

SYNOPSIS

Changing the way of doing things is Chile's current challenge

As a consequence of decades of successful transformations, which have lowered poverty rates, strengthened the economy, improved infrastructure and basic service coverage and deepened citizen rights, Chile is facing new challenges of a n entirely different kind.

Today, for any single initiative, simultaneous requirements of many social actors must be taken into account and consideration must be given to the relatively autonomous and unpredictable ways in which such actors relate to one another in pursuit of their aims. Building development today means having the ability to handle uncertain and complex environments resulting from the greater independence that daily practices have acquired.

The central objective of the present report is to show that the challenge of increasing country opportunities and translating them into concrete results for individuals is increasingly associated to the growing importance of phenomena that take place in the context of practices or whose consequences are visible in such practices.

The report proposes a theory of social action, a methodology for observing social practices and a linkage of both theory and findings to the Human Development paradigm. This is followed by a description of the conditions required for orientation of institutional and cultural change towards the expansion of Human Development.

The present context

Chile has changed a great deal in the past two decades. Its institutional framework, economy and culture are very different from what they were only a quarter of a century ago.

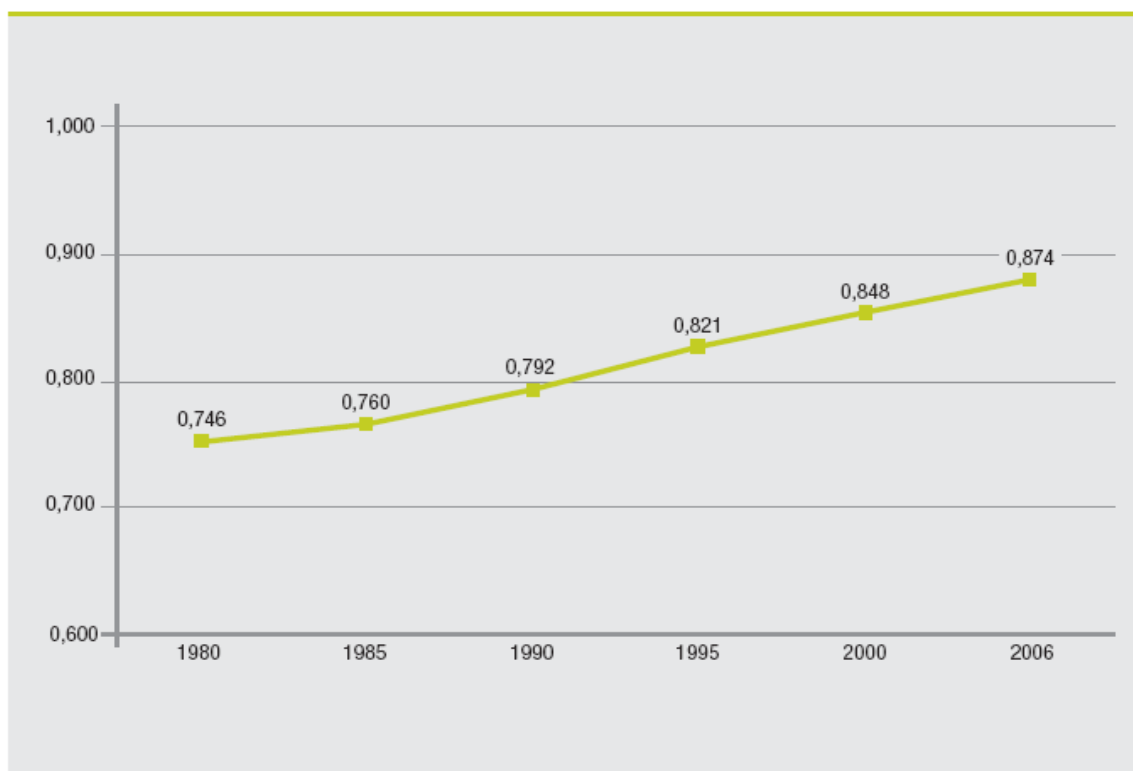
Such changes have been, in general, highly positive. The country's development has allowed its inhabitants to enjoy better quality of life. The evolution of the Human Development Index in Chile illustrates (and summarizes) such transformations (Chart A). In the past few decades Chile has shown a constantly rising HDI and is actually placed at the forefront in the Latin American context.

Such progress is perceived and valued by individuals. According to the HDI Survey 2008, 65% of the population declared that their families are living better today than they did ten years ago; a majority opinion shared at all socioeconomic levels (Table A).

The perception varies, however, when the focus moves to the future. Although citizens are aware of the nation's progress, they are also more pessimistic about the future. In the first semester of 2008, before the beginning of the international crisis, 80% of the population expects stability or worse conditions in the next five years as compared to only 52% in 1999. (Table B).

Perceptions appear to focus on the idea that what has been achieved so far is no assurance that progress will continue in the future. Something in the present time is halting advance.

GRAPH A
Chile: HDI Evolution over time



Source: World Report on Human Development, UNDP 2008

TABLE A
Assessment of personal trajectory , according to SES (percentage)

| | High | Medium | Low | Total |
|---|------|--------|-----|-------|
| In general, my family and I live better today than we did ten years ago | 70 | 69 | 61 | 65 |
| In general, ten year s ago my family and I lived better | 29 | 29 | 36 | 32 |
| DK – DA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Human Development Survey, UNDP 2008.

TABLE B
Expectations of the country´ s future (percentage)

| In general, do you think in the next five years the situation of the country... | 1999 | 2008 |
|---|------|------|
| Will improve | 43 | 27 |
| Will be the same | 34 | 49 |
| Will worsen | 18 | 21 |
| DK-DA | 5 | 3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Human Development Surveys, UNDP 1999 and 2008.

It does not seem to be a problem of shortage of resources. Chile today has abundant funds available for investment, both public and private. Neither is it a question of consensus and social will: the urgency of introducing qualitative improvements in the various areas is now a matter of common sense. Nor does it arise from institutional deficits; although it is a fact that extensive areas still require institutions to be modernised, major progress has been made in this field.

The focus is “on ways of doing things” that seem to hamper taking advantage of the new stage of opportunities and facing the challenges arising from it. The news and daily conversations are full of criticisms of both public and private efforts, where the common denominator is the way that action is conducted.

Such perceptions are clearly seen in Table C. There is no lack of ideas; the problem is how to implement them in practice.

It is likely, however, that the style of concrete actions, both public and private, is not so different today from what it has always been. If this were so, then one would have to ask oneself why the ways of doing things that allowed the country to reach the present stage of development no longer seem to be as effective.

TABLE C
The problem of Chile (percentage)

| With a view to improving people's quality of life, which would you say is Chile's main problem in achieving it? | Sex | | SES | | | Santiago | Regions |
|---|------|--------|------|--------|-----|----------|---------|
| | Male | Female | High | Medium | Low | | |
| Lack of good ideas | 26 | 22 | 24 | 25 | 23 | 26 | 22 |
| Though there are good ideas, we don't know how to carry them out | 72 | 75 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 71 | 75 |
| DK – DA | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Human Development Survey, UNDP 2008.

NOW THAT WE CAN, WHY DOESN'T IT WORK OUT ?

The changes undergone by the objective structures of social life, i.e. the economy, urban organization, new technologies; those evident in the orientation and diversification of behavioural styles among persons and groups, leading to greater individuality and autonomy, plus the context of globalization wherein such persons and groups develop, have led to the rise of new challenges.

Today, the task of fostering development seems to have acquired great complexity. The foregoing statement is based on two facts. On the one hand, persons increasingly tend to organise their lives according to their personal options, stressing the differences between them and the rest. As a result, it is more difficult today to create a common world that will culturally organise the society. On the other hand, in the context of organising social life, institutional order is observed to operate in increasingly decentralised contexts. Therefore, the coordination of independent processes and the handling of environmental uncertainty become increasingly important. It is

thus more difficult today to support a single institutional organisation regulating the dynamics of society.

In this scenario, integration and coordination become central. More attention must now be given to the changing and differentiated ways in which social actors weave their relationships with others and define common objectives. For this reason, the raw materials for working in this scenario are social relationships: bargaining, disputes, exchanges. In other words, the specific practices through which persons achieve their goals. At present, promotion and guidance of development must pay more attention to the ways in which persons act.

Not everything in this situation is new. On the contrary, this scenario is characterised by the coexistence of two kinds of challenge, some of long standing, others more geared to the present moment. The former refer to less complex environments, where the nature of the problems is easily identified and abundant information, high control capabilities, and strong consensus on what has to be done are readily available. These are normally environments where problems associated to coordinating complex social networks play a secondary role. Such challenges may be termed "social-framework problems" and they include such initiatives as building infrastructure, rationalising technical processes, or expanding coverage of certain services, e.g. electric power, irrigation, or improvement of school infrastructure.

The latter are highly complex problems resulting from recent changes and on which for the same reason not enough accumulated knowledge is available. They are usually cases of very dense social relationships and meanings, where social actors are relatively autonomous from one another and regarding which control centres are manifold and diffuse. This kind of problem may be labelled "coordination problems" for the crux of the matter lies precisely in organising relations among social actors, that is, in practices. Examples of the foregoing include improving the quality of education, developing innovation in business, generating agreement in civil society, handling family disputes, operationalising rights to health care, or transforming labour relations.

Facing this second type of problem requires a new perspective for looking at social life and conducting social change. Many of the assumptions commonly used for interventions in "social-framework problems" lose validity in the case of "coordination problems". Indeed, in such cases the dynamics of social life cannot be conceived as the result of fairly constant and predictable cause-and-effect relationships, nor can it be assumed that a central social actor exists possessing the knowledge, resources, and wills to move the society. A new approach is therefore needed to observe and analyze social practices, an approach allowing the difference between both types of problems to be properly weighted and applying in either case the most relevant instruments.

The present report aims to show the relevance of observing the new dynamics and challenges of development from the point of view of social practices. In this way, dysfunctional or inefficient forms of action and relationships are discovered, the effects of which are normally ignored. More importantly, it highlights some of the new challenges the country is facing, especially those associated to transforming the new structural, institutional, and cultural opportunities into human development achievements.

The emphasis laid on practices in this report is not a question of practical or methodological convenience alone, but also normative. "How" things are done involves Human Development, because not all the forms of organizing action will increase human capabilities and improve social

opportunities such that each actor involved may turn opportunities into achievements of life projects. From the Human Development perspective, the best ways of doing things will be the practices that consider adequate complementarity between the needs stemming from the objective organization of the society –such as economic growth, institutional regulation, or democracy- and the needs of human subjectivity, such as identity, autonomy, and social dignity.

WHAT ARE PRACTICES?

Practices are ways of acting and relating that individuals display in concrete spaces of practices. In practices, the orientations and general norms of the society, institutions, and organizations are combined with the particular motivations and aspirations of individuals.

Three forces shape practices and give to each its distinctive form. One is institutions, understood as the set of formal rules defining what should or should not be done in a practice space. Institutions allocate and distribute resources among the social actors involved in a practice, establish their roles, generate incentives to promote certain ends, and define enforcement mechanisms to ensure performance.

The second structuring force in the area of practices arises from human subjectivity: the set of motivations, preferences, aspirations, and expectations with which each social actor faces a specific practice. Subjectivity is not a structure set up once and for all in the personality or identity of individuals, but an ongoing construction that takes place in the interactions in which individuals take part in the course of their lives.

Practical knowledge is the third force that shapes practices; it takes the form of maps guiding individual courses of action. Some of these maps are conscious and fully reflective, whereas others are deeply etched in to the minds and bodies of individuals. Through practical knowledge the ways of doing things become routines, “knowhow” based on the confidence born of the fact that “things have always been done this way.”

The relative stability of cultural devices, formal rules, subjective provisions, together with routine ways of doing, and practical knowledge, lead to a remarkable inertness in practices such that the path to development in a society is strongly influenced by its past history. In other words, development is path-dependent.

THE AUTONOMY OF PRACTICES: COORDINATION GAMES

Institutions, subjectivity, and practical knowledge are the three forces defining the field of possibilities where practices develop. Now, none of these elements separately is what defines a practice but the way all three interact, for in a practice there are processes whereby such forces combine, vary, and are transformed. Such processes will be termed coordination games (see Fig. A).

In this report special attention was paid to four coordination games.

Identity games: These are interactions through which social actors from their subjective identities bargain, adapt, or resist the roles that institutions impose on them or others expect from them. In practice, persons do not act as the formal organization chart of an organization dictates or exactly as others expect; neither, however, only as they would themselves like to behave. The way in

which social actors see themselves and their environment and define how to act in each field of practices emerges from identity games.

Power games: These are interactions through which social actors mobilise their institutional resources and subjective supports to influence the behaviour of the other actors participating in a space of practice, or to resist such influence. Power, from both its institutional and its subjective sides, is unequally distributed among the social actors involved in a practice, which is why the ability to influence or resist is different and asymmetrical.

Exchange games: Interactions through which social actors bargain for real or symbolic goods involving mutual benefit in the context of a specific practice. Games of exchange are subject to a principle of reciprocity: to give, receive, and return, which may set up between the parties both a link of affection and a link of dependence. To a considerable extent, agreements, complicities, trusts, and mutual requirements are the result of exchange games.

Information games: Interactions through which information flows in a space of practices. For various reasons, information fails to move freely in such environments; highly sophisticated technical information may be locked up in the expert knowledge of certain social actors, while elsewhere it may be retained or obstructed for strategic purposes by individual or organizational social actors, causing asymmetry of information. The specific ways in which social actors utilise, concentrate, or distribute information are the result of information games.

Based on the above coordination games, practices acquire a degree of autonomy, for in such interactions the “ways of doing things” are not necessarily adjusted to institutional changes or to new cultural trends. Not even to changes that may be intentionally desired. The autonomy of practices is expressed in resistance to change or unanticipated responses to intentional changes.

OBSERVING CHILE FROM PRACTICES: OBJECT OF STUDY

This report aims to study various fields of practice in order to examine how they help or hinder the new opportunities that the society has achieved.

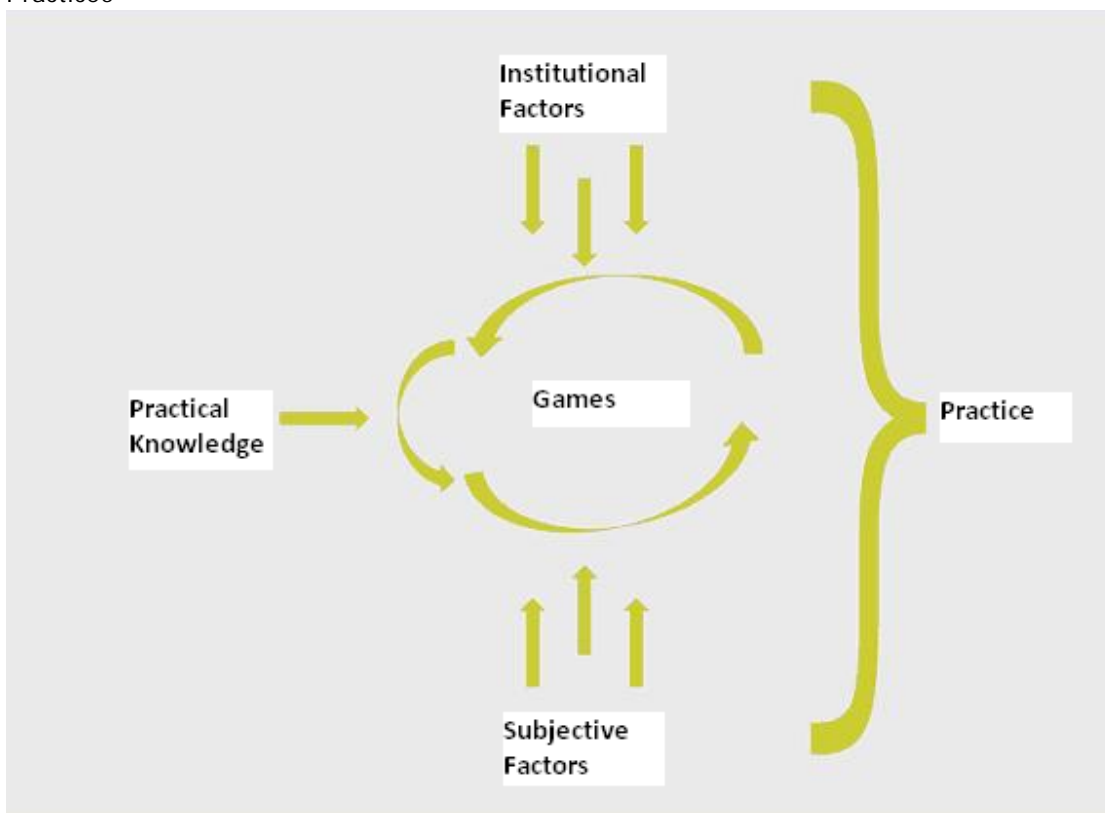
The definition of practices studied in this report was based on three criteria. First, preference was given to the study of areas characterised by many situations relevant to the objectives of the research, namely, places where materialisation of opportunities is hindered precisely by coordination problems.

The second criterion was to encompass a diversity of fields, covering public policies as well as private organisations and private life. The entire society has changed. Hence all society is challenged by such changes and must, by the same token, engage in reasoning about its way of doing things.

The third criterion is more theoretical and relates to the possibility of representing the various aspects of the approach to practices proposed in this report (social-frameworks, variables, and games). Thus, each field gives more information about one element of the approach to practices, and only by viewing all the elements together can social practices be reconstructed. In this context, fields are observed where more emphasis is laid on the relation between institutions and practices (public policy implementation); others where importance is attached to their own

organisational dynamics (labour-management relations); and others stressing the relationship between practice and subjectivity (identity formation).

FIGURE A
Practices



It is important to underline that an assessment of the selected fields of practice is not an objective of this report. Each field was interesting and useful because its dynamics were powerful instances for observing and learning about practices in Chile. That is why observation coverage is partial: only one specific practice –among many other possibilities - was observed in each field, and why the focus is placed on generalization rather than explanation of the case.

It should be pointed out too that the strategies and options of the social actors involved in these practices cannot be construed exclusively as the mere expression of their conspiratorial interests. It is not a question here of good or bad social actors; nor is it a matter of personal virtues or defects, but of the socially defined way how the manifold factors framing the action combine to lead to certain results. Accordingly, what is observed are actors on particular practice spaces, with specific rules of the game, persons who, shouldering their own subjectivity and with their own ways of doing things, seek to achieve their goals.

WHAT FIELDS OF PRACTICE WERE EXAMINED?

IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC POLICIES

1 Health care given in three diseases covered by the AUGE system (Universal Access to Guaranteed Health Care) was observed, including how the traditional way of organising relations in the hospital field reacts in the face of a reform aiming to set up a new logic: the logic of rights.

It was observed that implementation of the health-care reform combines a set of factors leading on occasion to unexpected results, both positive and negative. Through practices, the social actors involved adopt the new regulations, adapting them to their own historical identities. In AUGE, both patients and physicians are directed to modify their traditional roles; the former must be informed and demand their rights; the latter must follow protocols and perform certain administrative functions. Notwithstanding, when historic ways of doing things combine with scant incentives to amend practices, persons do not easily give up their traditional roles and so fail to expedite the process of change. On the other hand, gaps were observed in certain fields regarding management and oversight, together with information problems tending to compel social actors to improvise and resolve matters in practice, in ways that may be a contribution to the system or do damage to another person involved, or even run counter to the intentions of the reformers.

2. Implementation of the Support Strategy for Priority Schools was examined; the program is designed to improve the learning outcomes of vulnerable low-performing schools by means of pedagogical support services provided by external consultants (universities), which must address the specific problems faced by each individual school.

Here the observation focused on how resistance operates and sometimes hinders the success of external support programs. For instance, low levels of trust seldom predominated among the social actors. Teachers placed low expectations on the changes proposed by consultants and did not recognise the potential value added from the incorporation of their expertise. Consultants failed to consider the practical knowledge of the teaching staff (how-to-work-with vulnerable students), to promote participation of the school community and to give them feedback. Further difficulties arise in cases where the programmes are scarcely able to spell out responsibilities and coordinate action. However, the above does not happen when there is confidence among the social actors in the space of practice, coordination is taken seriously and activities are performed according to agreed or informed schedules.

IN THE FIELD OF LABOUR RELATIONS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

3. The practice of bargaining over labour conditions among employers and workers in the fruit export area was observed, including the effect of mutual perceptions and power games, on both the outcomes of contract bargaining and on the way the job is done.

In this context it was observed that in certain cases bargaining over a work contract is based on strong historical identities characterized by mutual mistrust. Both employers and workers often make agreements anticipating abuse from the other party, which prevents commitment to a mutually beneficial agreement. This adds to the uncertainty of the sector: one party does not know how long they will have work; the other party does not know how long they will have labour. Given such mutual distrust and the predominance of short-term considerations, the social actors are unable to overcome resistance in the interests of long-term benefits and end up entering into an agreement involving a minimum of benefits for both parties. This does not happen when mistrust is overcome by the consideration of long-term benefits, which is supported when there are effective enforceability mechanisms in place, such as international certification.

4. Organisation of the working day in the retail sector was studied to observe how the dynamics of exchange among workers in different roles (shop supervisors and salespeople) affect the organisation of working hours, aside from legal attempts to reduce the working week.

It was found that the legal provisions do not always agree with the real incentives set up either by corporations or worker motivations. The junction of both factors leads social actors to evade the regulations in order to maximise benefits in the short term. This does not happen when enforcement mechanisms are efficient and if conditions for worker protection are safeguarded. When this is not the case and practice disregards regulations, the working hours of the weakest social actor, in this case, the salesperson, are adjusted to sector requirements.

IN THE FIELD OF IDENTITY FORMATION AND DAILY LIFE

5. The practices of subjective identity formation among teenagers were examined together with their effect on the link teenagers have to society. Observation included how adolescents take a position vis-à-vis various "referent-models" (parents, friends, teachers, and others) and what resources they counted on as psychological supports.

Although teenagers have various ways of relating and differentiating themselves in their daily lives, it was observed that the society does not provide enough and adequate referent-models to each of them in order to form their identity. The absence of referent-models tends to generate weak life projects and a powerful retreat from the public space. On the contrary, where such referent-models and valid psychological supports were available to define identities, the latter were strengthened and characterized by greater inclination to participate in public activities. Part of this is due to acknowledgement of personal projects and the existence of spaces for communication and for resolving disputes. The analysis underlines the importance of granting supports and referent-models that make sense to a generation that builds its identity on a context of considerable individualisation, so that its link to society is not weakened.

6. Lastly, management of time by women was observed, in order to show the practical difficulties women face in developing greater autonomy. Bargaining was observed between women and their referents (children and partners), as well as the supports available to them for carrying out their life projects, in a cultural context where the traditional way of organising time is deeply rooted.

The observation found that owing to the way they manage their daily life many women live under constant tension to carry out their life projects, struggling to reconcile the demands of their partners, children, or jobs. In such cases, there is absence of supports and resources to confront traditional household division of tasks and to build a project of their own. On the contrary, women manage to develop personal projects when their capabilities and resources are comparable to those possessed by others with whom they relate in their daily life and their major referents (family members, friends, and workmates) recognise their worth. On such occasions, time bargaining takes into account the motivations and aspirations of women.

TOWARDS A MAP OF PRACTICES: THE WAY THINGS ARE DONE IN CHILE

One of the main findings of this report is that there are certain combinations of factors and games tending to structure the social life of Chileans when observed from the standpoint of practices, which repeat themselves in the various fields of observation.

Objective and subjective equality or inequality, the effectiveness of institutional enforcement mechanisms and of organizational governance mechanisms, the alignment of the different incentives, the degrees of reciprocal legitimation and trust among social actors, their subjective temporality, their aspirations and motivations, and the quality of their supports and referents, are all aspects that came up transversely in the fields studied and proved determinant in their development (see Fig. B).

Some combinations of factors led to games tending to favour realization of opportunities (such as long temporality, reciprocal legitimacy and trust, spaces for coordination, incentive alignment), while others tended to produce rather problematic games (short temporality, poor quality of supports, absence of enforcement, and others). The main issue is that certain combinations of factors appeared repeatedly in the course of the cases studied, revealing certain recurrent "typical practices" in the social life of Chileans.

Such typical practices allow drawing a map of the way of doing things in this country. Though not exhaustive, this map represents certain ways of doing things that are transversally present on many spheres of Chilean social life, and which are essential to consider to face present and future challenges.

RESISTED ADOPTION

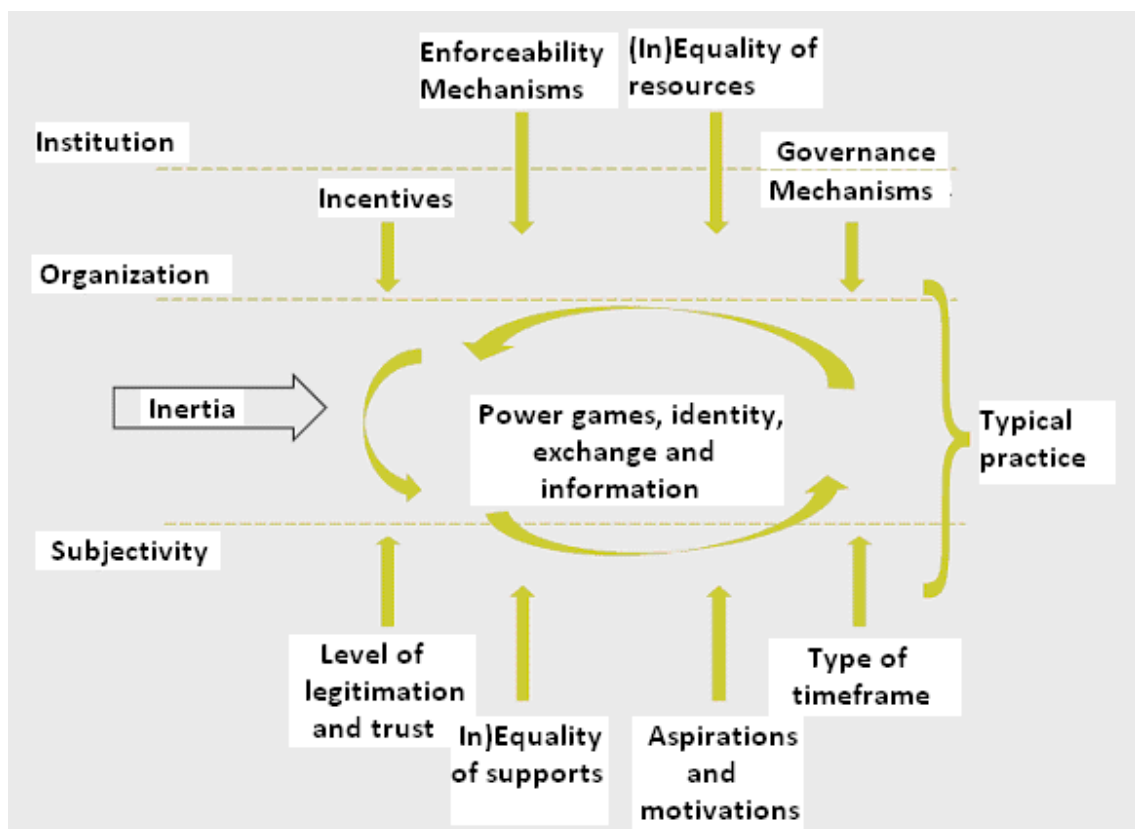
"I'll do it, but my way"

This typical practice is characterised by the resistance that certain social actors show towards processes involving cultural or institutional change, which they believe might be detrimental to them in some way. Here, social actors reinterpret the meaning of the change, set up strategies to oppose it, and seek ways of adapting it to their own interests.

One instance is the resistance of some physicians to perform the new administrative duties that AUGE entails or to follow the protocols that the new programme imposes on them, because they feel it is not consistent with their role. In such cases, the absence of institutional mechanisms for requiring adoption of the new rules, together with asymmetry of information between medical staff and users favour resistance to the new roles and rules.

FIGURE B

Factors that combine in the practices studied



Something similar happens in the power games with which some men make a stand against the growing demand for autonomy of their women partners or spouses : they pretend to agree that she should have more autonomy to select her life projects, while pressuring in private for her to continue organising her time around the home.

IMPROVISED ADAPTATION

"It has to be done, and if I don't do it nobody will"

This practice is characterized by the presence of some social actors who over commit themselves over and above what institutional or cultural changes expect from them, whether from a sense of sacrifice or because they feel strongly committed to the change pursued.

Women who engage in "double shift" at market work and at home in view of their partners' reluctance to assume domestic roles, and nurses who partly fill in records to help the physician in the AUGÉ context, are examples of such practices.

In this configuration, the social actors are compelled to improvise roles simply because they are in a position of inequality vis-à-vis others who delegate some of their functions on them. This applies to nurses who often have to engage in administrative functions that the physicians are loath to perform.

Whether subjective factors or power asymmetries predominate, improvised adaptations are characterised by social actors who become an adjustment variable for overall operation of the practice.

AGREED TRANSGRESSION

“It isn’t good for you or for me; let’s make a deal!”

Agreed transgression takes place when in contexts of institutional change (e.g. a new law) social actors coordinate to breach the rules because they feel that it counters their own short-term interests.

It is the case of agreements reached by salespersons and shop supervisors to enable the former to work more hours than legally allowed. A mutual short-term benefit is thereby obtained (sales commissions and goals achieved): in the long run, however, both may end up at a disadvantage owing to the consequences of overwork on productivity and quality of life. Sometimes transgression is a request of the supervisor and the salesperson is not capable to refuse for fear of the consequences.

Lack of oversight or other enforcement mechanisms, together with practices characterised by high levels of inequality among social actors, favour the instances of agreed transgression.

PROJECTED ADAPTATION

“Changes are for the better in the long run”

In this practice, social actors accept and embody the institutional or cultural changes because they are in tune with their long-term motivations and aspirations. Here identity games are characterised by social actors adopting new roles and functions and exchange games by mutual requirements based on the perspective of mutual benefit.

It is the case of women who have managed to agree with their families on new distributions of time and tasks within the household, in the light of achieving their own personal projects. In such practices social actors adapt their routines and motivations to the extent that all agree that in the long run it is beneficial for the whole family that the personal projects of each member be respected.

Projected adaptations modify not only routines and forms of action but also roles, even identities. Beyond immediate costs, social actors are prepared to change because they associate change with sustained benefit over time.

PERMANENT RENEGOTIATION

“And who are they to tell me what I have to do?”

This practice is characterised by the difficulty that social actors find in obtaining a minimum of consensus to allow future actions. It happens in contexts of highly indefinite roles and lack of trust among social actors, which establishes the need to be permanently setting up agreements, which upon the first complication are ignored.

Permanent renegotiation is observed, for instance, in some of the schools selected by the Strategy for Supporting Priority Schools. The undefined roles of each social actor in programme implementation, added to the mutual delegitimation of the teaching staff and the external consultants prevents agreeing on a joint strategy to carry out the improvement programme.

Cultural changes also provoke indefinite roles leading to permanent renegotiation. It is the case of parents who do not know how to take up an appropriate role of authority in order to relate to more autonomous children, giving rise to games where teenagers fail to recognize them as legitimate figures of authority and turn the limits that the parents (or any authority) seek to establish into something that can be constantly redefined.

Permanent renegotiation is reinforced when the social actors who negotiate do so with no sense of the benefit that might accrue in the long run from a change of practices.

LOWEST-TERM AGREEMENT

“Why should I make more of an effort if they don’t?”

In this practice there is a high degree of dependence between social actors and both act anticipating they will be abused by the other. In a context of mutual mistrust, individuals contribute with minimum effort in order to suffer the least possible loss.

Certain bargains between employers and casual workers were lowest-term agreements, because employers mistrusted the commitment of the workers while workers anticipated that the employer would fail to give them fair treatment. Lowest-term agreement is also found in partner relationships where both partners remain together in spite of a poor relationship.

In lowest-term agreements everyone loses, although effects tend to be more deleterious to social actors with less resources and supports. In fruit sector practices, the employer loses on productivity and profitability, while the worker risks losing his or her job and certain sources of social protection.

EMPOWERING NEGOTIATION

“If we all pull together, we all win”

In this practice, social actors are challenged by cultural, institutional, or organizational changes pressuring them to think about their modes of coordination and to enter into new relationships. In empowering negotiation, social actors achieve agreements beneficial in the long run based on acknowledging that the demands of other social actors are also legitimate.

Empowering negotiations were observed in schools where external consultants managed to set up trust relationships with the school community, usually with the active support of internal leadership, by explaining the meaning of the strategy in transparent and orderly terms. In these cases the creation of mechanisms for coordination, participation, and feedback was fundamental. Some identity formation practices among teenagers also qualify as empowering negotiations: the case of parents acknowledging the right of their children to exercise autonomy and of teenagers who legitimize the role of their parents; this happens when channels of communication have been established inside the home.

The name of this constellation arises precisely from the fact that it is a question of agreements that establish stages enabling further actions and agreements, and strengthening coordination among the social actors involved.

MAP OF PRACTICES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

In the light of the normative framework of the Human Development approach, a practice will be optimal when it takes advantage of existing social opportunities and when it allows individuals to utilise and increase their subjective capabilities. If either of the two conditions is not met, the promise of Human Development is not being entirely fulfilled.

In this context, the typical practices identified may be plotted on a map that classifies them in four types. Dysfunctional practices waste the opportunities that the society offers and further harm the social actors involved in them, limiting and frustrating their potential abilities. Anomalous functional practices take advantage of social opportunities and generate new ones, at the cost however of putting the social actors involved in the process under tension, leading them to breach the rules or their own subjectivity. Inefficient practices are those where social actors to some extent update their capabilities, but do so jeopardizing social opportunities. Lastly, empowering practices manage to coordinate expansion of social opportunities with the updating and increase of the capabilities of the social actors involved.

CAN PRACTICES BE CHANGED?

One of the most characteristic properties of social practices is their considerable inertia. The ways of doing things, together with the practical knowledge directing them, tend to settle, defining relations and forms of behaviour that become deeply rooted. However, the report shows that practices can change; social actors often generate learning and innovations in the ways of doing things, although not always contributing to Human Development.

The question to be raised then is whether it is possible to trigger changes in practices in the direction of Human Development. The Report finds that it is possible, given that empirical analysis has led to identifying constellations of factors associated to various typical practices. By amending such factors, dysfunctional, inefficient, or anomalous functional practices may be made to transit towards practices empowering Human Development. To this end, nonetheless, the possibility must be discarded of reaching linear results from voluntaristic and purely institutional changes that fail to take into account the internal elements of the practice to be amended. That is the reason why this report suggests the adoption of a new logic of change: the logic of orientation.

Orienting change in a practice means utilising the potentials for transformation inherent in the practice itself, bringing its institutional and subjective resources into line with its practical knowledge, with a view to triggering learning and deliberation processes to increase the likelihood of normatively desired innovations. It necessarily means taking into consideration the specific social actors, interests, norms, motivations, and games characterising the field of practices that are to be transformed. It is from the specificities of such elements and the way they are combined that effective and lasting changes can be made.

How to do it? The theoretical approach and the empirical analysis contained in this report enable us to extract certain criteria and suggestions to be considered at the time of designing institutional change, an intervention programme, a strategy for organizational change or any initiative designed to transform the "ways of doing things."

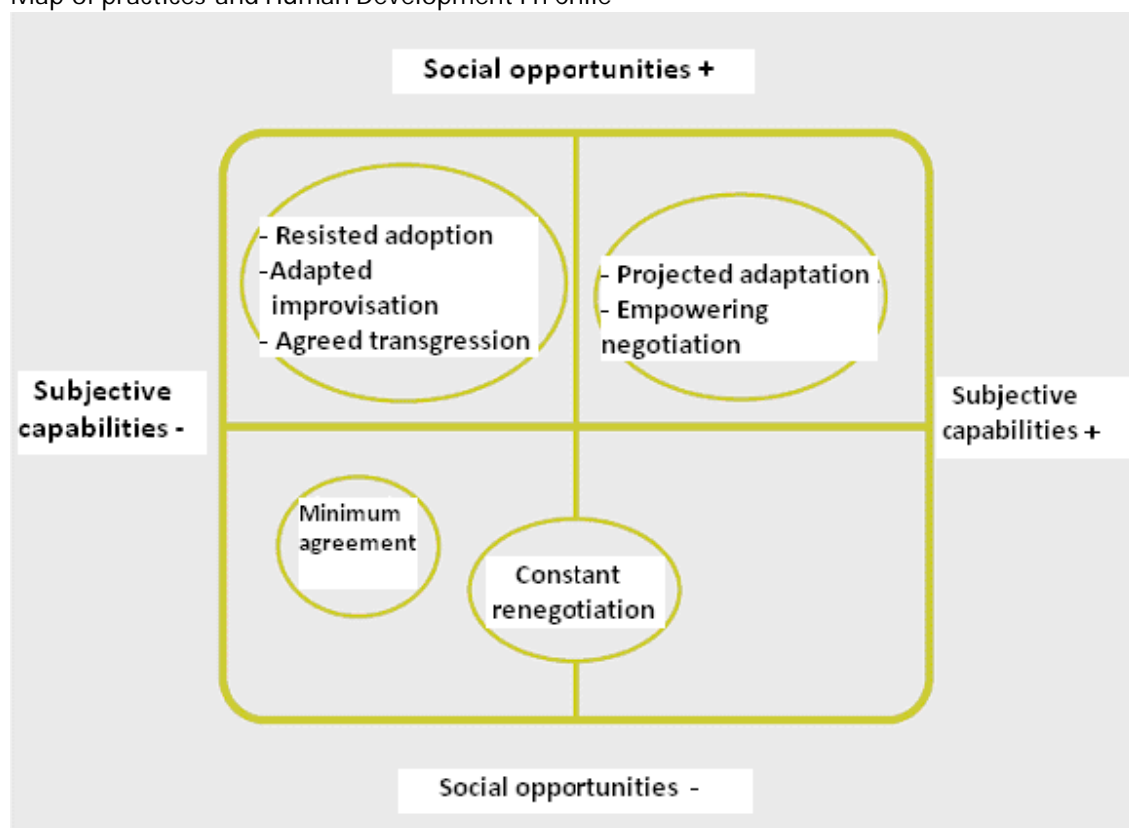
CRITERIA FOR ORIENTING CHANGE

Because no practice starts from zero, neither can any change start from zero

Any practice has a history that takes shape in identity resistance, reluctance to innovations due to past disillusion, asymmetric power and exchange relations, subjective and objective inequalities, over or undersized expectations structuring relationships, which must be taken into consideration in the context of any transformation initiative. That is why, from the logic of orientation, any change always begins by considering the historic career of practices.

It is easier to achieve a change of practice when it is known. Without direct observation it is difficult to predict the games that characterise a space of practice. That is why orienting change involves acquiring the perspective of an ex post planner, one who prior to implementing change will examine precisely what social actors are involved in the practice concerned, what are their motivations and expectations, what are their maps of practical knowledge, and whether there is coherence in the institutional and organizational frameworks regulating their relationships and behaviours.

FIGURE C
Map of practices and Human Development in Chile



Orienting change in a practice involves permanent follow-up of its games and variations. The games included in practices are dynamic, so that orienting change involves constantly monitoring the ways in which social actors improvise new roles, behaviours, and relationships based on their learning and deliberation, together with the adaptive way in which they respond to

changes in the environment. Feedback between those who seek to orient change and social actors involved in the practice must be sustained over time.

In the effort to monitor practices, participation plays a fundamental part, though endowed with a new meaning: no longer involving stakeholders at a single critical moment, but devising permanent feedback mechanisms between stakeholders and institutions, constantly thinking on how changes are adapted, integrated, and modified by individuals. Only thus will institutions be more sensitive to what happens in practices and will take it into consideration in decision-making.

Sudden change in the rules of the game in a space of practices may imply uncertainty, tactical resistance or regressive behaviour. To avoid this, changes must be instated gradually and implementation must be permanently monitored, allowing time and space for learning and for feedback. In the case of certain radical institutional transformations, such as creating a new organisation, an "all-or-nothing" strategy may be a valid option, bearing in mind however that social actors will tend to apply their practical knowledge, which may help or hinder implementation of change.

Governance devices play a key role in practices

It is hard to foretell with certainty the behaviours and conflicts that will arise in a practice. Orienting change means channeling these dynamics, to which end it is fundamental to promote the emergence of governance devices, that is, organizational arrangements facilitating the required coordinations, channeling possible conflicts for mutual benefit, and reducing power and information asymmetries.

The orienting effect of incentives can be maximised through alignment

It is not possible to establish *ex ante* the effect that incentives will have on a practice. Incentives are read from the standpoint of social actor motivations and expectations, and are negotiated and reconstrued in practical games. Nonetheless, the effect of a system of incentives may be maximised by reducing frictions and contradictions among the various institutions and organisations regulating a field of practices. Good enforcement mechanisms are also important to realign incentives to new set of rules.

Orienting change implies observing and empowering the supports available to social actors in the practice

Social actor incentives and motivation are not always sufficient to change the way of doing things in a space of practices. Implementation is hindered when distribution of psychological supports among social actors is unequal. That social actors count with quality supports, understood as resources that make sense to them and that empower them in their decisions and actions, is an element that helps change to develop in a favourable way.

Change orientation should arouse long-term motivation in social actors

The temporal meaning that social actors place on a practice is a key factor for the practice to develop smoothly or to be caught up in short-term interests. To trigger long-term motivations, changes should be backed by narratives, that is, symbolic constructions that give sense to the new interactions in a space of practice. Without a vision of the future that makes sense to those who are being invited to change, they will be hardly prepared to give up the previous situation.

Thinking of society and development from the standpoint of practices: the challenge posed by the report

The contents of the Report on Human Development in Chile 2009 show that the current situation of the country is the consequence of past achievements. Transformations at various levels of social life have granted a new importance to social practices, making it more complex, in most fields, to continue to move forward with old ways of thinking about social change.

Today, both progress and difficulties are explained mainly by the specific way in which social actors relate to one another in the space of their practices. For this reason, what is needed for fostering human development is creating conditions for the display of new ways of doing things. It is necessary to respond adequately to the actual challenges, that is, with visions and proposals consistent with the complexity of the new times. Hence the importance of considering practices when it comes to assessing problems and designing institutional and organisational changes.

Certainly, the way of doing things is not the only field where the challenges of Human Development arise. The debate will have to continue on such points as complementarity between the market and the State, unequal distribution of opportunities –especially gender-based inequalities–, the more or less inclusive principles structuring our democratic system, the restrictions and opportunities defining our insertion in the globalised world, or the threats to the environment, among other subjects. Nonetheless, for all of them, the dimension of day-to-day practices has become itself a crucial field wherein to perceive and face present and future challenges.

The present report suggests a way to think about and act upon practices. Typical practices as well as games and framework factors identified in it are useful tools to observe any space of social practices in which we may be involved. This report invites to use these instruments to transform the way of doing things in our society in order to promote human development.