informal institutions (Radnitz 2011: 354). We can, however, state with certainty that examinations of political reform processes ought to go beyond formal institutions. Informal institutions must always change in tandem with successful democratic transitions. Additional, crucial areas of study include hybrid regimes and flawed democracies. Do political regimes explain why informal institutions arise and persist? The growth of informal institutions can be attributed to several factors. The neo-institutional debate, which highlights various explanations (Jancsics 2014) that apply to informal institutions, has already addressed the majority of the arguments regarding their emergence (examples include reduction of transaction costs, fixed expectations, order and stability, power and interests). It is possible to distinguish between two main methods of generation by treating this argument carefully. One speaks of an "invisible hand" process that is more or less planned in which informal institutions realize requirements that are shared (Giordano 2013). These institutions may be the result of unofficial activities or they may be a sign of inadequate formal institutions. A different approach emerges consciously as a result of particular preferences ("visible hand"). Once more, there is a wide range of variations. They can support or even be essential to the democratic process (representation quotas, coalition agreements) or work against it (organized crime rules, for example). Köllner (2012: 7) mentions one particular instance of an informal institution's establishment. They can increase the political elites' ability to act and respond, making them appealing options. Little accountability and openness are often associated with informal institutions. Therefore, informal institutions serve as a means by which political elites maintain their dominance and power. Yes, elites also care about these institutions continuing to exist. Informal institutions survive because of processes of route dependence in addition to the interests of players. However, they are malleable and subject to change. Whether or whether they may be successfully directed relies on how suitable the supplied mean is in relation to the particular circumstance.

Informal institutions undoubtedly have an impact on social, political, and economic results. It is clear from the preceding considerations' logic that the result varies based on the kind of informal institution, its relationships to formal institutions, and their constellation. As previously said, the result changes in proportion to these changes during the transformation process. Similarly, the impact of non-formal institutions can range across several domains (political, social, and economic), as the debate over corruption serves to highlight (Debiel and Gawrich 2013). The use of precise ideas, categories, and classifications is required for the rigorous examination of the complicated study scenario. Numerous research on informal institutions have shown an intriguing finding: regardless of the variations among the types, they all exhibit the same principle: the law of reciprocity. Based on this conclusion, one may contend that informal institutions would foster interpersonal trust or perhaps serve as its foundation. This is undoubtedly the case in many

circumstances, but it's important to remember that many relationships are exclusive and that informal institutions can also be enforced. In this way, interpersonal trust—which is suitable for social capital—can be fostered inside limited groups, but not as an overlapping universal trust.

Methodological Reflections

Empirical comparative research still mostly focuses on formal institutions, despite political science research increasingly acknowledging the importance of informal institutions. The availability of data is one of the main causes of this. Since information on formal institutions is easily accessible, even qualitative research is feasible. With informal institutions, where it is still challenging to acquire empirical evidence, this is not always the case. In addition, researching unofficial institutions requires conducting time-consuming case studies using sociological and ethnological research techniques. The value of informal institutions has been shown by several empirical research (Ganev 2017; Grzymala-Busse 2010; Thiery 2011). Studies on informal governance (Christiansen et al. 2013; Christiansen and Neuhold 2012) might be integrated with these investigations.

Though there have been a few noteworthy exceptions (Helmke and Levitsky 2016), theoretical structures related to the study of informal institutions have not yet emerged. A new study program on informal institutions may start with a typology of informal institutions. The process of systematizing scientific results may also enable political actors to exert more influence over or even drive informal institutions. When doing this type of research, academics should remember to pinpoint the appropriate window of opportunity—that is, the point at which political actors have the power to alter informal institutions. It is also common knowledge that political reform frequently takes a while to materialize. As a result, it is necessary to examine political plans across far longer time horizons than are now done.

It is not the time to discuss the underlying reasons for change and stability. It should be noted, nevertheless, that this kind of discussion has to reveal the intricate interdependence between the two kinds of institutions. It is important to look at formal and informal institutions as independent and dependent factors. The efficacy, efficiency, and legitimacy of the political system are all directly impacted by changes made to any one aspect of the institutional architecture. Informal institutions have the power to influence formal institutions. Academics have long recognized that these modifications vary depending on the specific political environment. However, researchers still need to determine how much change—in the formal structure of a political regime—affects informal institutions and how changes within the informal institution world itself impact informal institutions.

Lastly, several additional theoretical and methodological consequences are highlighted. As previously said, the methodical examination of formal institutions is one of political science's greatest achievements. Numerous categorization typologies, such as consensus vs. majoritarian and presidential versus parliamentary, have been developed as a result of these assessments. Informal institutions are not taken into consideration by any of these

plans. Rather, they believe that formal institutions can autonomously manage the political system. This is an implausible premise. Institutions, formal and informal, are interconnected, as said. The logic of formal institutions can be influenced by informal institutions through a multitude of strategies. Therefore, to prevent conceptual stretching, researchers should assess the empirical validity of traditional political science presumptions (Lauth 2013). Extra alternative typologies with subtypes are needed for the study of (formal and informal) institutions (as sorts of faulty democracies). It also necessitates understanding the context-specific implications of the interactions between formal and informal institutions.

Conclusion

Institutions matter because they influence the structure of our society. Formal or informal norms established by institutions are adhered to by political players. There are informal institutions in every political system; it is challenging to understand how they relate to formal institutions. Scholars in their subfields often focus on their specific substantive institution of interest. It makes sense that there would be this division given professional specialization. However, there are valid reasons for academics to focus on institutions in several distinct substantive settings when considering how institutions form and operate in response to various strategic conundrums that face political actors. For instance, academics studying commitment issues may and ought to share more knowledge, regardless of whether these issues arise about peace accords, vote-buying, or presidential authority limitations. Similarly, by engaging with work on delegation across many substantive settings, academics who investigate principal-agent interactions within a specific context can learn more about adjacent fields as well as their area of study. We can only advance our grasp of increasingly intricate issues about the genesis and evolution of institutions by engaging in this sort of intra-disciplinary effort.

By using typologies to categorize informal institutions and methodically considering how they relate to formal institutions, one may more easily predict the consequences of informal institutions. However, this is just the beginning. Empirical research demonstrates that relationships between formal and informal institutions vary depending on the circumstances. This is accurate in terms of the number of institutions participating as well as the degree to which those institutions have the power to sway the players. Political action is filtered by both official and informal institutions. They can only influence a political process's result to a limited extent, though (Köllner 2012: 15). The preferences, interests, and beliefs of the players formed by these institutions (as well as how the actors in turn shape these institutions) must be taken into consideration to explain these results.

Without informal activity, no political system can endure. This has been brought to light by Hodgson (2016: 18): "To put it another way, legislative statements that lack support from the "informal" community are not legitimate institutions, but rather legal or "formal" institutions. This is not to say that laws are meaningless; rather, it is to say that laws become significant when they are assimilated into custom and habit. But contrary to what his

opening quote in the paper implies, this assertion does not imply that it is impossible to analytically separate the two realities. Formal and informal institutions must be kept apart to conduct an empirical analysis of their interactions. Though they make up a small portion of the informal world, informal institutions play a significant role in it. Political processes cannot be comprehended without taking into account the examination of already-existing informal institutions. Informal institutions may have little effect in certain situations or can "dominate" the game in others. As a result, every institutional study should include a classification of strong and weak institutions (Levitsky and Murillo 2019). The empirical results underline once more that informal institutions are not extinct. In today's political situations, traditional institutions still exist, while new informal institutions are always forming. Further investigation into the function of informal institutions is thus necessary.

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