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## Varieties of Subnational Undemocratic Regimes: Evidence from Argentina and Mexico

Agustina Giraudy

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**Abstract** This article analyzes concept formation and its empirical and theoretical implications for the study of subnational undemocratic regimes. The paper argues that extant conceptualizations of subnational political regimes, which generally draw on a strategy of “conceptual expansion” have important drawbacks for the study of subnational undemocratic regimes (SURs). To overcome these shortcomings, the article claims for a strategy of “conceptual separation” that disaggregates political regimes into two orthogonal dimensions, i.e., the access to and the exercise of state power. Drawing on original evidence from Argentina and Mexico, the article demonstrates that the strategy of conceptual separation helps researchers to (1) avoid truncation of the universe of cases for analysis, (2) obtain new and more precise information about the actual magnitude of the uneven territorialization of democracy, (3) recognize the existence of two ideal type domains of SURs: patrimonial and bureaucratic, and (4) gain more analytic leverage to identify the causal mechanisms that explain regime continuity within and across SUR types. In-depth case studies of the state of Puebla (Mexico) and the province of San Luis (Argentina) demonstrate empirically the workings of the mechanisms that account for regime continuity in bureaucratic-like SURs. The article also demonstrates the potential of distinguishing between SUR types for the study of SUR origins and SUR change.

**Keywords** Subnational undemocratic regimes · Regime types · Federal countries · Latin America

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In recent years, a growing number of scholars around the world have begun to study the existence and continuity of subnational undemocratic regimes (SURs) within democratic countries.<sup>1</sup> SURs are civilian *electoral* regimes characterized by the use and abuse of incumbent authority in order to prevent the opposition from taking office. Despite the fact that challengers exist and effectively compete in subnational elections, a variety of tactics employed by incumbents, such as electoral fraud, restricted access to media outlets and/or biased media coverage, electoral violence, and recurrent changes in electoral rules and political institutions, help them safeguard incumbency.

The existence of SURs has presented comparativists with the challenge of conceptualizing and measuring regimes that are neither fully authoritarian nor fully democratic. Researchers have generally responded to this challenge with the conceptual strategy of adding new attributes to the Schumpeterian minimalist, procedural definition of democracy. Although analysts tend to disagree about the specific attributes to be included, most of them nevertheless end up adopting, either intuitively or self-consciously, an expanded definition of democracy.<sup>2</sup>

Scholars using such definitions view democracy as a regime type that combines two subsets of attributes. One subset includes the attributes of the minimalist, procedural definition of democracy. These attributes connote the *access* to state power, such as fully contested elections with universal suffrage and the absence of massive fraud, as well as effective guarantees of civil liberties. The other subset encompasses the attributes embraced by the liberal and constitutional traditions of democracy. These attributes connote the *exercise* of state power, such as horizontal checks and balances, adherence to the rule of law, non-discretionary exercise of political power, and opportunities to exercise societal accountability. To obtain a single, overarching measure of subnational democracy, scholars of SURs typically combine or aggregate the attributes within each of these two subsets (e.g., Gibson 2005; Petrov 2005; McMann 2006; Behrend 2008; Gervasoni 2010a; Durazo Hermann 2010). As a result of this operation, most scholars characterize as SURs those cases that score low in terms of democratic attributes *and* that perform poorly on the exercise dimension. Thus, their cases of analysis are subnational units in which undemocratic rulers restrain access to power by rigging elections, restraining electoral competition, and violating civil rights and liberties, *while also* exercising power along patrimonial lines, i.e., arbitrarily and without accountability or adherence to the rule of law.

<sup>1</sup> See, among others, Fox (1994), O'Donnell (1999), Snyder (1999), Gibson (2005), Petrov (2005), Lankina and Getachew (2006), McMann (2006), Montero (2007; 2010), Behrend (2008), Giraudy (2009; 2010), Gervasoni (2010a; 2010b), Durazo Hermann (2010), Benton (2012), Tudor and Ziegfeld (2012).

<sup>2</sup> Examples of the numerous attributes that scholars add to the procedural, minimal definition of subnational democracy include lack of control by local incumbents over the media, the local legislature, opposition parties, lower-tier governments, and state resources (Gibson 2005); freedom to form and join organizations and the existence of institutions for making policies dependent upon preferences (McMann 2006); lack of control by local incumbents over business opportunities, the local judiciary, and clientelistic networks (Behrend 2008; Durazo Hermann 2010); and the absence of control by incumbents over national legislators, the existence of autonomous labor unions, business organizations, and autonomous NGOs (Gervasoni 2010b).

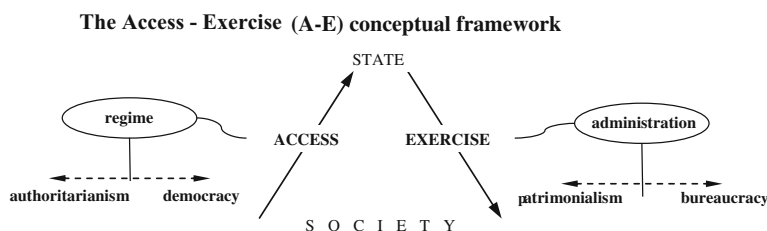
One of the central claims of this article is that the adoption of the expanded definition of democracy in studies of subnational political regimes, which has led scholars to focus only on one type of SUR, i.e., regimes that perform poorly on both the access and exercise dimensions, hampers our understanding of subnational undemocratic regimes. It does so for at least two reasons. First, because extant works have overlooked the existence of undemocratic regimes in which political power is exercised in an impersonal way—that is, in adherence to established rules and without resorting to patrimonial practices—scholars have relied on partial information for diagnosing the number of SURs in democratic countries. Second, by focusing exclusively on this particular subset of cases, researchers have only developed accounts of the causes and mechanisms of regime continuity in the patrimonial variety of SURs. As a result, existing research tells us very little about the mechanisms of regime continuity in places where subnational undemocratic incumbents exercise political power in a non-patrimonial manner.

To avoid the empirical and analytic pitfalls that result from an expanded definition of subnational democracy, this article employs an alternative conceptual strategy by drawing on Mazzuca's (1998; 2007; 2010) access–exercise (A-E) conceptual framework. The article demonstrates that the separation of these two subsets of attributes—access to and exercise of state power—into orthogonal sets is beneficial because it helps avoid case truncation, and, more importantly, improves our understanding of the mechanisms of regime continuity in those SURs in which power is not exercised in a patrimonial manner. Original cross-sectional and longitudinal data from SURs in Argentina and Mexico are employed in order to illustrate the payoffs of the A-E framework. Through in-depth case studies of two SURs, Puebla (Mexico) and San Luis (Argentina), the article demonstrates how, by distinguishing among different types of SUR, we can better understand regime reproduction in subnational unit districts in which state power is exercised in a relatively bureaucratic manner.

The article is organized as follows. “The A-E Conceptual Framework” section outlines and describes the building blocks of the A-E conceptual framework. “The A-E Conceptual Framework Applied: Subnational Evidence from Argentina and Mexico” section applies this framework to the subnational level of government in contemporary Argentina and Mexico, and discusses its empirical implications. “Mechanisms of SUR Continuity in Patrimonial and Bureaucratic SURs” section examines how the A-E framework is useful for identifying mechanisms of SUR reproduction and shows that different types of SUR have different mechanisms of regime continuity. Finally, “Conclusion” section draws on original, in-depth qualitative analyses of Puebla (Mexico) and San Luis (Argentina) in order to demonstrate that the mechanisms and scope conditions of regime continuity in those SURs in which political power is exercised along more bureaucratic lines are different from those of patrimonial SURs. The final section summarizes the findings of the article and discusses some additional analytical payoffs of distinguishing between different types of SUR.

## The A-E Conceptual Framework

The A-E conceptual framework, which was first developed by Mazzuca (1998), originated as a reaction to the conceptualization of *national* democracy employed



Source: Mazzuca (2007)

**Fig. 1** The access–exercise (A-E) conceptual framework

by researchers of the “quality of democracy” (QOD) during the 1990s and early 2000s. Scholars pursuing this research agenda typically added various attributes to Dahl’s definition of polyarchy, thereby creating an expanded concept of democracy. Typical additions include: systems of checks and balances (e.g., agencies of horizontal accountability), rule of law, channels to exercise vertical accountability, levels of clientelism, and corruption, among others.

In his assessment of the contributions of the QOD research program, Mazzuca (2007, 2010) notes that this strategy of conceptual expansion interferes with the development of causal explanations of post-democratic transition political patterns. In order to overcome this problem, Mazzuca proposes that the attributes added to the Dahlian conceptualization of democracy be rearranged. Instead of adding new attributes to the minimalist concept of democracy, he argues that the “new” attributes should be placed in an analytically distinct set or dimension.

According to Mazzuca (2007, 2010), the cornerstone of the alternative set is the distinction between *access* to and *exercise* of political power. Access to and the exercise of political power is viewed as analytically distinct aspects of the institutional structure of the state (see Fig. 1). As such, relations between the state and society can be grouped into two separate categories: “One, running upwards from the society to the state, involves the efforts of groups in society to gain control over state positions—the access side of politics. The other, running downwards from the state to society, refers to the use of political power to align the behavior of social groups with the order created by the state—the exercise side” (Mazzuca 2007, p. 45).

According to this framework, the political regime, as noted by traditional scholarship, is the prevailing mechanism of access to political power.<sup>3</sup> Whereas democracy consists of a mechanism that enables the whole adult population to access state power through competitive, fair, and clean elections, authoritarian regimes or autocracies are forms of access to the state not based on fair elections, or in which certain adult groups are excluded from participation. Conversely, state administrations are the sets of institutions that establish the rules and procedures through which incumbents exercise political power, and that manage and distribute state power and state resources (Mazzuca 2007, 2010; Hartlyn 1998; Ertman 1997). Following Weber

<sup>3</sup> Customarily, a political regime is defined as “the set of procedural norms, whether formal or informal, that determine the number and type of actors who are allowed to gain access to the principal governmental positions, the methods of access to such positions, and the rules that are followed in the making of publicly binding decisions” (Munck 1996, p. 8).

(1976 [1925]), state power can be exercised through administrations that range from patrimonial to bureaucratic.<sup>4</sup> Under patrimonial administrations, state power is exercised in an unlimited and arbitrary manner—as if it were an extension of the rulers' household. This allows incumbents to infringe on established general rules, to disregard the limits imposed by agencies of horizontal control, to distribute state resources following clientelistic and personalistic criteria, and/or to curb the autonomy of agents and organized groups that may exercise vertical (societal) control. Under bureaucratic state administrations, by contrast, state power is exercised in an impersonal way, state resources are distributed on the basis of merit and universalistic criteria, and rulers adhere to established and impersonal rules.

By distinguishing between access to and exercise of political power, the strategy of conceptual separation underlying the A-E framework introduces three major conceptual and analytic modifications to the strategy typically employed by scholars who rely on an expanded definition of democracy. First, by not adding new attributes to the root concept of democracy, the A-E framework retains the Dahlian meaning of democracy. Second, it places the “new” attributes (i.e., accountability, rule of law, clientelism, and patrimonialism) in a different analytic and conceptual set of elements—the state administration—that is orthogonal to the first set. Third, it defines “regime” in terms of access and “administration” in terms of exercise. Regime and administration, in turn, provide the overarching concepts underlying two sets of opposite types: authoritarianism/democracy and patrimonialism/ bureaucracy (Mazzuca 2010). Together, these three modifications, as Mazzuca (2010) argues, help researchers within the QOD research program to re-diagnose the problems conventionally viewed as deficiencies of democratization as issues of patrimonial rule (or failures of bureaucratization). These choices also enable scholars to search for the causes (and actors) that triggered the process of democratization, but at the same time locked in patrimonial rule.

Despite its conceptual and analytic contributions to the study of national-level democratic regimes, the A-E framework has not yet been applied to subnational levels of government. This is striking, as several of the analytic, empirical, and theoretical pitfalls identified by Mazzuca in the study of democracy at the national level are also inimical to the study of subnational levels of government. The next section scales down to this level of government in two of the largest federal countries in Latin America, Argentina, and Mexico, where SURs have proliferated.

## The A-E Conceptual Framework Applied: Subnational Evidence from Argentina and Mexico

### Definitions and Operationalization

*Access to State Power* The definition of subnational democracy adopted in this article follows Schumpeter (1947) by defining democracy in procedural terms. Yet unlike some leading analysts who adopt a procedural minimal definition of democracy

<sup>4</sup> Patrimonial and bureaucratic administrations are ideal types and, as such, are rarely found in practice. These ideal types simply serve as endpoints in a continuum and indicate that, at least conceptually, nothing can be more ideal. However, they draw attention to the fact that state administrations can be polar opposites.



(Collier and Levitsky 1997; Diamond, Hartlyn, Linz and Lipset 1999; Mainwaring, Brinks and Pérez-Liñán 2007), this article subscribes to Przeworski et al.'s (2000) procedural subminimal, or electoral (Schumpeterian), definition of democracy.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, subnational democracy is considered to have three constitutive elements: (a) fully contested elections (for both legislative and executive posts), (b) clean elections, and (c) alternation (turnover) in office. Figure 7 (Appendix) illustrates the operationalization of subnational democracy used in this study.<sup>6</sup>

*Exercise of State Power* As noted above, state administrations establish the rules and procedures through which incumbents exercise the (political) power conferred upon them by their ruling position. These rules determine whether political power can be exercised (a) with or without effective checks and balances, (b) according to clientelistic or programmatic criteria, (c) in compliance or noncompliance with established general rules, and (d) with or without effective vertical (societal) control (see Hartlyn 1998; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Mazzuca 1998; 2007). Accordingly, subnational state administrations may tap into four dimensions: (1) horizontal accountability, (2) patronage, (3) rulers' fiscal discretion,<sup>7</sup> and (4) societal accountability. Figure 8 (Appendix) illustrates the operationalization of subnational state administrations employed in this study.<sup>8</sup>

The dataset used to measure subnational democracy encompasses 24 provinces in Argentina and 32 states in Mexico. Data used to measure state administrations (or patrimonialism) cover 21 provinces in Argentina and 31 states in Mexico.<sup>9</sup> Databases span the 1983–2006 period in Argentina and the 1997–2006 period in Mexico. Time intervals in each country start with the most recent transition to democracy at the national level, as these transitions paved the way for “regime juxtaposition,” (Gibson 2005) that is, the coexistence of nationally democratic and subnationally undemocratic regimes.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The decision to adopt a *subminimal* Schumpeterian (rather than a Dahlian) definition of democracy is due mostly to problems of data availability. The lack of systematic, comparable subnational data to measure, for instance, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, or human rights violations makes impossible an operationalization of democracy according to *minimal* standards.

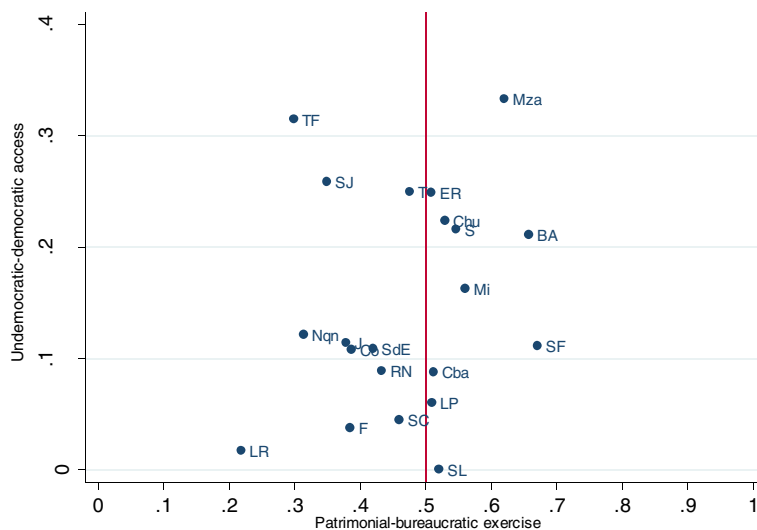
<sup>6</sup> Appendix (Section I) discusses indicators of democracy and aggregation procedures.

<sup>7</sup> This dimension is used as a proxy for rulers' attachment to established rules and procedures. For a justification of its selection, see the Appendix (Section II). This secondary-level dimension captures rulers' capacity to discretionally allocate fiscal transfers among lower-tier levels of government (municipalities).

<sup>8</sup> Appendix (Section II) discusses indicators of patrimonialism and aggregation procedures.

<sup>9</sup> The exercise of state power is not calculated for the cities of Buenos Aires and Mexico City because, unlike other provinces/states, they do not possess lower levels of government (municipalities). Due to the absence of this lower-tier level of government, the “(subnational) rulers' fiscal discretion” dimension cannot be computed, thus preventing comparability with other districts. Data on judicial independence were unavailable for Catamarca and Chaco, which is why the exercise dimension was not computed in these provinces.

<sup>10</sup> The onset of democratization in Argentina is set in 1983, when military rule was replaced by a democratically elected civilian government. In Mexico, it is set in 1997, since, according to prominent Mexican scholars, this year marked the onset of democratization in the country at the federal level (see, for instance, Magaloni 2005). In 1997, the PRI lost its majority in the lower chamber of Congress, and consequently its hegemony in the legislative arena.



**Fig. 2** Access and exercise (Argentina, 1983–2006 average). Notes: Y-axis: Higher values indicate higher levels of subnational democracy; 0 and near 0 scores denote undemocratic regimes. X-axis: Higher values of exercise indicate higher levels of subnational bureaucratization. BA (Buenos Aires), Chu (Chubut), Co (Corrientes), Cba (Córdoba), ER (Entre Ríos), F (Formosa), J (Jujuy), LP (La Pampa), LR (La Rioja), Mza (Mendoza), Mi (Misiones), Nqn (Neuquén), RN (Río Negro), S (Salta), SJ (San Juan), SL (San Luis), SC (Santa Cruz), SF (Santa Fe), SdE (Santiago del Estero), TF (Tierra del Fuego), T (Tucumán)

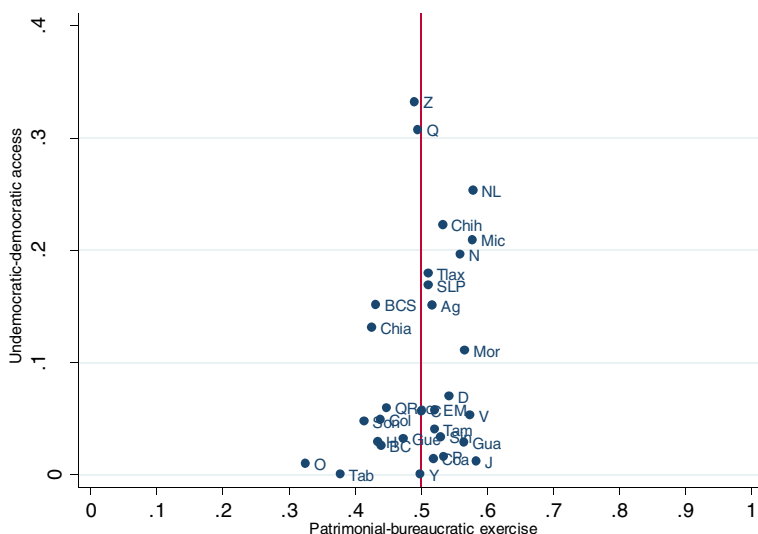
## Results

Figures 2, 3, 4, 5 below plot Argentine provinces and Mexican states along the access and exercise analytic dimensions.<sup>11</sup> At least four conclusions can be drawn from these graphs. First, the charts substantiate empirically the value of conceptual separation. Mazzuca's conceptual and analytic distinction between institutions of access and institutions of exercise is corroborated at the subnational level, as these two dimensions are not part of the same underlying empirical domain. Indeed, the magnitude of the correlation coefficient between measures of subnational access and exercise is low: 0.25 (Argentina) and 0.26 (Mexico).<sup>12</sup> This evidence suggests that the strategy of conceptual expansion commonly employed by scholars of SURs is problematic and needs to be reassessed, since it lumps together attributes that are not empirically related.

Second, the application of the A-E conceptual framework provides evidence that the use of the expanded definition of democracy leads to an omission of relevant cases. As noted above, scholars who use an expanded definition of democracy classify as SURs only those cases that score low on the access *and* exercise dimensions. According to these criteria, only those states and provinces in the lower-left quadrant of Figs. 2 and 3 would be classified as undemocratic. These are the cases identified and studied by Gibson (2005), Behrend (2011), Durazo Hermann (2010), and Benton (2012), among others. Cases in the lower-right quadrant of Figs. 2 and 3 would not be regarded as undemocratic because political power in these districts is

<sup>11</sup> Scores in Figs. 5 and 6 are averages for 1983–2006 (Argentina) and 1997–2006 (Mexico).

<sup>12</sup> Significance levels are 0.27 and 0.15, respectively. The low correlations, however, do not rule out the possibility that one dimension is necessary for the other. Future studies should explore this possibility.



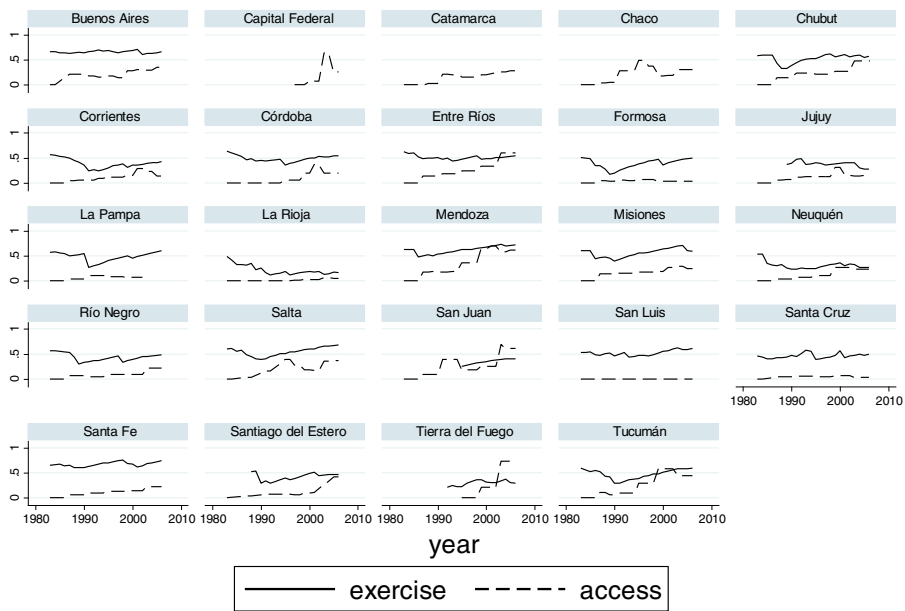
**Fig. 3** Access and exercise (Mexico 1997–2006 average). Notes: Y-axis: Higher values indicate higher levels of subnational democracy; 0 and near 0 scores denote undemocratic regimes. X-axis: Higher values of exercise indicate higher levels of subnational bureaucratization. *Ag* (Aguascalientes), *BC* (Baja California), *BCS* (Baja California Sur), *C* (Campeche), *Chia* (Chiapas), *Chih* (Chihuahua), *Coa* (Coahuila), *Col* (Colima), *D* (Durango), *EM* (Estado de México), *Gua* (Guanajuato), *Gue* (Guerrero), *H* (Hidalgo), *J* (Jalisco), *Mic* (Michoacán), *Mor* (Morelia), *N* (Nayarit), *NL* (Nuevo León), *O* (Oaxaca), *P* (Puebla), *Q* (Queretaro), *QRoo* (Quintana Roo), *SLP* (San Luis Potosí), *Sin* (Sinaloa), *Son* (Sonora), *Tab* (Tabasco), *Tam* (Tamaulipas), *Tlax* (Tlaxcala), *V* (Veracruz), *Y* (Yucatán), *Z* (Zacatecas)

not exercised in a patrimonial manner. This would exclude cases such as La Pampa in Argentina or Guanajuato and Jalisco in Mexico would not be regarded as undemocratic, despite the fact that they score low on the access dimension. In sum, Figs. 2 and 3 vividly illustrate that scholars who employ an expanded definition of democracy may be wrongly omitting a considerable number of cases that comprise the universe of SURs.

Figures 2 and 3 then demonstrate that the expanded definition of democracy typically employed results in a serious undercounting of SURs. Indeed, the information in these datasets and graphs suggests that the territorially uneven process of democratization in Argentina and Mexico has been much more severe than previously believed. If one considers both the patrimonial and bureaucratic SURs located at the bottom of Figs. 2 and 3, the picture of territorially uneven democratization that emerges is truly bleak: at least 19 states in Mexico and 10 provinces in Argentina have remained undemocratic during the period studied.<sup>13</sup>

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the information presented in Figs. 2, 3, 4, and 5 is that, contrary to conventional wisdom, a significant number of SURs

<sup>13</sup> Cluster analyses were employed to separate the cutoff points between states and provinces that rank zero or near zero from those ranking higher on the democracy scale. In a scale that ranges from 0 to 1, the cutoff point was set at 0.17 in Argentina and at 0.08 in Mexico. SURs in Argentina include: La Rioja, San Luis, Santiago del Estero, Santa Cruz, Formosa, La Pampa, Río Negro, and Neuquén (see Fig. 7, Appendix). SURs in Mexico include: Oaxaca, Puebla, Baja California, Coahuila, Colima, Hidalgo, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Guanajuato, and Yucatán (see Fig. 8, Appendix). The results of these cluster analyses are available from the author.



Graphs by province

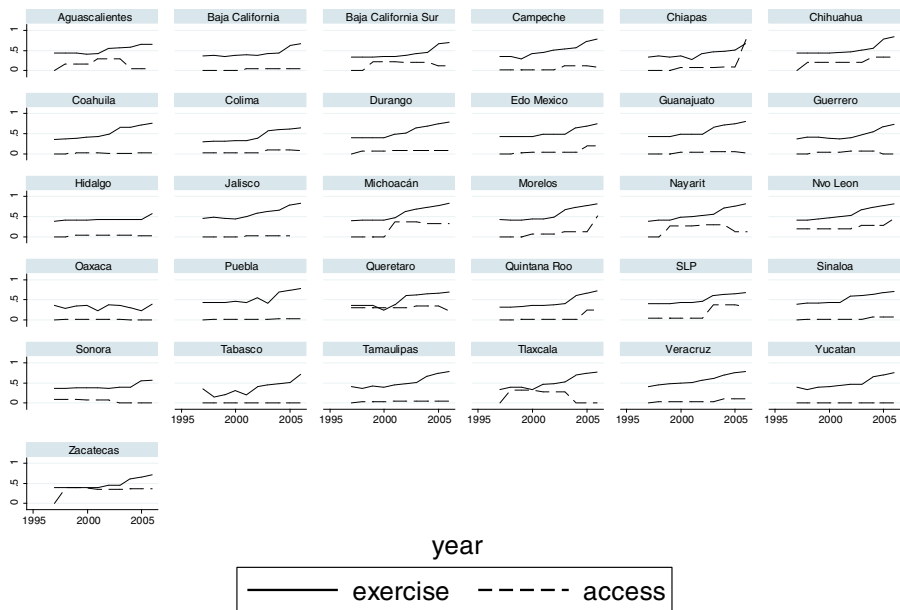
**Fig. 4** Access and exercise in Argentina (1983–2006). Higher values of access indicate higher levels of subnational democracy; 0 and near 0 scores denote subnational undemocratic regimes. Higher values of exercise indicate higher levels of subnational bureaucratization

exercise state power along fairly bureaucratic lines and without necessarily abusing power. This finding, which has been overlooked in existing studies of SURs, suggests that states and provinces that score low in terms of subnational democracy approximate two general types: patrimonial and bureaucratic. Acknowledging the existence of different SUR types is critical for establishing well-defined and independent domains of cases within which analysts can identify causal (unit) homogeneity. This, in turn, is essential for gaining a more thorough understanding of the origins of each regime type, the implications of regime types for policy making (Snyder 1999), and the specific causal mechanisms that underpin regime continuity within each SUR type. As shown in the next section, mechanisms of regime reproduction are specific to each SUR type and do not travel well to other case domains.

### Mechanisms of SUR Continuity in Patrimonial and Bureaucratic SURs

Due to truncation of the universe of cases, the growing literature on SURs has only analyzed the mechanisms of regime continuity for SURs located in the lower-left quadrants of Figs. 2 and 3, i.e., patrimonial SURs. Consider, for instance, Gibson's (2005) theory of “boundary control.”<sup>14</sup> Gibson analyzes the undemocratic patrimonial province of Santiago del Estero in Argentina and the undemocratic patrimonial

<sup>14</sup> Economic dependence, as McMann (2006) demonstrates, is another mechanism of SUR continuity. Yet this mechanism is a more adequate explanation of regime reproduction in patrimonial SURs, since inhabitants in these settings are more dependent on the state and its handouts.



Graphs by state

**Fig. 5** Access and exercise in Mexico (1997–2006). Higher values of access indicate higher levels of democracy; 0 and near 0 scores denote undemocratic regimes. Higher values of exercise indicate higher levels of bureaucratization

state of Oaxaca in Mexico. He argues that SURs remain intact when incumbents carry out strategies of boundary control, through which they successfully maximize influence over local politics and prevent provincial opposition forces from accessing national allies and resources. Gibson argues that SUR incumbents reproduce their regimes by preventing local opposition forces from breaching provincial borders and bringing potential national allies into local politics. This boundary control mechanism of SUR reproduction is more likely to operate in patrimonial SURs, where incumbents can monopolize state resources, harass the local population, and control or co-opt local opposition forces, thereby hindering coalition-making between politicians at the national and local levels. Evidence from various patrimonial SURs, such as Oaxaca in Mexico and the Argentine provinces of Corrientes, La Rioja, Formosa, and Santiago del Estero, confirm the existence of this phenomenon (Gibson 2005; Lakin 2008; Durazo Hermann 2010; Behrend 2008; Giraudy 2009; 2010; Benton 2012).

Boundary control, however, cannot explain SUR continuity in bureaucratic settings. Bureaucratic administrations, such as those found in the undemocratic Mexican states of Guanajuato and Jalisco and the undemocratic Argentine province of La Pampa, are more conducive to boundary opening. Under such administrations, rulers are less capable of exercising tight control over state resources, territory, and local opposition parties/groups, and are thus less effective at preventing the formation of local–national alliances that have the potential to bring down SURs. In other words, the kinds of boundary control strategies that Gibson describes as mechanisms of SUR reproduction are unlikely to be effective where bureaucratic administrations prevail.

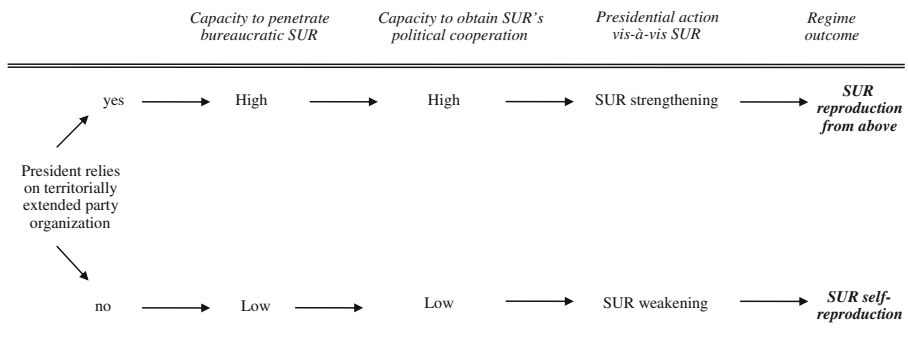
Existing research, then, can tell us very little about the persistence of undemocratic regimes with non-patrimonial administrations, or those regimes found in the lower-right quadrants of Figs. 2 and 3. Accordingly, the remainder of this article seeks to theorize new mechanisms to explain regime continuity in this type of SUR.

As noted above, incumbents in bureaucratic SURs have less capacity (1) to concentrate political authority, (2) to discipline the local population politically and economically, and (3) to control territory and municipalities. As such, they are more susceptible to the infiltration of national-level political actors who forge alliances with provincial opposition forces. This vulnerability to outside penetration becomes particularly acute when national political elites and presidents can rely on territorially extended party organizations. Presidents and elites who possess territorially extensive party organizations are able to gain political presence at the local level, win over territorial spaces, and circumvent subnational autocrats' territorial authority.<sup>15</sup> Successful infiltration is also an important tool that presidents can use to discipline and ultimately control SUR incumbents. National rulers who have access to extended territorial party organizations may use state-level partisan branches to increase their presence within SURs. For example, they may use these local party organizations to win control of municipal governments, which they can then use to curb the power of SUR incumbents or to exert control over them.

Presidential control over SURs is crucial for turning undemocratic incumbents into allies. Subnational autocrats who are in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis the central government can in fact be very beneficial for a president in need of political support. Since subnational undemocratic incumbents control local electoral processes, local and national legislators, and voters (Gibson 1997, 2005; Hagopian 1996; Hunter and Power 2007), they are potentially attractive political allies and important providers of political benefits to national rulers. Hence, if presidents can control subnational autocrats and ensure their political cooperation, they are in a position to induce and routinely obtain subnational rulers' cooperation.

The possibility of control over subnational autocrats, which in bureaucratic SURs is made possible by the set of institutions that disperse political power and maximized by the existence of an extended territorial party organization, provides an incentive for presidents to sustain rather than dismantle SURs. Through the implementation of various policies, they can help maintain these autocrats and their regimes in power. When this occurs, presidents engage in *SUR reproduction from above*. Yet presidential penetration and control over undemocratic incumbents/arenas cannot always be attained. Despite the fact that bureaucratic SURs are more penetrable and therefore—potentially, at least—more vulnerable vis-à-vis national rulers, only presidents with access to *territorially extended partisan organizations* can take full advantage of the political benefits that stem from these regimes' “porousness.” When presidents lack partisan allies (i.e., mayors, delegates, brokers, and community organizers) at the local level, it is more difficult for them to forge coalitions to undermine SUR incumbents' territorial bases of power. As a result, presidential leverage over SUR rulers is less effective and less threatening, and the prospect of obtaining subnational autocrats' acquiescence and

<sup>15</sup> See, for instance, Mainwaring (1999); Jones, Sanguinetti and Tommasi (2000); Stepan (2000); Garman, Haggard and Willis (2001); Samuels (2003); Wibbels (2005); Levitsky (2003); and Caramani (2004).



**Fig. 6** Mechanisms of continuity in bureaucratic SURs

cooperation is diminished. This weak presidential disciplining power, in turn, enables incumbents in bureaucratic SURs to maintain the status quo and keep their regimes alive. When this occurs, regime continuity results from *SUR self-reproduction*. In these cases, regime continuity is not the result of subnational autocrats' capacity to close provincial borders, which in bureaucratic SURs is rather low; rather, it is the result low presidential capacity to penetrate these regimes. Figure 6 summarizes the two alternative mechanisms of regime continuity in bureaucratic SURs. To explore empirically the operation of these mechanisms of regime reproduction, the next section draws on original qualitative research from two bureaucratic SURs: Puebla (Mexico) and San Luis (Argentina).

### Puebla under Governor Melquíades Morales (1998–2004)

As Fig. 5 illustrates, Puebla has been one of the least democratic states in Mexico. Using a variety of non-democratic tactics, such as electoral fraud and electoral violence, incumbents in Puebla managed to safeguard the Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI) incumbency for more than 80 years. In the 1990s, despite low levels of democracy, the exercise of power in the state began a protracted shift from patrimonialism to bureaucratization.

This shift began during PRI Governor Manuel Bartlett's administration (1992–1998) and was partly a consequence of the governor's resolution to modernize Puebla.<sup>16</sup> Bartlett, as several interviewees put it (Table 1), was determined to show the rest of Mexico what he would have done with the country had he become Mexico's new president (interviews 1, 2, 3<sup>17</sup>). His project was ambitious: he invested heavily in public works, engaged in important projects of urban development, and placed a strong emphasis on the construction of technological schools and universities. All of this contributed to the modernization of the state's physical and human infrastructure. Bartlett's project also sought to modernize the local PRI bureaucracy by neutralizing the power of the party's traditional and corporatist sectors, whose

<sup>16</sup> Manuel Bartlett was a prominent federal minister during the presidential administrations of Miguel de la Madrid (1982–1988) and Carlos Salinas (1988–1994), and was a PRI presidential nominee on numerous occasions.

<sup>17</sup> Information about interviewees' names, positions, and date/place of interviews can be found at the end of this article.

**Table 1** List of interviews conducted by the author

No., name	Position	Location	Date
1. Morales, Melquiades	Governor of Puebla	Mexico City	8 Oct 2007
2. Hernandezy Genis, Antonio	Technical secretary to the PRI (Puebla)	Puebla City	3 Oct 2007
3. Ehlinger, Jorge	President of the PAN in the state of Puebla	Puebla City	1 Oct 2007
4. Alcántara, Jaime	Adjunct Secretary to the Presidency of the National PRI (2007)	Mexico City	25 Sep 2007
5. Fraile, Francisco	Former President of the PAN in the state of Puebla	Puebla City	5 Oct 2007
6. Mantilla, Miguel Ángel	PAN Federal Delegate of the Secretaría de Economía	Puebla City	3 Oct 2007
7. Moreno Valle, Rafael	PRI Secretary of the Treasury of Puebla (1999–2003), PAN Senator (2006–2010)	Mexico City	27 Sep 2007
8. Contreras, Coeto	PAN federal deputy (Puebla) (2006–2009)	Mexico City	20 Sep 2007
9. Germán	Leader of the Popular Organization of Sombrero Rojo, Canoa (state of Puebla)	Puebla City	3 Oct 2007
10. Ibáñez, Carlos	Advis or to the Undersecretary of Legislative Coordinator, Ministry of Interior (2003–2005)	Puebla City	3 Oct 2007
11. Velazquez, Felipe	Mayor of Atlitxco, Puebla (2002–2005)	Puebla City	28 Sep 2007
12. Hinojosa, Gabriel	Mayor of Puebla City (1996–1998)	Puebla City	2 Oct 2007
13. Anonymous interviewee	Top rank PRI politician	Mexico City	9 Jul 2007
14. Anonymous interviewee	Top rank PRI politician	Mexico City	22 Oct 2007
15. Escobedo, Salvador	Mayor of Atlitxco, Puebla (1996–1999)	Mexico City	12 Oct 2007
16. Miriam Agúndez	Secretary of Government in San Luis City's municipality	San Luis City	6 Jun 08
17. Oscar Montero	Secretary of Municipal Affairs, San Luis Government (2003–2007)	San Luis City	6 Jun 2008
18. Anonymous interviewee	Top rank official of San Luis City's municipality	San Luis City	5 Jun 2008

entrenched patrimonial practices gave the party a non-modern appearance to the outside world (interviews 2, 4, 11). To this end, he removed many of the more traditional politicians of the local PRI regime and replaced them with out-of-state technocratic ministers. More importantly, Bartlett openly repudiated electoral coalition-making with the local PRI bosses who controlled the state's hinterlands (interviews 5, 2, 11, 7, 15).

Bartlett's incipient bureaucratization had an important unintended consequence: it made the local bosses rebel against the governor. One of the strategies employed by local bosses to punish Bartlett's decision was to open up their strongholds to opposition parties, such as the National Action Party (PAN). As the former president of the PAN in Puebla noted: “Before the 1990s, I had attempted, with little success, to campaign in the interior. Every time I visited these parishes and handed out fliers, people would laugh at me and would return the fliers. My party's popularity changed abruptly in the mid-1990s, when the local bosses began to be ignored by Bartlett. José Esquítin, a powerful and well-known local boss from the Sierra in Puebla, for



example, allowed me to colonize the Sierra and open a PAN branch in the Sierra. I began with 200 followers; little by little, and with the permission of Esquitín, I managed to entice new followers” (interview 5). This penetration soon translated into PAN electoral victories. In the 1995 municipal elections, “the party's traditional bases, and the people in the interior,” as Governor Bartlett himself noted, “repudiated us. They all turned to the PAN, which then began to gain considerable force” (interview Bartlett).<sup>18</sup> The PRI's electoral debacle occurred not only in the interior but also in urban centers. For the first time since 1930, the party lost control of the state's capital, Puebla City, and other urban areas, such as Atlixco, to the PAN.

Threatened by the growing number of PAN-ruled municipalities, Bartlett resumed old patrimonial practices and toughened his position toward PAN mayors. During the last half of his administration (1995–1998), Bartlett behaved like his counterparts of the patrimonial SURs of Oaxaca, Tabasco, and Chiapas. Reportedly, he commissioned thugs to generate conditions of ungovernability in PAN-ruled municipalities and to apprehend violently officials of PAN-ruled municipalities (interviews 6, 12). It was also in this context that the famous “*ley Bartlett*” (Bartlett law) was put in place.<sup>19</sup> The Bartlett law allowed the governor to limit the amount of resources flowing to PAN municipalities and thus reducing the PAN mayors' capacity to deliver goods, and in turn their popularity and political clout.

As Fig. 5 shows, however, the exercise of bureaucratic state power gradually resumed during Melquiades Morales' PRI administration (1998–2004). Morales reduced levels of patronage through cuts in public sector employment and refrained from using partisan criteria in the distribution of federal aid, such as the *Fondo General de Participaciones* (General Participation Fund), among municipalities (Giraudy 2009; interviews 11, 2, 7, 10, 6). Several important state funds began to be allocated based on eligibility rather than political criteria. As many former opposition mayors indicated, the governor rewarded opposition municipalities based on their financial performance and their efficiency in the provision of public goods through a newly instituted program, the so-called FONCON. These criteria clearly benefited PAN-ruled municipalities (over PRI and PRD municipalities), which, in general, were ruled by less corrupt, more managerial, and more efficient mayors. Another factor reducing the patrimonial exercise of state power was Morales' commitment to refrain from implementing extreme tactics to crush, co-opt, or manipulate local opposition forces and local organized groups. As many *Poblano* opposition leaders noted, unlike what occurred during Bartlett's administration and in Mexico's other patrimonial SURs, such as Oaxaca or Tabasco, in which governors blackmailed opposition mayors with state audits and removal from office, opposition mayors in Puebla did not, for the most part, suffer these retaliations.

This context of relatively high bureaucratization under Morales helped to expand the power and number of opposition municipal governments and local opposition groups within the state, which in turn enabled presidential infiltration and control from within. This institutional scenario was particularly beneficial to the PAN's

<sup>18</sup> See also Eisenstadt 2004; Snyder 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Claiming the state's sovereignty, Governor Bartlett altered the formula to distribute earmarked federal funds among municipalities. Less populated municipalities (not coincidentally, those ruled by the PRI) were disproportionately favored by the new coefficients.

electoral consolidation in Puebla; the PAN went from controlling 10.14 % of municipalities in 1995 to 26.73 % in 2004. In effect, as several ex-mayors from the PAN reported, it was mostly through the FONCON program and other state funds that they managed to improve municipal infrastructure and thus win elections (interviews 11, 8). The election of new PAN deputies and senators was also critical for increasing the party's electoral clout in the state.<sup>20</sup> After the party's 2000 presidential victory, PAN federal legislators had ready access to cash transfers and subsidies, and they funneled additional funds to the local PAN branch. These funds, in turn, were used by local PAN brokers to reward adherents and attract new followers (interviews 10, 7). These resources helped President Fox to enlarge and sustain the PAN's support base, win over opposition factions, and gain a foothold in communities of the interior previously under PRI control (interviews 9, 7). Finally, the more bureaucratic nature of Puebla's state administration also enabled Fox (and the PAN) to side with and buy off local grassroots and organized groups that originally sympathized with the PRI. In sum, the electoral expansion of the PAN, as well as PAN mayors' greater financial and territorial autonomy, both a consequence of a more "porous" administration and a more bureaucratic exercise of state power, coupled with the injection of more funds to sustain the PAN's base of support, were all important factors in allowing greater presidential infiltration in the state and were key to expanding Fox's control from within over Morales.

Morales' policy of "bureaucratization without democratization" explains why federal infiltration and control over Puebla put the governor in a vulnerable, albeit not entirely weak, position vis-à-vis President Fox. As an undemocratic governor, Morales had tight control over the local PRI machine and the party's core supporters, as well as the local legislature and some *Poblano* federal deputies and senators.<sup>21</sup> He also wielded considerable influence over other PRI governors from southeastern states, whom President Fox needed in order to implement his much-resisted plan of regional integration (Plan Puebla Panama), which was a core part of the president's political agenda. For all of these reasons, Morales was, in Fox's eyes, a key coalitional partner, who, given his vulnerability vis-à-vis the federal government, could be induced to deliver important strategic benefits in a context in which the president lacked majorities in both chambers of Congress. Fox thus saw great value in ensuring the continuity of Puebla's undemocratic governor and the regime that kept him in power (interviews 10, 13).

Throughout the years of President Fox's administration, Morales was rewarded with additional discretionary funds from the federal government, which were critical for carrying out various projects and for covering the state's financial deficit (interviews 1, 10, 7). Indeed, Puebla was among the greatest beneficiaries of both the *Programa de Apoyo Financiero a las Entidades Federativas* (Program of Financial Support for the States), one of Mexico's most important financial assistance programs, and many *Convenios de Descentralización* (Decentralizing Agreements),

<sup>20</sup> The PAN went from holding 44.44 % of Puebla's seats in the federal lower house in 2000 to 70 % in 2006, along with two thirds of its senators.

<sup>21</sup> Unlike his predecessor, who had a more ambivalent relationship with local PRI politicians, technocrats, and party bosses, Morales sought to minimize conflict with them. One way in which he enticed these figures, and thus managed to expand his power over the local PRI branch, was by appointing them as secretaries of state (interviews 2, 7).

federal transfers destined for education, agriculture, and rural development projects (SHCP 2008). Morales, for his part, did not hesitate to break ranks with his party in order to support Fox's legislative initiatives. He not only instructed Puebla's PRI congressional delegation to vote for Fox's less ambitious and less controversial pieces of legislation, such as the law of access to public information and the civil service law, but also supported Fox in initiatives fiercely opposed by national PRI leaders, such as the 2003 fiscal reform (interviews 13, 14, 4, 10). Morales also became an important partner for electoral coalitions, "allowing" the PAN to win in local and federal mid-term and general elections. A major factor contributing to PAN victories was that Morales agreed not to intervene in municipal electoral races, surrendering his capacity to engage in ballot stuffing and guaranteeing a lower turnout of PRI voters (interviews 3, 10, 11).

In sum, the case study of Puebla illustrates how higher levels of bureaucratized state power can enable local opposition parties to expand their political presence and territorial power in a state by running municipal governments and receiving additional state and federal resources. This expansion, which greatly favored the PAN, was conducive to greater presidential infiltration in the state. Using his party organization as a springboard to penetrate Puebla, President Fox managed to control Governor Morales from within, thus increasing his ability to induce gubernatorial compliance in carrying out the presidential agenda. Because Morales was an important ally for coalition-making, and since the president had the means necessary to secure the governor's support, Fox had an interest in ensuring the continuity of Puebla's SUR. He thus channeled additional material resources to Puebla, which helped to keep the state's economy running and to enhance the political position of the undemocratic Governor Morales. In so doing, Mexico's first democratic president helped to reproduce an established undemocratic regime in the Mexican periphery.

#### San Luis under Governor Alberto Rodríguez Saá (2003–2007)

As shown in Fig. 4, San Luis has been one of the least democratic provinces of Argentina. Between 1983 and 2007, two governors from the *Partido Justicialista* (PJ or Peronist party), Adolfo Rodríguez Saá, and his brother, Alberto, ruled the district. From the mid-1990s onward, one-party rule was consolidated in the province, when Adolfo Rodríguez Saá began to win gubernatorial elections with wide margins of victory while also controlling solid majorities in the provincial legislature.<sup>22</sup> Despite more than 25 years of political hegemony, the exercise of state power in San Luis, like in Puebla, became less patrimonial with the passage of time.

Similar to Bartlett in Puebla, Governor Adolfo Rodríguez Saá (1983–2000) executed an ambitious program to modernize his province. Modernization in San Luis was in part the result of the implementation of a special "industrial promotion regime" (IPR), a national program that granted federal tax breaks and helped promote provincial industrialization. Unlike other provinces benefitting from IPR, San Luis

<sup>22</sup> Margins of victory for the Rodríguez Saá brothers over runners-up in gubernatorial elections were as follows: 3.26 in 1983, 19.20 in 1987, 12.32 in 1991, 55.03 in 1995, 10.44 in 1999, and 84.56 in 2003. Between 1983 and 2003, the Rodríguez Saás controlled an average of 55.34 % of the provincial legislators (Giraudy and Lodola 2008).

made industrial development the province's major economic activity. In 1980, before IPR was implemented, industrial activity only comprised 14.7 % of the provincial GDP; by 1991, it had reached 63.7 % (DPEyC-San Luis). As a result of this rapid industrialization, the economically active population in the manufacturing sector grew by 245.5 % between 1980 and 1991; the percentage of households living in poverty decreased from 27.7 % in 1980 to 18.6 % in 1991; and the percentage of households with no water and electricity dropped from 34.1 and 27.2 % in 1980, respectively, to 19.9 and 12.1 % in 1991 (Guiñazú 2003, pp. 59–64). Additionally, Governor Rodríguez Saá worked to ensure that the process of industrialization was accompanied by a substantial investment in public works. Roads, highways, sewage, housing for workers, and other public works were built at an impressive rate, enhancing the productivity of the newly installed industries and improving the living conditions of the local population (Guiñazú 2003).

In addition to modernizing the province, the Rodríguez Saá administration took important steps towards bureaucratizing state power, rationalizing the provincial public administration, and enhancing the administration's efficiency and predictability. For instance, in order to reduce levels of patronage, Rodríguez Saá twice (in 1987 and 1989) issued decrees to freeze vacancies and suspended the overtime payment system (FUNIF 1999 [Tomo II]). These measures, which were an exception to the pattern of provincial public employment policies in Argentina, helped to keep the size of the provincial administration in check and limited the governor's capacity to rely on a “captive electorate” of public employees, who, fearful of losing their jobs, would remain loyal to the governor. In 1988, Rodríguez Saá also passed several laws to establish wage caps for public employees, and in 1989, he suspended advanced payments for centralized and decentralized public personnel. In 1990, in order to further reduce levels of patronage, the governor put off special pension regimes, and in 1993, he implemented meritocratic procedures for hiring civil servants (see FUNIF 1999 [Tomo II]).

Lower levels of patronage and greater possibilities for economic development increased citizens' autonomy from the provincial government and created conditions favorable to the organization of an opposition middle class eager to engage in politics and to denounce Rodríguez Saá's undemocratic practices (Behrend 2008; Giraudy 2009). Unlike in patrimonial SURs in Argentina, such as La Rioja or Formosa, where regime opponents never had the political clout to win municipal elections, the opposition in San Luis managed to take office in several municipalities, including the province's capital, San Luis City,<sup>23</sup> and other important communities, such as Merlo. Opposition control of municipal governments peaked in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with 40.62 % of municipalities in 1999 and 59.38 % of municipalities in 2003 electing opposition mayors (Micozzi 2009). Moreover, unlike other Argentine SURs, regime opponents in San Luis were also able to take to the streets *en masse*. In 2004, for instance, political dissidents, including teachers, municipal employees, Catholic church officials, middle-class professionals, and shop owners, mobilized

<sup>23</sup> Forty percent of the provincial population resides in San Luis City (Dirección Provincial de Estadísticas y Censos [DPEyC], Gobierno de San Luis). With the exception of the 1990s, the city has been ruled by opposition parties: the *Unión Cívica Radical* (UCR) from 1983 to 1987, and the local dissident PJ in alliance with different parties from 1999 to 2007.

weekly through the newly created umbrella organization known as the “*Multisectorial*” in order to denounce Rodríguez Saá's undemocratic practices and to demand his resignation.

The existence of opposition-ruled municipalities and opposition grassroots organizations created favorable conditions for presidential infiltration. Taking advantage of this window of opportunity, in 2005 President Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007) from the newly created party Front for Victory (FpV), a splinter of the national Peronist Party (PJ), began to take steps toward penetrating the Rodríguez Saás' stronghold. To this end, he sided with the dissident Peronist mayor of San Luis City, Daniel Pérsico, who was a staunch opponent of the governor. During the second half of his administration, Kirchner directed abundant federal funds to the city, which were used to improve municipal infrastructure, to launch new social programs, and to boost expenditures (Giraudy 2009; interviews 16, 17, 18). These resources not only helped strengthen the Kirchner-Pérsico alliance, but also served to increase Kirchner and the mayor's political clout in the province.

However, in contrast to President Fox's penetration of Puebla, which enabled him to control Governor Morales from within and secure his political cooperation, Kirchner's infiltration in San Luis was insufficient to pose a true threat to Governor Rodríguez Saá's authority and to obtain his acquiescence. As noted above, Fox could rely on a territorially extended party organization with a stable network of brokers, activists, and local offices, all of which helped him win in Puebla's urban districts and numerous communities of the interior. President Néstor Kirchner's party organization, by contrast, was territorially weak. His party, the Peronist FpV, had limited territorial reach and its influence was limited to the Patagonian provinces and the province of Buenos Aires (Calvo and Escolar 2005).<sup>24</sup> Beyond these districts, and particularly in San Luis, the FpV lacked territorially extensive networks of offices, brokers, and members. Lack of party infrastructure in San Luis prevented Kirchner from crafting stable coalitions with local leaders. Unlike the national–local party coalition in Puebla, which rested on long history of shared ideology and values as well as a strong party organization, alliances in San Luis were opportunistic, unstable, and mostly based on exchanges of federal funds for political support. Hence, Kirchner's infiltration in the province, while momentarily disruptive, was not sufficient to allow the president to control the governor from within.

Lack of presidential control over Rodríguez-Saá prompted the governor to challenge, rather than cooperate with, President Kirchner. For instance, Rodríguez Saá was the only governor who openly confronted one of Kirchner's key policies, the appropriation of soy export duties. He also confronted Kirchner in Congress by instructing San Luis' national legislators—most of whom followed the governor's orders—to oppose nearly all of the president's legislative initiatives. This refusal was vividly illustrated in 2006, when not a single San Luis deputy voted for Kirchner's most valued

<sup>24</sup> In 2003, when Kirchner took office, the national PJ was split into three different factions: the *Frente por la Lealtad* (Front for Loyalty), led by former President Menem; the *Frente Movimiento Popular—Unión y Libertad* (Popular Movement—Unity and Liberty), headed by San Luis' former governor, Adolfo Rodríguez-Saá; and the *Alianza Frente para la Victoria* (Front for Victory), led by Kirchner and his immediate predecessor, Eduardo Duhalde. Relying on their respective party (faction) organizations, each of these Peronist leaders controlled and wielded power over different parts of the country.

initiatives.<sup>25</sup> Finally, perhaps the most eloquent example of this confrontation occurred in the 2007 presidential election, when Alberto Rodríguez Saá ran as the Peronist dissident candidate against Kirchner's wife, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

The weakness of the FpV, which translated into the incapacity of President Kirchner to obtain the cooperation of Rodríguez Saá, coupled with the governor's confrontational stance, dissuaded the president from sustaining San Luis' SUR. Indeed, despite the state's relatively high level of bureaucracy and its greater vulnerability to presidential infiltration, the regime in San Luis, unlike its counterpart in Puebla, was not rewarded with subsidies, fiscal transfers, or special benefits, all of which could have helped to entrench Rodríguez Saá and his regime in power (Giraudy 2009). Instead, SUR continuity in San Luis was made possible by the province's strong economic record and the government's implementation of policies, such as employment schemes linked to industrialization, housing plans, public infrastructure, and social programs, which helped to elicit the support of core supporters, especially the lower classes and industrialists (Behrend 2008; Giraudy 2009). This support, in turn, was indispensable for the regime's self-reproduction.

## Conclusion

A core theme of this article is that concept formation is crucial for research on subnational political regimes. This paper has examined a common conceptual strategy used by analysts who seek to identify, study, and understand the continuity of SURs in nationally democratic countries. The goal has been both to illustrate the conceptual, empirical, and theoretical problems that arise when scholars use expanded definitions of democracy and to provide an alternative that can help to overcome these pitfalls. As demonstrated in the analysis of Argentina and Mexico, the strategy of conceptual separation, which is based on the distinction between *access* to and *exercise* of power, discourages analysts from misleadingly truncating the universe of cases for analysis. By avoiding this type of truncation, the article has shown that the A-E framework allows scholars (a) to obtain new and more precise information about the actual magnitude of the uneven territorialization of democracy, (b) to recognize that there are two ideal types of SUR (patrimonial and bureaucratic), and (c) to gain more analytic leverage for identifying the causal mechanisms that explain regime continuity within and across SUR types.

The in-depth, qualitative analyses of Puebla and San Luis also highlight three important points about the mechanisms of regime reproduction in SURs. First, the mechanisms that have been theorized to explain continuity in patrimonial SURs are insufficient to account for the reproduction of bureaucratic SURs. As noted above, boundary control, one mechanism of SUR reproduction, can only explain regime

<sup>25</sup> These bills included: the alteration of the *Consejo de la Magistratura's* composition (the agency responsible for appointing lower court judges), which allowed Kirchner to control the greatest share of counselors; the law regulating the use of presidential decrees, which further enlarged presidential legislative authority; the *ley de Administración Financiera* [Financial Management Law], which granted the chief of cabinet prerogatives to reassign budget items without congressional consent; and the extension of the “economic emergency law,” which granted extraordinary powers to the president (Bonvecchi and Giraudy 2007).



stability in patrimonial subnational units. As the case studies of two bureaucratic SURs illustrate, regime continuity is possible even when SUR incumbents are unable to close subnational borders. Second, the case of Puebla demonstrates that presidential penetration of a SUR increases the likelihood that a national incumbent will gain control over subnational autocrats and help turn them into allies. The prospect of obtaining political cooperation is what ultimately leads democratic presidents to maintain SURs in power. Third, despite the existence of windows of opportunity for penetrating bureaucratic SURs, as shown in the province of San Luis, not all presidents are in a position to take advantage of such openings. National incumbents who lack a strong and territorially extended party organization at the local level, and hence lack a critical resource to win over municipal governments and the local opposition, are unable to control SUR incumbents from within. Weak presidential disciplining power, in turn, enables subnational autocrats to maintain their regimes intact. In such cases, SUR self-reproduction is not the result of subnational rulers' capacity to close provincial borders and thereby prevent outside infiltration; rather, it is the result of low presidential capacity to penetrate these regimes.

Aside from helping to uncover the mechanisms of SUR reproduction, the distinction between patrimonial and bureaucratic SURs is important for understanding the *origins* of these regimes and the possibilities for *change*. The evidence presented in Figs. 2, 3, 4, and 5 suggests that levels of economic development and geographic location are good predictors of patrimonialism.<sup>26</sup> These graphs demonstrate that provinces in Argentina with high levels of economic development, such as Mendoza, Santa Fe, Entre Ríos, and Buenos Aires, score high on the exercise axis, i.e., they are more bureaucratic. The same pattern can be observed in Mexico, where states with the highest levels of socioeconomic development, such as Jalisco, Nuevo León, and Morelos, obtain the highest scores on the exercise scale. In contrast, the provinces and states that present the highest levels of patrimonialism are those located in the least economically developed and poorest areas of Argentina and Mexico, such as the Argentine provinces of La Rioja, Formosa, Corrientes, and Jujuy, and the Mexican states of Oaxaca, Chiapas, Guerrero, and Tabasco. These findings suggest that Max Weber's classic assertion about the “elective affinity” between capitalist development and bureaucratic administrations applies to subnational levels of government. This correlation between SUR types and levels of economic development is a first step toward uncovering how each of these regimes came to exist in the first place.

By taking into account SUR variation, researchers are also in a better position to assess the factors that explain regime *change*. Prominent scholarship on national political regimes has demonstrated that regime type—particularly whether a regime is patrimonial or not—affects the probability and nature of regime change (Linz and Stepan 1996), as well as transition patterns (Snyder 1992; Bratton and van de Walle 1994; Hartlyn 1998; Geddes 1999). There are good reasons to believe that different types of undemocratic regimes at the subnational level are also likely to follow distinct paths towards democratization.

<sup>26</sup> By contrast, levels of economic development are not good predictors of subnational democracy. As Figs. 2, 3, 4, and 5 illustrate, provinces and states with low levels of subnational democracy, such as Santa Cruz, La Pampa, or Jalisco, have high levels of economic development.

Finally, disaggregation of SUR types, as the growing literature on varieties of national-level undemocratic regimes has demonstrated (e.g., Falleti 2011), can also help researchers gain a more nuanced understanding of the consequences of subnational undemocratic regime types on policy outcomes. This line of research is promising, given that important policy areas, such as education, health, and security, are designed, financed, and implemented by subnational autocrats, who exert state power in different ways.

Our understanding of SUR continuity, as this article has argued, can benefit enormously from acknowledging that SURs, while sharing certain attributes, are not of a single type. In addition, distinguishing among SUR types can improve our understanding of the origins and change within these regimes, as well as their impact on policy outcomes. In all of these ways, clearly demarcating SUR types has the potential to move the research agenda on subnational political regimes, and subnational politics more generally, in important and intriguing new directions.

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## Appendix

### Section I: Access to State Power

Following Goertz (2006), the definition of democracy adopted in this study utilizes the “necessary and sufficient condition” concept structure. Accordingly, in order for a subnational political regime to be conceived of as democratic, a number of conditions must be present (i.e., they are necessary), and these conditions, in turn, are jointly sufficient to classify a given polity as democratic. If any of these conditions is absent, the subnational polity cannot be considered democratic. To translate a necessary and sufficient concept structure into mathematical terms without violating concept–measure consistency, this study follows Goertz's (2006) suggested aggregation procedure of multiplying (rather than adding) individual indicators. Accordingly, as Fig. 7 shows, contestation (for both executive and legislative posts), clean elections, and turnover i.e., the necessary conditions, are “connected” via the logical AND, a first cousin of multiplication (denoted with the \* symbol). Finally, it should be stressed that the necessary and sufficient structure inevitably assumes equal weighting of all dimensions.

### *Aggregation of Indicators*

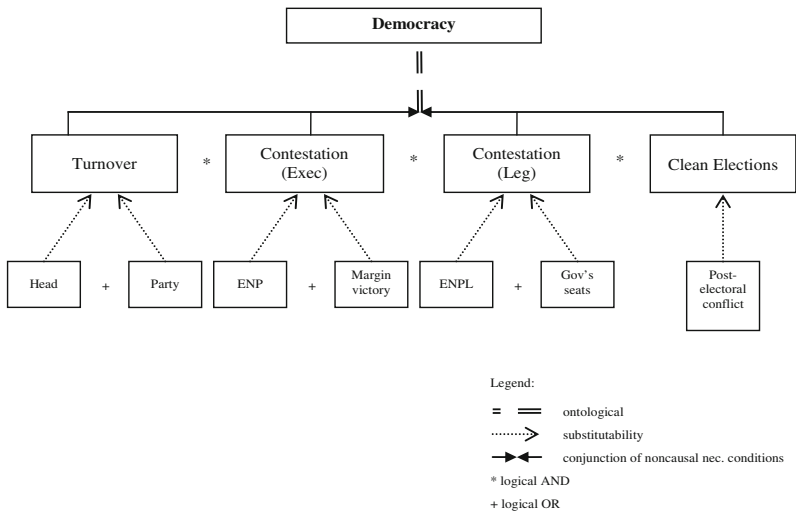
As Fig. 7 shows, democracy is made up of seven indicators. Each of these indicators is described in detail in Table 2. The necessary and sufficient concept structure of democracy provides the justification for why the secondary dimensions of democracy are not added together, and it also provides the justification for why indicators are added together. At the indicator level, addition (rather than multiplication) is a desirable option because indicators are *substitutable*. Substitutability is normally



Basic level

Secondary level

Indicator level



**Fig. 7** A necessary and sufficient concept structure of subnational democracy

associated with the logical OR, which in turn is closely connected with arithmetic addition.

A final clarification on the “clean elections” measure is in order. The concept of “clean elections” is perhaps one of the most difficult to operationalize and measure at the subnational level, as it demands a retrospective review of every gubernatorial election held in 32 states and 24 provinces over a period of 25 years. I chose to measure this indicator only in the case of Mexico, where electoral fraud has been ubiquitous. In Argentina, in contrast, little fraud or manipulation of the vote-counting processes has occurred since 1983 (Levitsky and Murillo 2005; Gervasoni 2010a).

A good way to grasp the cleanness of elections is to measure the occurrence and intensity of postelectoral conflicts. Postelectoral conflicts *as well as* their intensity reflect the extent to which official electoral results fail to correspond to reality as perceived by opposition parties. Following one of the leading works on postelectoral conflicts in Mexico, it was assumed that postelectoral mobilizations were provoked by high perceptions of electoral fraud (Eisenstadt 2004, pp. 135–140). Thus, the *occurrence* of postelectoral conflicts is considered to be a proxy for electoral fraud, while the *intensity* (duration and severity) of post electoral conflicts is considered a proxy for how “damaging and detrimental” the rigging was for the “defeated” party.

To code the existence and intensity of postelectoral conflicts in gubernatorial races, state-level newspapers were reviewed for a period of four consecutive weeks beginning the day after the election. Postelectoral conflicts are defined as instances of social mobilization following gubernatorial elections in which protestors demand a vote recount. The intensity of postelectoral conflicts was coded as follows: a score of 1 was given to states in which there was no postelectoral conflict; a score of 2 was given to states in which postelectoral conflict lasted less than a week and where there were no deaths and/or human or material casualties; a score of 3 was given to states where postelectoral conflict lasted more than one week (8 to 30 days) people were held in custody, and/or there were human or material casualties; and a score of 4 was

given to states in which postelectoral conflict lasted more than 1 month and/or where there were deaths.

## Section II: Exercise of State Power

As noted by Mazzuca (2010, p. 343): “[F]ollowing Weber, extreme forms of appropriation and particularism in the exercise of state power define the patrimonial type of administration, or patrimonialism.” A typical patrimonial state administration thus enables rulers to appropriate state resources (such as power, money, information, and material goods) for themselves, and to exercise authority in ways that benefit some groups and citizens over others. There is no single type of appropriation or particularism that a patrimonial state administration must (necessarily) perform in order for an administration to be regarded as patrimonial. If there are multiple ways of appropriating resources and/or imparting discretionary authority, the state administration is generally conceived of as patrimonial.

Underlying this conception of patrimonial state administration is a family resemblance concept structure. Unlike the necessary and sufficient concept structure, the family resemblance structure “is as a rule about sufficiency with no necessary condition requirements” (Goertz 2006, p. 36). Accordingly, the presence of any of the constitutive dimensions (see Fig. 8) places any given state/province in the category of patrimonial state administration. It should be emphasized that, unlike the necessary and sufficient concept structure, concepts within the family resemblance structure can be assessed by identifying attributes that are present to varying degrees, rather than simply being present or absent (Collier and Mahon 1993). This is the reason why it is not necessary that all four secondary dimensions be present (i.e., measured), as in the societal accountability dimension, which, due to data availability constraints, could not be measured in the Argentine provinces. Finally, because the family resemblance concept structure allows the absence of any given characteristic to be compensated for by the presence of another characteristic, the secondary dimensions are “connected” via the logical OR, and aggregated through addition (rather than multiplication) (Goertz 2006, p. 39–44).

### *Aggregation of Indicators*

To capture historical, cultural, and contextual diversity, and thus ensure measurement equivalence, some of the secondary-level dimensions of patrimonialism were operationalized using system-specific indicators. For instance, “*rulers' fiscal discretion*” in Argentina is measured using the “*rules of fiscal allocation*” indicator. This indicator accumulates the number of years the law regulating the distribution of fiscal resources between the provincial and municipal governments has been in existence. By contrast, “*rulers' fiscal discretion*” in Mexico is measured with the “*appropriation of municipal funds*” indicator, which reflects the percentage of fiscal funds that governors did not transfer to the municipalities.<sup>27</sup> This latter indicator ensures greater

<sup>27</sup> By law, Mexican states are obliged to pass 20 % of the transfers that they receive from the *Ley de Coordinación Fiscal* to the municipalities.

**Table 2** Indicators of subnational democracy

Indicator	Description	Calculation	Source	
			Argentina	Mexico
HEAD	Based on Przeworski et al.'s (2000) coding this indicator measures the cumulative rate of provincial chief executive turnover	ACCHEAD is the number of changes of provincial chief executive [HEADS] accumulated during the life of a particular political regime. [HEADS is defined as the number of changes of the chief executive in each year]	Author's calculations based on BASECIAP	Author's calculations based on <i>Rulers Database</i>
PARTY	Based on Przeworski et al.'s (2000) coding this indicator measures the cumulative rate of provincial chief executive party turnover	ACCPARTY is the number of changes of the provincial chief executive party [PARTY] accumulated during the life of a particular political regime. PARTY is defined as the number of changes of the party in each year	Author's calculations based on Guia Electoral	Author's calculations based on CIDAC's Electoral Database
ENP	Laakso and Taagepera Index (1979)	$1/\sum si^2$ , with si representing the number of votes cast for party i during gubernatorial elections	Calvo and Escolar (2005) and author's calculations based on Guia Electoral	Author's calculations based on CIDAC's Electoral Database
Margin victory				
ENPL	Laakso and Taagepera Index (1979)	measured as $v1-v2$ , where v1 is the vote share of the winning gubernatorial candidate, and v2 the vote share of the second-place candidate <sup>a,b</sup> $1/\sum si^2$ with si representing the number of seats held by party i	Author's calculations based on Guia Electoral Calvo and Escolar (2005) and author's calculations based on Atlas Electoral de Andy Tow	Author's calculations based on CIDAC's Electoral Database
Governor's seats		100 % of governor's party (or party coalition) legislative seats	Author's calculations based on Graudy and Lodola (2008) Database	Lujambio (2000) and CIDAC's <i>Electoral Database</i>

**Table 2** (continued)

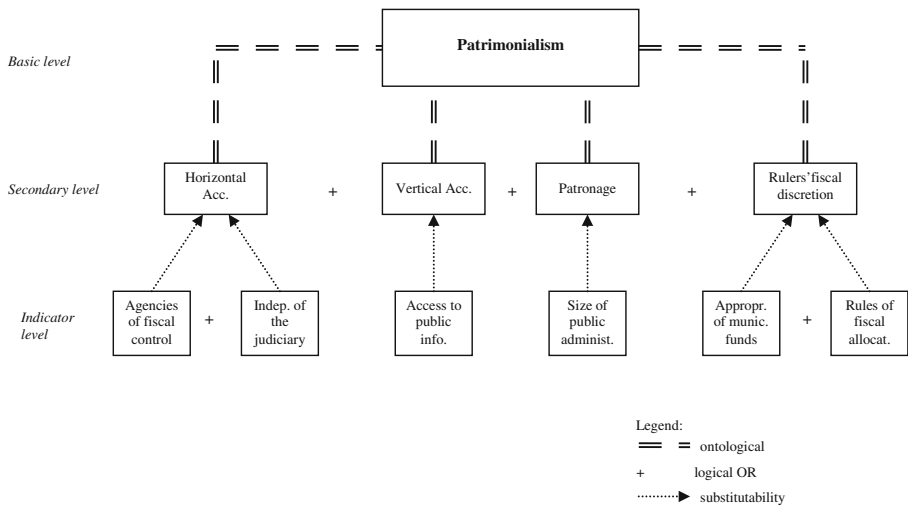
Indicator	Description	Calculation	Source	
			Argentina	Mexico
Clean elections	Index that captures the existence, durability, and intensity of postelectoral conflicts	Postelectoral conflict ranges from 1 to 4, where 1=absence of postelectoral conflict, 2=postelectoral conflict lasted less than a week (7 days), and there were no dead and/or human/material casualties, 3=postelectoral conflict lasted more than one week (from 8 to 30 days), and/or people were held in custody, and/or there were human/material casualties, 4=postelectoral conflict lasted more than 1 month and/or there were deaths <sup>b</sup>	N/A <sup>c</sup>	Based on a review of major local (state-level) newspapers (1991–2006; Giraudy 2009)

All indicators were standardized to make scales comparable

<sup>a</sup> First round

<sup>b</sup> Reversed scale

<sup>c</sup> Little fraud or manipulation of the vote-counting procedures has taken place in post 1983 Argentina (see Levitsky and Murillo 2005; Gervasoni 2010a)



**Fig. 8** A family resemblance concept structure of subnational patrimonialism

concept–measure consistency. Yet given the lack of a similar law in Argentina, a functional equivalent measure was needed.

The horizontal accountability indicators are also system-specific. In the case of Argentina, horizontal accountability was measured using indicators that operationalize the level of judicial independence (from the executive). In Mexico, the indicators used to measure horizontal accountability operationalize the effectiveness of the state-level agencies (i.e., agencies of fiscal control) responsible for controlling the executive branch's use of fiscal resources. Indicators of the judicial system in Mexico were not employed because state-level judiciary systems there are more homogenous than in Argentina. Unlike other subnational judicial systems, in Argentina, each province dictates its own constitutional and statutory rules for selecting, appointing, and determining the number of provincial court justices. This variation is not present in Mexico, where the rules regarding state-level judiciaries are very similar across states.

Tables 3 and 4 present a description of the indicators that made up each of the four secondary-level dimensions of patrimonialism. The tables also reflect the

**Table 3** Indicators of subnational patrimonialism (Argentina)

Variable	Indicator	Calculation	Source
HA (horizontal accountability)	Independence of the judiciary (IJ)	IJ	Dispersed political authority = $(IJ + SPA + RFA) / 3$
Patronage	Size of public administration (SPA)	SPA	Giraudy, Leiras, Tuñón (n.d) Mecon
Rulers' fiscal discretion	Rules of fiscal allocation (RFA)	APFF	Fundación CECE, Mecon, provincial laws

**Table 4** Indicators of subnational patrimonialism (Mexico)

Variable	Indicator	Sub-indicator	Calculation	Source
Vertical Accountability (VA)	Access to public information (API)	i. Cumulative years of API law ii. Sum of publicity of public information iii. Cumulative years of API agencies	$API = (i + ii + iii) / 3$	Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información
Horizontal Accountability (HA)	Agencies of fiscal control (AFC)	i. Cumulative years of modern fiscal law ii. Agreement between state govt. and ASF to supervise R33 and R23	$AFC = (i + ii) / 2$	Giraudy (2009)
Patronage	Size of public administration (SPA)		SPA	INEGI
Rulers' fiscal discretion	Appropriation of Fondo General de Participaciones			

mathematical operations conducted in order to transform these measures into single numbers.<sup>28</sup> A detailed description of each of the individual indicators and sub-indicators is presented below.

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<sup>28</sup> A detailed description of each of the indicators and sub-indicators presented below are available from the author.

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