



Chile Report

Fabian Klein, Claudia Zilla,
Martin Thunert (Coordinator)

Sustainable Governance in the
Context of the COVID-19 Crisis

© wellphoto - stock.adobe.com

Executive Summary

Chile was going through a political and social crisis when the coronavirus pandemic hit the country. Since October 2019, massive peaceful demonstrations as well as acts of destruction targeting infrastructure had dominated the public space. In January 2020, the government estimated the damage done by protestors at some \$1.4 billion. The pandemic has placed additional pressure on the state budget. However, thanks to the fiscal discipline shown by the Chilean government (ruled by different parties) in recent years, the state has had most of the resources required to take rapid compensatory measures aimed at remediating the economic impact of the pandemic. As a result, in 2020, Chile registered its largest fiscal deficit of the last 30 years. Nevertheless, public spending could not prevent a rise in unemployment: in 2020, this rate reached 11%, 50% higher than the year before.

At the end of the first pandemic year, citizens were very critical of the government's coronavirus-crisis management. In December 2020, barely 8% of the population approved of the government's performance, and just 7% approved of the president's actions. The poor and inconsistent communication by the government in the context of the pandemic may have contributed to these low levels of support. In the course of 2020, President Sebastián Piñera dismissed and replaced ministers nine times – including the minister of health.

Due to COVID-19, the plebiscite on the elaboration of a new constitution, originally scheduled for April 2020, was postponed until October. The plebiscite had been the result of an agreement (Acuerdo 2019) between the political parties responding to citizens' demands. On 25 October 2020, at the height of the pandemic, 78.27% of votes cast supported the yes option for the elaboration of a new constitution, and 78.99% of votes cast favored the establishment of a constitutional convention as the institution responsible for this elaboration. The convention's members were to be directly elected in May 2021. The fact that this constitutional process has been possible despite the pandemic restrictions has been considered a significant democratic achievement.

However, the pandemic has brought to light the existence of highly vulnerable groups in Chilean society, while also deepening social inequality between

people, regions and areas. When the virus was first detected in the more affluent sectors of the capital city, municipalities declared quarantines and increased capacities in the public health system, maintaining a certain amount of control over the crisis. Later on, the coronavirus spread massively into the poorer areas of the Santiago Metropolitan Region, where conditions do not enable people to respect quarantines or socially distance. Although a number of academics and NGOs had warned of the dangers of this situation, the government's management measures have not met the needs of a variety of social groups.

At the end of the period under review, Chile was facing its second pandemic wave, with the prognosis of a possible collapse of the health system. The country had experienced 652,525 cases of infection, and 17,204 people had died from coronavirus-related causes, implying a rate of about 900 dead per 1 million habitants.

Citation:

Acuerdo por la Paz Social y la Nueva Constitución 2019.

<https://reformaspoliticas.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/pdf-Acuerdo-por-la-Paz-Social-y-la-Nueva-constitucion.pdf>

On the different elections during 2021 published by the Chilean Electoral Service (Servicio Electoral de Chile – SERVEL): <https://www.servel.cl/conozca-todas-las-fechas-del-ciclo-electoral-2020-2022/>, last accessed: 14 January 2021.

Opinion polls on the government's performance:

Centro de Estudios Públicos – CEP (2020), “Estudio Nacional de Opinión Pública 2019,” 16 January 2020, <https://www.cepchile.cl/cep/site/edic/base/port/encuestasCEP.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CADEM (2020), “Plaza Pública N° 360 – 7 de Diciembre,” 7 December 2020, <https://www.cadem.cl/encuestas/plaza-publica-no-360-7-de-diciembre/>, last accessed: 14 January 2021.

Statistics on the COVID-19 pandemic in the world:

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>, last accessed: 14 January 2021.

Key Challenges

Chile faces a complex set of challenges, certainly in terms of the health crisis and its economic and social implications, but also regarding the country's political and development model, which are being called into question like never before. Despite Chile's solid economic performance of the last 20 years, the COVID-19 crisis has brought to light the severe structural deficits and massive social inequalities that still exist in several areas, including education, public health and social protection. In this context, citizens' confidence in the government, the president and political parties has dropped to historic lows.

Against this backdrop, the success of the government's crisis-management strategy will depend strongly on the (technical) capacity of the health sector

and on the compensatory measures' ability to dampen the economic impact of the pandemic. However, it will also depend largely on the government's communication policy, that is, its ability to inform the public in a consistent and transparent manner, and to engage with other key actors.

As a recent OECD analysis showed, citizens' confidence in their own governments seemed to be linked to their assessment of the government's performance on coronavirus-related issues. Thus, high levels of COVID-19 mortality correlated with low levels of trust (OECD 2020). In the case of Chile, the challenge consists not only in restoring confidence in the government, but also in the political system as a whole. The constitutional process initiated represents an attempt to address this task. Citizens were slated to elect the members of the constitutional convention along with mayors and regional governors in May 2021. This election, originally scheduled for April 2021, had to be postponed a month due to the critical health situation at the time. General elections, including the election of deputies, senators, regional councilors and the president, are scheduled for November 2021. The voting is expected to take place in a peaceful and transparent manner, as was already possible in October 2020 under pandemic conditions.

Recovering and maintaining social peace in this context will probably be the greatest challenge the country faces in the short term. Achieving this objective will necessitate the passage of policies and reforms that promote political and social inclusion, not only in terms of outcomes, but also within the process of policymaking itself. As in most Latin American countries, additional critical tasks include expanding the formal labor-market and social-protection system, and improving labor conditions.

Citation:

OECD (2020), "OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19) – The territorial impact of COVID-19: Managing the crisis across levels of government," Updated 10 November 2020, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-territorial-impact-of-covid-19-managing-the-crisis-across-levels-of-government-d3e314e1/#section-d1e1175>, last accessed 14 January 2021.

Resilience of Policies

I. Economic Preparedness

Economic Preparedness

Economic Policy
Preparedness
Score: 6

In general terms, Chile has an advanced macroeconomic and financial policy regime in place. This is rule-based, and combines a floating exchange rate, inflation targeting, an autonomous central bank, an overall government budget rule, and effective regulation and supervision of banks and capital markets. As a result, macroeconomic performance has generally been quite satisfactory. A dominant economic role is assigned to foreign trade, markets and the private sector, complemented by active government regulation and policies aimed at limiting noncompetitive market conditions, extending social protection, and – to a limited degree – reducing poverty and income concentration. Economic legislation and regulation provide a level playing field for domestic and foreign competitors. Barriers to international trade and capital flows are negligible, and international competitiveness, adjusted for labor productivity, is relatively high.

Chile's budgetary policy has been quite successful in the past in terms of national debt reduction and reserve-fund accumulation. The country's budgetary policy is based on a fiscal rule that explicitly – and relatively transparently – links overall government spending to an estimate of government revenue trends. A Fiscal Consulting Council oversees the government's adherence to this fiscal rule.

These policies have enabled a relatively high level of growth, and poverty rates have fallen substantially in the last few decades. However, Chile is also one of the countries with the highest levels of wealth concentration within the OECD. Together with Mexico, Chile also shows the largest income gap between the richest and poorest 10% within the group of OECD member countries (OECD 2019). Moreover, the Gini coefficient for income inequality has remained virtually unchanged since 2006 (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social

2017). In this sense it is clearly debatable whether economic policies in fact promote social well-being and economic empowerment in a sustainable way. Inequality in terms of income distribution can undoubtedly be understood as a key factor driving the social outburst Chile experienced leading up to the end of the year 2019, a few weeks before the coronavirus pandemic reached the country.

Chile's economic stability and growth primarily depend on the export of commodities (e.g., copper, and agricultural and silvicultural products) with relatively low or no added value at all, along with comparatively low level of industrial production. The manufacturing sector is small, and most consumer, intermediate and capital goods must be imported. The productivity gap remains significant compared to the OECD average (OECD 2018). Thus, technological readiness and business sophistication tends to be rather weakly developed.

Rather than generating incentives for eco-innovations in business operations, economic policies tend to focus on fining companies for non-compliance with regulation. Especially in the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector, where most employment is generated (about 2/3 of Chilean employees work in SMEs) and labor conditions tend to be rather precarious, there are few positive incentives for eco-innovation.

Furthermore, Chile is still highly dependent on energy imports. Major efforts have been made to become more energy efficient, especially within the mining sector, as well as to promote the generation of renewable energy.

Citation:

Central Bank:

Banco Central (2020), Informe Política Monetaria, <https://www.bcentral.cl/web/banco-central/areas/politica-monetaria/informe-de-politica-monetaria-ipom>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Budget Office (Dirección de Presupuesto; DIPRES):

DIPRES (2020), Adendum – Informe de Finanzas Públicas (Proyecciones de mediano plazo): https://www.dipres.gob.cl/598/articles-202677_doc1_pdf.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Social Development:

Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (2017), Observatorio CASEN 2017, http://observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/casen-multidimensional/casen/docs/Resultados_ingresos_Casen_2017.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Energy:

Ministerio de Energía (2017), Energía 2050 – Política energética de Chile, https://www.energia.gob.cl/sites/default/files/energia_2050_-_politica_energetica_de_chile.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

OECD Reports:

OECD (2018), OECD Economic Surveys – Chile, <https://www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/Chile-2018-OECD-economic-survey-Spanish.pdf>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

OCDE (2019), Society at a glance 2019 – OECD Social Indicators, <https://www.oecd.org/social/society-at-a-glance-19991290.htm>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Labor Market
Policy
Preparedness
Score: 5

Labor Market Preparedness

By international comparison, Chile has very wide-ranging and restrictive labor-market laws and regulation, at least on paper, with only a few minor reforms made during the last four years. Excessive regulation of job content, termination restrictions and comparatively inflexible part-time contracts create disincentives to formal-sector employment. Minimum wages are high relative to average wages in comparison with other OECD countries. As most employment is created in small or medium-sized enterprises with relatively low productivity and little product sophistication, about 70% of salary earners work in low-wage sectors or do not even earn minimum wage, despite being statistically registered as employed. Policies that would increase labor-market flexibility (e.g., greater integration of groups such as women and low-skilled workers), have largely been ignored. Since powerful labor unions, including the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) and Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), focus primarily on wage-related issues, the limited labor-market policies that have been implemented in the recent past have tended to focus mainly on wage levels rather than on labor conditions or the quality of the labor force. Continuing education and skill enhancement training programs receive little support, or are exclusively focused on improving conditions for youth employment rather than employment among all age groups.

Unemployment insurance only applies to those workers who have permanent or fixed-term contracts, and to those services governed by the Labor Code (Código del Trabajo). These conditions apply to only 54.2% of the economically active population. Each worker that is a member of the Unemployment Fund Administrator (Administradoras de Fondos de Cesantía, AFC) has an individual account, to which the employer must contribute 3% of his or her taxable remuneration on a monthly basis. This contribution is obligatory, but entails different proportions by the worker and the employer, depending on the type of contract. Those who are unemployed and are affiliated with the AFC, but do not have sufficient resources in their individual account to finance a benefit in accordance with the amounts and percentages established by law, are entitled to draw from the Solidarity Unemployment Fund. Thus, self-employed workers and especially workers in the informal sector are excluded from this benefit (about 35% of the economically active population).

Employees are entitled to paid sick leave if they obtain an appropriate medical certificate and deliver it within two days to their employer. The employer then has three working days to pass the required documentation to the respective health insurance institution in order to activate the payment. Especially in the Fonasa (Fondo Nacional de Salud) public health system, which most Chileans

belong to, payments are often delayed, either because the employer has not submitted the required documents on time or because the Commission for Preventive Medicine and Disability (Comisión de Medicina Preventiva e Invalidez, COMPIN) refuses to grant medical leave, which blocks payment until doubts have been clarified with the treating physician. This last aspect in particular has generated significant criticism, which led the government to draw up a plan to speed up sick-leave payments. For its part, the Chamber of Deputies set up an investigation commission to analyze the “COMPIN crisis” by mid-2019. The respective investigation report was published in August 2020, underlining very serious administrative problems regarding the existing delay in the sick-leave payments authorized by COMPIN.

Citation:

National Institute for Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE):

INE (2020), “Encuesta Nacional de Empleo - Principales resultados trimestre agosto-octubre de 2020,” 27 November 2020, <https://www.ine.cl/prensa/2020/11/27/ine-publica-resultados-de-la-encuesta-nacional-de-empleo-del-trimestre-agosto-octubre-de-2020>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.ine.cl/estadisticas/laborales/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.ine.cl/ine-ciudadano/definiciones-estadisticas/economia/encuesta-nacional-del-empleo>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports on the unemployment insurance and income-substitution benefits for sick workers:

CIPER, “¿Aguanta usted una cuarentena? Radiografía económica del hogar chileno que se enfrenta al Covid-19,” 17 March 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/03/17/aguanta-usted-una-cuarentena-radiografia-economica-del-hogar-chileno-que-se-enfrenta-al-covid-19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, “Por qué el plan económico ante el Covid-19 es insuficiente y lo agrava el dictamen que permite no pagar remuneraciones,” 27 March 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/03/27/por-que-el-plan-economico-ante-el-covid-19-es-insuficiente-y-lo-agrava-el-dictamen-que-permite-no-pagar-remuneraciones/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Universidad de Chile – Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, “El saqueo del COMPIN: de la manifestación individual a la protesta social,” 5 November 2020, <http://www.facso.uchile.cl/noticias/158943/el-saqueo-del-compin-de-la-manifestacion-individual-a-la-protesta>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Fiscal Preparedness

Fiscal Policy
Preparedness
Score: 8

Chilean budgetary policy has been very successful in terms of national debt reduction and reserve-fund accumulation. The country’s budgetary policy is based on a fiscal rule that explicitly – and relatively transparently – links overall government spending to an estimate of government revenue trends. Reliable burden-sharing arrangements, coordinated across state levels, are in place. This puts Chile at the international best-practice frontier regarding budget policies and fiscal regimes. In order to improve fiscal transparency and the validation of the public balance, the Fiscal Consulting Council (Consejo Fiscal Asesor) was created in 2013.

Especially during the last five years, the country’s budgetary policy has come under pressure due to declines in the international price of copper (Chile’s main export good), slowing economic growth, state spending that has risen

faster than GDP, the continued presence of a structural deficit and an increase in debt – although this latter trend has stayed within reasonable proportions, considering the positive trend of the last 15 years.

As a result of the massive damage that had been caused to public infrastructure during the social outbursts and street violence in the larger cities through the end of 2019, the government was forced to restructure its planned public spending. As estimated by the government at the beginning of 2020, losses in infrastructure reached \$1.4 billion, an estimate significantly lower than that made by the Chilean Insurers Association, which indicated that its members should pay between \$2 and \$3 billion for claims deriving from the social outburst. At that point, a political debate was already ongoing regarding the value of adhering to fiscal orthodoxy, and to which degree the country should fund a badly overdue social agenda and repairs to the damaged public infrastructure by resorting to sovereign wealth funds (e.g., the Pension Reserve Fund and the Economic and Social Stabilization Fund). By the end of 2019, the two funds together had reached a market value of \$23 billion (Ministerio de Hacienda 2019).

By then, the Ministry of Finance had indicated that public spending would have to rise by 9.8% in real terms in order to address the socioeconomic agenda, which includes labor-market measures and the restoration of infrastructure damaged or destroyed during the protests. This implies that in 2020, the country would register its largest budget deficit in the last 30 years. Despite this exceptional situation, Chile's budgetary policy as such can generally be classified as successful regarding sustainable public finances.

Citation:

Ministry of Finance (Ministerio de Hacienda):

Ministerio de Hacienda (2019), "Informe Anual Fondos Soberanos 2019," <https://www.hacienda.cl/areas-de-trabajo/finanzas-internacionales/fondos-soberanos/informe-anual/informe-anual-fondos-soberanos-2019>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Dirección de Presupuesto (DIPRES), "Balance estructural 2019/2020," <https://www.dipres.gob.cl/598/w3-propertyvalue-16156.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Dirección de Presupuesto (2017), "Financiamiento de los Gobiernos Regionales en Chile," https://www.dipres.gob.cl/598/articles-160346_doc_pdf.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On damages caused by the social outburst:

Consejo de Políticas de Infraestructura, "Gobierno estimó en USD\$ 1.400 millones los daños a infraestructura tras el estallido social," 16 January 2020, <http://www.infraestructurapublica.cl/gobierno-estimo-usd-1-400-millones-los-danos-infraestructura-tras-estallido-social/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, "Gobierno cifra en US\$ 1.400 millones los daños a la infraestructura desde el 18 de octubre," 14 January 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/pulso/noticia/gobierno-cifra-us-1-400-millones-los-danos-la-infraestructura-desde-18-octubre/974052/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Pauta, "Chile tendrá en 2020 el mayor déficit fiscal de los últimos 30 años," 2 December 2019, <https://www.pauta.cl/economia/en-2020-chile-tendra-el-mayor-deficit-fiscal-de-los-ultimos-30-anos>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Research and
Innovation Policy
Preparedness
Score: 4

Research and Innovation

Chile has the OECD's lowest research and development (R&D) expenditure as a share of GDP. Most of this expenditure is undertaken by the government rather than by the private sector. However, Chile has shown awareness of its shortcomings, and of the necessity of technological innovation for its future economic and social development. Significant reforms have been put in place since 2018 in order to raise R&D funding, including earmarked taxation (a royalty tax on mining), increases in government expenditure, and the improvement of tax incentives for private R&D. Moreover, a new Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation (Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología, Conocimiento e Innovación, MinCiencia) was created, and the former National Commission for Scientific Investigation and Technology (Comisión Nacional de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica, CONICYT) was transformed into the National Agency for Investigation and Development (Agencia Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo, ANID) by early 2020.

Although results of these measures have to date been disappointing – in large part because of bureaucratic hurdles to the approval of private and public projects – Chilean institutions show relatively high performance at least in the area of basic research. However, the steps needed to transform this good basic research into applied research are almost never taken. Universities are often not prepared to support research that operates at the interface between basic research and industrial development. This is reflected in the comparatively low number of patents registered per year on a per capita basis, whereas the number of scientific publications is relatively high. In general, access to public funds available for research tends to be limited due to high bureaucratic barriers.

Despite these facts, improvements regarding innovation policy and scientific cooperation have been in evidence. According to the latest version of the Global Innovation Index (2020), Chile is ranked at 54th place out of 131 countries. In comparison to the previous year, when it was ranked 51st out of 129 countries, the country's innovation performance appears to be relatively stable.

Citation:

Global Innovation Index (2020):

<https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/gii-2020-report>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation (Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología, Conocimiento e Innovación – MinCiencia):

<https://www.minciencia.gob.cl/noticias/gobierno-lanza-fondo-de-2300-millones-para-investigacion-cientifica-sobre-covid19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021

Chilean Corporation for the Promotion of Production (Corporación de Fomento de la Producción – CORFO) – “Política I+D Empresarial”

https://www.corfo.cl/sites/cpp/descubre_mas_documentos, last accessed: 12 January 2021

Chilean Corporation for the Promotion of Production (Corporación de Fomento de la Producción - CORFO)
https://www.corfo.cl/sites/Satellite?c=C_NoticiaNacional&cid=1476721151824&d=Touch&pagename=CorfoPortalPublico%2FC_NoticiaNacional%2FcorfoDetalleNoticiaNacionalWeb, last accessed: 12 January 2021

Reports and discussion on the Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation (MinCiencia):
 CIPER, “Pensar la política científica más allá de Becas Chile “, 30 July 2020,
<https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/07/30/pensar-la-politica-cientifica-en-chile-mas-alla-de-becas-chile/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

II. Welfare State Preparedness

Education System Preparedness

Education Policy
 Preparedness
 Score: 4

Chile’s school and educational attainment levels are very mixed and are generally lower than the OECD average. Pre-primary education coverage is still low, but is rising. Primary and secondary education coverage is high, reaching nearly 100% of current age cohorts. Tertiary education coverage is moderate but increasing, although the quality of universities and private sector technical institutions shows significant variation. There is a huge financial gap between private and public education, with per month spending per pupil in the public system averaging CLP 40,000 (approximately \$60), and private-school fees averaging about CLP 300,000 (approximately \$450) per month.

Previous governments proved unable to reduce the qualitative and social gap between the private and public systems. This failure has led to strong public protests in the past and can be seen as a key factor of the social tension which led to massive protests and riots through the end of 2019. Traditionally, high-quality education in Chile has been accessible only to those able to afford it, and the quality of public education varies significantly between different municipalities along the country. Although a reform intended to demunicipalize public primary and secondary education has been underway since 2017, the vast majority of these educational institutions still depend directly on their local administrations, and thus partly on their funding capacity.

In general, Chile’s education system – with the exception of a few top universities – fails in the task of enabling students to acquire the knowledge and skills required for the country to make a quantum leap in economic development and growth.

Although 87.5% of the households do have access to the internet (slightly more than the OECD average), the digital literacy gap between different

socioeconomic groups in Chile is significant. This hinders equitable access to education in general, but has especially done so during the coronavirus crisis.

Even though there have been some modernization efforts regarding school curricula, reforms have not occurred very frequently during the last 20 years. The latest major reform was announced in May 2019 and was intended to be implemented gradually during 2020 for third- and fourth-grade students (due to the pandemic, its implementation was partly delayed). The reform seeks to reorganize school time, giving students more ability to choose subjects according to their vocation and interests, and thus be better prepared as they transit toward higher education.

Although teachers in the public education system are evaluated frequently by the Ministry of Education, training courses for teachers, for example in the field of digital literacy, are usually offered by universities or institutions and mostly subject to a fee. Thus, the motivation to apply to these courses depends on the teacher's own particular interest, financial situation and career goals rather than on an integrated education-policy framework.

The Ministry for Education's total budget for 2020 reached about CLP 11.7 trillion (approximately \$16.1 billion), 1.03% more than in 2019. Whereas higher education experienced a reduction (-1.5%), primary and secondary education received major funding increase with +3.1% and +2.8% respectively (LyD 2019).

Citation:

Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, MinEduc):

<https://www.mineduc.cl/apoyos-del-mineduc-durante-la-pandemia-del-covid-19/>

<https://www.mineduc.cl/orientaciones-mineduc-covid-19/>

<https://www.mineduc.cl/mineduc-conforma-grupo-de-trabajo-para-abordar-desercion-escolar/>

<https://www.supereduc.cl/prensa/superintendencia-de-educacion-emite-circular-con-instrucciones-para-retorno-a-clases-presenciales/>

<https://www.ayudamineduc.cl/ficha/marco-curricular-educacion-media>

<https://www.curriculumnacional.cl/portal/>

Last accessed: 12 January 2021

On education budget:

Budget Directorate (Dirección de Presupuestos, DIPRES)

DIPRES (2019), "Presupuesto Ministerio de Educación 2020," <http://www.dipres.gob.cl/597/w3-multipropertyvalues-14437-25190.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Fundación Libertad y Desarrollo (2019), "Ley de Presupuesto 2020 – Ministerio de Educación," https://lyd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/lp2020_partida-09_mineduc.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On the digital (literacy) gap and COVID-19:

Fundación País Digital (2020), "Brecha en el uso de internet Desigualdad digital en el 2020," <https://paisdigital.org/brecha-en-el-uso-de-internet-2020>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Radio Universidad de Chile, "Brecha digital y educación online – La pandemia no es igual para todos," 6 July 2020, <https://www.uchile.cl/noticias/164931/brecha-digital-y-educacion-online-la-pandemia-no-es-igual-para-todos>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

TecnoEducación.cl, "La brecha digital de conectividad se sigue acortando en Chile," 9 July 2020,

<https://www.tecnoeducacion.cl/2020/07/09/la-brecha-digital-de-conectividad-se-sigue-acortando-en-chile/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Consejo Políticas de Infraestructura, “OCDE: Acceso a internet en Chile subió “sustancialmente” a 87,5% de los hogares,” 26 February 2019, <http://www.infraestructurapublica.cl/ocde-acceso-internet-chile-subio-sustancialmente-875-los-hogares/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On Inclusion Law within the education sector:
<http://leyinclusion.mineduc.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Social Welfare Preparedness

Social Welfare
Policy
Preparedness
Score: 5

Although Chile has been one of the fastest growing Latin American economies in recent decades, about 30% of the population is economically vulnerable. Income inequality remains very substantial, making Chile one of the most unequal countries in the OECD.

In terms of upward mobility, Chile still suffers from a long-lasting and even broadening social gap. For instance, considerable exclusion along ethnic lines persists, along with a large gap between poor parts of the population and the middle class. There is also little upward mobility within higher income groups. The middle class in general and the lower middle class in particular can be considered highly vulnerable given the lack of support for those suffering from unemployment or health problems. Middle-class wealth tends to be based on a high level of long-term indebtedness, and its share in the national income is low even by Latin American standards.

The income distribution is highly unequal. Although GDP (2019) was about \$282 billion, and GDP per capita (2019) was about \$15,000, 65% of the population earns a monthly income of less than \$800 (CLP 530,000). About half of the population earns less than \$550 (CLP 380,000) per month. Furthermore, poverty rates among the elderly are disturbingly high. In general terms, political discussions and policy proposals regarding the promotion of social inclusion and social mobility still tend to be strongly ideologically biased.

The public education system provides a comparatively low-quality education to those who lack financial resources. The approach to social policy promoted and supported by the Chilean elite maintains this very unequal social structure. Although some social programs seeking to improve the situation of society’s poorest people have been established and extended, the economic system (characterized by oligopolistic and concentrated structures in almost all domains) does not allow the integration of considerable portions of society into the country’s middle class. Moreover, the lower middle class in particular can be regarded as a statistical category rather than a realistic characterization

of people's quality of life. In fact, the majority of the Chilean middle class runs a perpetual risk of falling (material) living standards, as their consumer spending is mainly financed by credit and individual debt. If a household's primary income earner loses his or her job, or a family member has serious health troubles, families tend to face rapid impoverishment.

Furthermore, the number of immigrants in Chile has increased significantly in recent years. The National Institute for Statistics estimates that by the end of 2019, about 1.5 million immigrants lived in the country. Immigrants with low education levels have difficulty finding jobs in the formal sector; consequently, many members of this group are highly vulnerable, as they are not necessarily covered by social-protection measures due to their visa status or informal work conditions.

The massive protests at the end of 2019 can be understood as the expression of a generalized frustration regarding the persistent lack of equal opportunities and social justice. As an immediate response to these protests and riots, the government presented several reform proposals, including a 20% increase in the solidarity pension, the implementation of a health insurance program covering families in cases when expensive medical treatments become necessary, and the implementation of municipal-level solidarity funds designed to support vulnerable communities. These reform proposals were broadly perceived as patches rather than as a step toward a more equitable social system. Therefore, mobilizations continued, culminating on 25 October 2019 in the largest protest the country has ever experienced. In Santiago alone, more than 1 million people gathered in the streets demanding social justice. These protests finally led to a plebiscite, in which Chile's citizens voted to draft a new constitution.

World Bank – Data on Chile (last accessed: 12 January 2021):

<https://www.bancomundial.org/es/country/chile/overview>

<https://data.worldbank.org/country/chile>

Inter-American Development Bank – Data on Chile (last accessed: 12 January 2021):

<https://data.iadb.org/>

National Institute for Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE):

INE (2018): <http://www.ine.cl/prensa/detalle-prensa/2018/07/18/ingreso-laboral-promedio-mensual-en-chile-fue-de-4.493-en-2017>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

INE (2019): <https://www.ine.cl/prensa/2020/03/12/seg%C3%BAAn-estimaciones-la-cantidad-de-personas-extranjeras-residentes-habituales-en-chile-bordea-los-1-5-millones-al-31-de-diciembre-de-2019>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On income inequality and social inclusion:

Fundación Sol (2018) "Los Verdaderos Sueldos en Chile," <https://fundacionsol.cl/blog/estudios-2/post/los-verdaderos-sueldos-de-chile-6188>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

OECD (2018), "A Broken Social Elevator? How to Promote Social Mobility," <https://www.oecd.org/social/broken-elevator-how-to-promote-social-mobility-9789264301085-en.htm>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Health Policy
Preparedness
Score: 5

Healthcare System Preparedness

Chile's healthcare system provides broad coverage to most of the population. However, there are significant differences regarding the quality of healthcare, due to differences between the public and private healthcare sectors, as well as to regional gaps regarding infrastructure and access to medical care.

In the Latin American context, Chile has conducted the highest number of PCR tests per million inhabitants, reaching an average of 22 tests per 100 inhabitants as of 24 December. A total of 6.16 million tests had been carried out by the end of 2020 (University of Oxford 2020).

By mid-2019, before the outbreak of the pandemic, there were 38,000 hospital beds throughout the country, including about 26,000 in the public sector and 12,000 in the private sector. The public sector had about 640 beds in intensive care units (ICU), and about 1,060 beds in intermediate treatment units (ITU), while the private sector had about 1,600 beds for critical care. As indicated by various reports on the Chilean health system, before the crisis the country had about two hospital beds per 1,000 inhabitants and 9.2 mechanical ventilators per 100,000 inhabitants (Interference.cl 2020b based on a report of Global Health Intelligence, numbers vary slightly depending on the source).

Beginning in January, when the impact of the pandemic in Europe started to raise concerns, the government introduced several measures intended to improve the capacities of the health system (e.g., the preparedness of the infrastructure, ensuring there was sufficient medical staff and equipment). Nevertheless, especially at the beginning of the pandemic in Chile, the demand for personal protective equipment reached a critical point. In a survey carried out by the Chilean Medical College (Colegio Médico de Chile), 85.7% of health personnel indicated that there was a lack of protective equipment (CIPER 2020).

Although the health system reached the limits of its capacity in terms of intensive care beds and ventilators during the winter months, a major collapse of the system was avoided. In general terms, sufficient medical supplies and personnel have to date been available. Still, the situation has been critical at moments.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the government significantly underestimated the negative impact of crowded homes and low education levels on their efforts to contain the virus. In this context, the government's

communication has been strongly criticized by the opposition, as well as by some academics and research institutes. Some of this criticism focused on a permanent change regarding the methodology for collecting, analyzing and publishing official statistics on case numbers and deaths at the beginning of the pandemic; however, critics also pointed to the government's inconsistent communications regarding restrictions and health ordinances.

The communication lapses reached such a level that the then-serving health minister publicly declared that the government had been unaware of the overcrowded housing conditions suffered by a large population of vulnerable families, especially in the Santiago Metropolitan Region. As a political response to this questionable management, President Piñera decided to change the minister of health in June 2020, at the peak of the pandemic. The administration also announced that additional staff had been hired. The health alert declared by the Ministry (MINSAL) facilitated the recruitment of additional health system personnel and accelerated the purchasing of supplies.

Regional imbalances have been more or less successfully balanced, at least regarding the treatment of serious ill patients (e.g., seriously ill patients have been transferred depending on the availability of intensive care beds – not only from outlying regions to Santiago, but also to other regions, depending on the situation.

Citation:

United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):
ECLAC (2020), Observatorio COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe – Impacto económico y social,
<https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud, MINSAL):

<https://www.minsal.cl/nuevo-coronavirus-2019-ncov/casos-confirmados-en-chile-covid-19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.minsal.cl/chile-lidera-latinoamerica-en-tasa-de-test-pcr-por-millon-de-habitantes/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

University of Oxford (2020):

<https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Data on COVID-19 by country:

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/chile/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports on the pandemic and the Chilean Health Care System:

Pauta, “Las cifras indispensables de la expansión del coronavirus,” 11 January 2021,
<https://www.pauta.cl/ciencia-y-tecnologia/las-cifras-del-covid-19-chile-comparacion-con-paises-misma-cantidad-dias>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Pauta, “Camas, ventiladores, personal: los factores críticos ante un posible colapso sanitario,” 19 March 2020,
<https://www.pauta.cl/nacional/camas-ventiladores-personal-los-factores-criticos-ante-colapso-red-salud>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, “Mañalich reconoce que en un sector de Santiago hay un nivel de pobreza y hacinamiento del cual yo no tenía conciencia de la magnitud que tenía,” 28 May 2020,
<https://www.latercera.com/politica/noticia/manalich-reconoce-que-en-un-sector-de-santiago-hay-un-nivel-de-pobreza-y-hacinamiento-del-cual-yo-no-tenia-conciencia-de-la-magnitud-que-tenia/5BQZLGL0PVDDPKQ2SNSSSWRGYU/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Interferencia.cl (2020a), “Red de Salud Pública,” No date indicated,
https://interferencia.cl/sites/default/files/red_publica_de_salud_y_covid19_rt_consultoria.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Intereferencia.cl (2020b), “Así está preparado América Latina para el COVID-19,” 22 March 2020, <https://interferencia.cl/articulos/exclusivo-asi-esta-preparada-america-latina-para-el-covid-19-en-cuanto-infraestructura>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Centro de Investigación e Información Periodística (CIPER)

CIPER, “Encuesta del Colegio Médico: 85,7% del personal de salud dice que faltan implementos de protección,” 31 March 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/03/31/encuesta-del-colegio-medico-857-del-personal-de-salud-dice-que-faltan-implementos-de-proteccion/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.gob.cl/en/news/chiles-health-ministry-gives-details-scope-health-alert-novel-coronavirus/>

Families

Family Policy
Preparedness
Score: 5

In recent years, there have been efforts to establish wide-ranging preschool-education coverage. These policies offer Chilean parents more opportunities to place their children in free or low-priced nurseries and kindergartens. At the end of 2019, a bill that would require companies to provide childcare for employees’ children under two years of age (“sala cuna universal”), regardless of the company’s size (previously, only companies employing at least 20 women are obliged by law to offer nursery facilities), was submitted to parliament. As of the time of writing, lawmakers had yet to discuss the financing and administration of the funds that would be provided for this purpose.

The current system does not yet fulfill actual labor-market requirements, given that childcare-facility opening times often do not coincide with parents’ long working hours. The annual average of working hours in Chile (1,914 hours per year and worker in 2019) far exceeds the OECD average (about 1,726 hours per year and worker). A bill that would reduce the standard number of weekly working hours from 48 to 40 was elaborated and approved by the lower chamber of Congress in November 2020; as of the time of writing, it had not yet been taken up by the upper chamber.

In recent years, more women have joined the labor market. In the last quarter of 2010, women’s labor-market participation rate was only 48.1%; in the same quarter of 2019, this share had risen to 52.7%, as indicated by the National Institute of Statistics (INE). But at the same time, most working women are (self-)employed in the low-wage sector. More than 30% of all employed women worked in the informal sector at the end of 2019. About 40% of the women who are out of the labor market say they are in this situation due to long-term family reasons.

Families’ abilities to find childcare depend to a great degree on their economic background, as wealthier families normally pay for private housekeepers and nannies (in both cases mostly females). In general terms, Chilean family policies still lack a holistic vision of modern families. For example, there is

little support provided specifically to single parents, and parental leave policies are weak by OECD standards (e.g., the length of parental leave during which jobs are protected, and the length of paid paternity leave are both significantly lower than the OECD average).

Citation:

National Institute for Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE):

<https://www.ine.cl/prensa/2020/03/06/mujeres-en-chile-ganan-en-promedio-27-menos-que-los-hombres>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About working hours in OECD countries:

<https://data.oecd.org/emp/hours-worked.htm>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About length of maternity leave and job protection in OECD countries:

<https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54760>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About the law initiative for universal day nursery:

<https://www.gob.cl/salacunauniversal/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About the reduction of the weekly working hours published by the Chilean Senate:

<https://www.senado.cl/40-horas-llega-al-senado-el-proyecto-que-reduce-la-jornada-laboral/senado/2019-11-08/131139.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

III. Economic Crisis Response

Economic Response

Economic
Recovery
Package
Score: 7

Chile was already facing complex circumstances when the pandemic hit. Even before the social outburst of October 2019, the country's budgetary policy had come under pressure in the recent past due to declines in the price of copper, slowing economic growth and state spending that had risen faster than GDP. Thus, the preexisting social and political crisis worsened the conditions and restricted the margin for budgetary maneuvers able to address the health and economic crisis caused by the pandemic.

In general terms, the government reacted relatively quickly to the economic and social crisis. Beginning in March 2020, the Ministry of Finance announced several economic stimulus packages (ECLAC 2020). These included:

- A fiscal package in the amount of \$11.75 billion, representing 4.7% of GDP. These resources will be used to provide 1) protection for workers and to impose obligations on employers; 2) tax relief; 3) liquidity for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); 4) income support for families; and 5) greater resources for the Ministry of Health.
- An economic emergency plan amounting to \$5 billion, or 2% of GDP. This includes an extension of state guarantees for enterprises (up to \$3 billion) and the creation of an income protection fund (up to \$2 billion).

A large part of the measures will be financed through the sovereign wealth funds, the Pension Reserve Fund (Fondo de Reserva de Pensiones, FRP) and the Economic and Social Stabilization Fund (Fondo de Estabilización Económica y Social, FEES). The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Economy accompanied the design of the measures with medium- and long-term resource planning in order to assure financial sustainability.

A total of 48 coronavirus-related measures were passed by the end of September 2020. As of the time of writing, the most extensive measures in budgetary terms implemented by the Ministry of Finance included:

- A six-month reduction of the stamp tax to 0% for all credit operations.
- An acceleration of payments to state providers; at the beginning of April 2020, all invoices issued to the state and all pending payments were to be paid in cash, generating immediate liquidity in the amount of approximately \$1 billion.
- New lines of financing (with state guarantees) for entrepreneurs and enterprises with annual sales of up to \$37 million (99.8% of the country's enterprises).
- A \$100 million solidarity fund was created to provide subsidies to businesses experiencing "social emergencies" due to declining sales.
- Several temporary tax-relief measures for SMEs and people with lower incomes.

Apart from these measures, the government implemented several tax-relief and tax-deferral measures, especially for SMEs, as well as measures targeting the financial sector, for example facilitating mortgage-loan deferrals and credit refinancing.

Furthermore, due to public pressure in the context of the country's still ongoing political crisis, the government allowed individuals to withdraw some of their private pension funds was approved (up to 10% of the available funds can be withdrawn twice). The finance minister has strongly criticized this measure from the point of view of sustainability.

In order to maintain sufficient liquidity and credit, the central bank lowered its benchmark interest rate to 0.50%. After a sharp fall at the beginning of the second quarter, the Chilean economy started to show signs of stabilization, and even some incipient improvement. The rebound was in line with the gradual withdrawal of health control measures and the government's support for household incomes. In a September 2020 report, the central bank estimated that 2020 would end with a GDP decline of between 4.5% and 5.5%. The report additionally projected that GDP would grow between 4% and 5% in

2021, and between 3% and 4% in 2022. These growth rates are based on a scenario featuring a gradual reduction in coronavirus restrictions, in which credit continued to flow to support the recovery process. The inflation rate was forecast to reach 3% by 2022, and is not expected to drop below 2% annually before that time.

Citation:

Central Bank:

Banco Central, Informe Monetario – September 2020, <https://www.bcentral.cl/contenido/-/detalle/informe-de-politica-monetaria-septiembre-2020>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):

ECLAC (2020), Observatorio COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe – Impacto económico y social, <https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports on the economic measures undertaken by the government to tackle the effects of the pandemic and the social outburst:

Radio Universidad de Chile, “Las medidas económicas sólo aminoran, pero no compensan el daño del Coronavirus,” 20 March 2020, <https://www.uchile.cl/noticias/162044/medidas-economicas-solo-aminoran-pero-no-compensan-dano-de-covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Centro de Investigación e Información Periodística (CIPER):

CIPER, “La política económica frente al covid-19 en Chile y el mundo – una invitación a ampliar las fronteras de lo posible,” 24 May 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/05/24/la-politica-economica-frente-al-covid-19-en-chile-y-el-mundo-una-invitation-a-ampliar-las-fronteras-de-lo-posible>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, “Análisis comparativo de la política social económica chilena durante la pandemia,” 31 August 2021, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/08/31/analisis-comparativo-de-la-politica-social-economica-chilena-durante-la-pandemia>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Presidential announcement 2019/2020:

<https://prensa.presidencia.cl/discursos.aspx>

Sustainability of Economic Response

Recovery
Package
Sustainability
Score: 4

Given the country’s economic structure and the economic vulnerability of a large part of its population, the main focus of the recovery packages measures has been on stimulating economic activity, cushioning the negative effects on the labor market (maintaining jobs and avoiding an increase in informal activity) and supporting household income. Promoting transformative opportunities in the sense of “eco-friendly behavior” has not been a priority. Nevertheless, there have been some smaller initiatives supported and/or financed by state bodies (e.g., Corporación de Fomento de la producción, CORFO) that have sought to strengthen the green economy.

The capacity to invest in and implement transformations in the sense of sustainable cities often depends on the municipalities themselves. This fact generates a strong bias in the implementation of such measures; not only due to the significant budgetary disparities between the different municipalities, but also due to factors such as population density, connectivity and infrastructure.

Planned investments in the area of public infrastructure – specifically health, education and transport – are following regulations already in place before the crisis, focusing mainly on the effort to lower carbon-dioxide emissions (e.g., as part of the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) plans). The renewable energy sector has gained importance in recent years and is a priority area in the national energy strategy.

As of the time of writing, there were no specific measures in place for a state-led post-pandemic green recovery. Academics and several think tanks have called for greater emphasis in this area.

Citation:

Ministry of Public Works (Ministerio de Obras Públicas, MOP):

MOP-Centro de Dirección de Arquitectura: <http://www.depucolabora.cl/2016/09/terminos-de-referencia-estandarizados.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

MOP-Centro de Dirección de Arquitectura: <http://www.depucolabora.cl/2017/05/ord-da-n-636-instrucciones-para.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On certification for sustainable construction:

<https://certificacionsustentable.cl/conoce-la-certificacion/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On Green Recovery post COVID-19 in Chile:

PaísCircular, “Santiago no es Chile: 5 iniciativas apoyadas por Corfo que están impulsando una “economía verde” desde las regiones,” 30 June 2020, <https://www.paiscircular.cl/consumo-y-produccion/santiago-no-es-chile-5-iniciativas-apoyadas-por-corfo-que-estan-impulsando-una-economia-verde-desde-regiones/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Labor Market Response

Labor Market
Policy Response
Score: 5

When the coronavirus pandemic reached the country, the unemployment rate was already about 7.2% and the rate of informally employed or informally active workers about 29.6%. In both cases, that rate represented one of the highest registered in recent years. According to the National Institute of Statistics (INE 2020), the unemployment rate in the August-October 2020 period was 11.6%, a slight improvement in comparison to the 12.9% rate in the previous period.

There has been a constant increase in the rate of informal employment over the last few years (approximately 28.8% in April 2020), a situation that can partly be explained by the significant growth in immigration. As in practically all Latin American countries, informal and self-employed workers might be the group most significantly affected by the crisis, given their dependence on close physical proximity to other people in order to offer their services or products, and the impossibility of performing tasks in public spaces due to lockdowns and quarantines. This is especially true for informal workers, who are not eligible for social-protection measures and support instruments such as unemployment insurance. In this regard, the crisis had a strong regressive impact, which has been only partially mitigated by targeted support measures for low-income groups.

To address the effects of the pandemic on the labor market, the government implemented a series of measures (ECLAC 2020) including the following:

- An employment protection law. A law was passed allowing employers to temporarily stop paying salaries to their workers, while maintaining their legal obligation to cover social security contributions and other benefits. Workers instead receive income from the unemployment insurance program, according to the insurance rules. During the first month, the insurance program pays 70% of the original salary, with this benefit decreasing gradually over time. The employment protection law also allows employers and employees to agree on a remote-working system or on a reduction of hours. In this latter case, employers pay only for the actual hours worked, with the difference covered by the unemployment insurance.
- Paid sick leave. Leave is granted to workers with confirmed coronavirus cases or to those who have had proven close contact with confirmed cases, as well as to individuals required to comply with mandatory quarantines.
- Public sector employee protection: All public officials over the age of 70, or who are part of a high-risk group, may work remotely. In addition, the heads of service of the state administration may adopt flexible working hours and encourage teleworking.

Additionally, in April 2020, a new teleworking law came into force, which regulates teleworking and home office practices. Until this date, Chile did not have a regulation for this type of work.

Citation:

National Institute for Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE):

INE (2020), “Encuesta Nacional de Empleo Principales resultados trimestre agosto-octubre de 2020,” <https://www.ine.cl/prensa/2020/11/27/ine-publica-resultados-de-la-encuesta-nacional-de-empleo-del-trimestre-agosto-octubre-de-2020>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.ine.cl/estadisticas/laborales/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.ine.cl/ine-ciudadano/definiciones-estadisticas/economia/encuesta-nacional-del-empleo>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):

ECLAC (2020), Observatorio COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe – Impacto económico y social, <https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

ECLAC (2020a), “Employment Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean Work in times of pandemic: the challenges of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19),” https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45582/4/S2000306_en.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

ECLAC (2020b), “El impacto de la crisis sanitaria del COVID-19 en los mercados laborales latinoamericanos,” https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45864/4/S2000495_es.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

ECLAC/ILO (2020), “Employment Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean – Employment trends in an unprecedented crisis: policy challenges,” https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/46309/4/S2000600_en.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

OECD Reports:

OECD (2020), OECD COVID-19 Country Policy Tracker, <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/country->

policy-tracker/, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports on the employment situation:

El Clarín, “Aumentó el empleo... informal,” 30 November 2020, <https://www.elclarin.cl/2020/11/30/aumento-el-empleo-informal/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

El Mostrador, “Nueva ley de teletrabajo: cómo implementarlo correctamente en la casa de los colaboradores,” 29 June 2020, <https://www.elmostrador.cl/agenda-pais/2020/06/28/nueva-ley-de-teletrabajo-como-implementarlo-correctamente-en-la-casa-de-los-colaboradores/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Diario Financiero, “Seguro de cesantía: Sólo un 10% de los fondos se ha usado pese a enfrentar la peor crisis de los últimos 40 años,” 7 December 2020, <https://www.df.cl/noticias/economia-y-politica/laboral-personas/seguro-de-cesantia-solo-un-10-de-los-fondos-se-ha-usado-pese-a/2020-12-07/182206.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Fiscal Response

Fiscal Policy
Response
Score: 7

Even before massive protests culminating in October 2019, the country’s budgetary policy had come under pressure due to declines in the international price of copper (Chile’s main export good), slowing economic growth and state spending that had risen faster than GDP. The social and political crisis then worsened these conditions, further restricting the margin for budgetary maneuvers intended to address the health and economic crisis generated by the pandemic.

According to the Ministry of Finance, spending associated with measures intended to mitigate the economic effects of the coronavirus crisis would total around \$30 billion over time (Ministerio de Hacienda 2020). Public spending in 2021 was slated to rise by 9.5% as compared to the adjusted 2020 budget, for a total of \$73.2 billion (Ministerio de Hacienda 2020). This was the second-highest rate of budgetary expansion in the last decade, surpassed only by the 11.4% increase foreseen for 2020. Due to these and other expenses, the total financial assets held by the public treasury were expected to decline by 49% to \$15.3 billion, considerably under the 2017 peak of \$30.2 billion. The largest spending increases have come in the areas of public infrastructure (33.3%), labor and social security (24.58%), and social housing (18.05%). Some of this spending was to be financed by drawing on the Economic and Social Stabilization Fund (Fondo de Estabilización Económica y Social, FEES), using fully half of the \$13 billion available in mid-2020. This decision was characterized by the minister of finance as a burden on future generations.

The planned 2020 measures left Chile with its largest fiscal deficit in 30 years. However, the current government has also set rigid and ambitious goals for reducing the structural balance by 0.5% of GDP each year, a structural surplus of 1% of GDP by 2024, regardless of probable future contingencies due to the coronavirus pandemic or social unrest.

Ministry of Finance (Ministerio de Hacienda):

Ministerio de Hacienda (2020), “Estado de la Hacienda Pública 2020,” <https://www.hacienda.cl/areas-de-trabajo/presupuesto-nacional/estado-de-la-hacienda-publica>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Dirección de Presupuesto, DIPRES (2020a), “Informe de Finanzas Públicas 1er Trimestre 2020,” <https://www.dipres.gob.cl/598/w3-propertyvalue-15889.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Dirección de Presupuesto, DIPRES (2020b), “Adendum – Informe de Finanzas Públicas (Proyecciones de mediano plazo),” https://www.dipres.gob.cl/598/articles-202677_doc1_pdf.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Dirección de Presupuesto – DIPRES, “Balance estructural 2019/2020,” <https://www.dipres.gob.cl/598/w3-propertyvalue-16156.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Undersecretary for Regional Development and Administration, SUBDERE:

<http://www.subdere.gov.cl/sala-de-prensa/gobierno-transfiere-80960-millones-municipios-para-enfrentar-emergencia-sanitaria-del>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports on budgetary policy in the context of the pandemic:

CIPER, “¿Existe más espacio en la billetera? Radiografía al esfuerzo fiscal para ayudar a los chilenos en la pandemia,” 26 May 2020, https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/05/26/existe-mas-espacio-en-la-billetera-radiografia-al-esfuerzo-fiscal-para-ayudar-a-los-chilenos-en-la-pandemia/#_ftnref10, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Consejo Políticas de Infraestructura, “Presupuesto: gasto público crecerá 9,5% en 2021 con foco en empleo, PYME, mujer y reactivación,” 30 September 2020, <http://www.infraestructurapublica.cl/presupuesto-gasto-publico-crecera-95-2021-foco-empleo-pyme-mujer-reactivacion/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, “La mayor mochila de Briones: deuda pública subiría a 43% del PIB en 2022, mientras los fondos soberanos bajarían al 5% del PIB,” 14 June 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/pulso/noticia/la-mayor-mochila-de-la-que-habla-briones-por-el-nuevo-plan-economico-deuda-publica-subiria-desde-el-28-al-43-del-pib-en-2022-mientras-que-fondos-soberanos-bajarían-desde-95-al-5-del-pib/GP3FYSS5YLNENFLVRQDY53VVNVE/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, “Fondo soberano se reducirá a la mitad por medidas especiales,” 23 March 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/pulso/noticia/fondo-soberano-se-reducira-a-la-mitad-por-medidas-especiales/YSPLXUXNJVFPBQH76K4V5GB2E/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

OECD – Economic Outlook Chile (2020):

<http://www.oecd.org/economy/chile-economic-snapshot/>

Research and Innovation Response

Research and
Innovation Policy
Response
Score: 4

The government launched a special fund of about CLP 2.3 billion (approx. \$3.2 million) in order to foster scientific research on COVID-19. The initiative provides financing of up to CLP 90 million (approximately \$125,000) to develop studies in the natural or social sciences, with the ultimate goal of strengthening response capacities. However, during the same period of time, the scientific community suffered from significant cuts in scholarships for postgraduate students as a result of the economic austerity forced by the pandemic and the protests culminating in late 2019.

As of the time of writing, the Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation (MinCiencia) had played only a minor role in dealing with the pandemic. It has not been a decisive actor in the policy design and policymaking process during the crisis. The ministry is responsible for coordinating and supporting scientific cooperation, such as the Scientific Advisory Board’s efforts to secure COVID-19 vaccines (Consejo Asesor Científico Vacuna Covid-19) and the coordination of the COVID-19 data desk, which makes information about the pandemic available for research purposes. The Ministry has been criticized by the country’s scientific

community for its handling of data about the pandemic, especially with regard to a lack of transparency.

In general terms, international research cooperation tends to depend on the initiative of individual universities and attached research centers rather than being part of a national policy. With regard to concrete research on COVID-19 vaccines, by the end of the period under review, Chile was participating in three trial studies (phase 2 & 3), two of them in cooperation with the University of Chile, and one in cooperation with Pontifical Catholic University of Chile.

The government launched a COVID-19 contact-tracing app, but due to severe data-protection problems, the app was abandoned just a few weeks after the official launch.

Despite the government's declaration of the importance of science in tackling the current and future crises, the draft 2021 budget increased funds for the Ministry of Science by only 0.6% in comparison to 2020. If passed, this would mean the country was investing 0.34% of its 2021 GDP in this area, a 9.02% decrease compared to 2020. This would represent one-seventh of the average amount spent on the sector by OECD countries.

Citation:

Budget Directorate (Dirección de Presupuesto, DIPRES):

<https://www.dipres.gob.cl/597/w3-multipropertyvalues-25190-25229.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation (MinCiencia):

<https://www.minciencia.gob.cl/noticias/gobierno-lanza-fondo-de-2300-millones-para-investigacion-cientifica-sobre-covid19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

https://cdn.digital.gob.cl/filer_public/27/98/2798ac23-2590-4855-a42d-0e0a4965a16c/24_minciencias-f.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Health:

<https://www.minsal.cl/salud-autoriza-desarrollo-de-dos-estudios-clinicos-de-vacunas-contra-el-covid-19-en-chile/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports and discussion on the Ministry of Science:

SCIDEV.net, "Presupuesto para ciencia en Chile disminuiría en 2021," 23 October 2020, <https://www.scidev.net/america-latina/news/presupuesto-para-ciencia-en-chile-disminuiria-en-2021/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, "Presupuesto de Ministerio de Ciencia es rechazado en primer paso por el Congreso," 16 October 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/pulso/noticia/presupuesto-de-ministerio-de-ciencia-es-rechazado-en-primer-paso-por-el-congreso/DIVTRYGJANGI3P6L7QXXGP44IM/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, "Pensar la política científica más allá de Becas Chile," 30 July 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/07/30/pensar-la-politica-cientifica-en-chile-mas-alla-de-becas-chile/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, "Becas Chile: el falso dilema entre reapertura y reformulación," 6 August 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/08/06/becas-chile-el-falso-dilema-entre-reapertura-y-reformulacion/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Radio Universidad de Chile, "Recortes en Becas Chile o la pandemia como excusa para la precarización," 15 May 2020, <https://radio.uchile.cl/2020/05/15/recortes-en-becas-chile-o-la-pandemia-como-excusa-para-la-precarizacion/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Pauta, "El ministro de Ciencia sometido a revisión de pares," 19 June 2020, <https://www.pauta.cl/politica/criticas-ministro-de-ciencias-couve-gestion-de-la-pandemia>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

IV. Welfare State Response

Education System Response

Education
Response
Score: 4

Within the Chilean education sector, the impact of the pandemic was felt most keenly by public primary and secondary education students. On March 15, the president announced the suspension of classes in kindergartens and in municipal, subsidized and private schools. The suspension was originally planned to last two weeks, but was extended over time at the request of municipal authorities.

By the end of 2020, the primary education measures implemented by the government included the following (ECLAC 2020):

- A free online platform called “aprendo en línea” that provides instructional mathematics and language content for each grade (preschool, primary and secondary levels). In addition, special digital-learning materials for primary pupils, designed to help them learn to read and write at home, were developed and provided online.
- A new educational television channel was launched, designed to deliver pedagogical programs to students around the country whose schools had been closed.
- The Ministry of Education provided pre-university online courses, free of charge.

In this context, it is worth noting that although 87.5% of the households in Chile do have access to the internet, the digital literacy gap among different socioeconomic groups is significant. Whereas private schools were broadly able to implement online classes and distance-learning methods, most public schools found it considerably more difficult to do so, because schools and teachers did not have access to the required infrastructure and/or knowledge and methods. Additionally, many families whose children attend public schools, especially among the more vulnerable population, lack the equipment to attend virtual classes adequately nor do most have a proper learning environment. For instance, a study by Summa and the University of Chile found that 75% of teachers estimated that their students lacked sufficient digital proficiency to use digital distance-learning applications efficiently (Summa 2020a).

Especially at the beginning of the pandemic, a number of initiatives and donations – typically made by private foundations, NGOs or even teachers themselves – sought to close this gap and prevent school dropouts within the population of vulnerable children.

In seeking a return to classrooms, apart from health regulations and protocols, the Ministry of Education announced a three-stage process:

- Student diagnostics: Through tools to be delivered by the ministry, all educational establishments will have to measure their students' learning levels.
- Leveling: For a time yet to be defined, depend on how long the health crisis finally lasts, schools will address the fundamental content lost or skipped during this time.
- Curricular adaptation: Give that many teachers will find it impossible to address all content as under regular conditions, the Ministry will prioritize the most important learning units for each school year and subject that should have been covered during 2020.

In 2021, the Ministry of Education plans to conduct an evaluation to detect possible knowledge gaps. This plan will include all schools in the country and all levels, including kindergartens.

Citation:

United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):
ECLAC (2020), Observatorio COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe – Impacto económico y social,
<https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud, MINSAL):
<https://www.minsal.cl/presidente-anuncia-suspension-de-clases-y-reduce-actos-publicos/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, MinEduc):
<https://www.mineduc.cl/apoyos-del-mineduc-durante-la-pandemia-del-covid-19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.mineduc.cl/orientaciones-mineduc-covid-19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.mineduc.cl/mineduc-conforma-grupo-de-trabajo-para-abordar-desercion-escolar/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.supereduc.cl/prensa/superintendencia-de-educacion-emite-circular-con-instrucciones-para-retorno-a-clases-presenciales/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On the digital (literacy) gap in schools and COVID-19:

Fundación País Digital (2020), “Brecha en el uso de internet Desigualdad digital en el 2020,”
<https://paisdigital.org/brecha-en-el-uso-de-internet-2020>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Fundación Educación 2020 (2020). Segunda Encuesta Online: #Estamos conectados:
http://educacion2020.cl/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Resultados_2%C2%B0_salida_noviembre.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

SUMMA – Laboratorio de Investigación e Innovación en Educación para América Latina y el Caribe (2020a), “Docencia durante la crisis sanitaria: La mirada de los docentes,”
<https://www.summaedu.org/docencia-crisis-sanitaria-chile/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

SUMMA – Laboratorio de Investigación e Innovación en Educación para América Latina y el Caribe (2020b), “Docencia durante la crisis sanitaria: La mirada de los docentes,” http://miradadocentes.cl/Informe-de-Resultados_Docencia_Crisis_Sanitaria.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Radio Universidad de Chile, “Brecha digital y educación online – La pandemia no es igual para todos,” 6 July 2020, <https://www.uchile.cl/noticias/164931/brecha-digital-y-educacion-online-la-pandemia-no-es-igual-para-todos>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

TecnoEducación.cl, “La brecha digital de conectividad se sigue acortando en Chile,” 9 July 2020, <https://www.tecnoeducacion.cl/2020/07/09/la-brecha-digital-de-conectividad-se-sigue-acortando-en-chile/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

AS Chile, “¿Cuándo se reanudan las clases en Chile?¿Se puede alargar más?,” 10 April 2020, https://chile.as.com/chile/2020/04/10/actualidad/1586547000_068330.html, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Social Welfare Response

Social Welfare
Policy Response
Score: 5

In general terms, the government reacted relatively quickly to the impending crisis by implementing additional or increased cash transfers and social assistance measures for the most vulnerable part of the population, allocating considerable financial resources. The following social-protection measures had been implemented by the end of 2020 (ECLAC 2020):

- A special COVID-19 benefit was issued to the most vulnerable 60% of the population (CLP 50,000 () per household and dependent). About two million people lacking formal work benefited from this cash transfer.
- The Ministry of Finance provided \$2 billion in order to implement an income protection fund focused on informal workers with no contract or unemployment insurance coverage.
- The government created the Emergency Family Income (IFE) program to compensate for income losses within the most vulnerable 60% of the population during the emergency. The IFE was originally planned to be delivered for three months, mostly targeting households with informal income, but was extended to a total of up to six months, and expanded to include households with a formal income (while also covering families with income from other benefit programs such as the Employment Protection Law, the unemployment insurance program, or people collecting contributory or noncontributory pensions). The amount varied depending on the actual income and size of the household (up to CLP 759,000 (,050) for households with 10 or more family members). According to the Ministry of Social Development, about 8.2 million people had benefited from this initiative by the end of 2020.

In addition, the government distributed about 5.6 million baskets containing food and essential hygiene products to the most vulnerable and middle-class families in need, a measure that was partly replicated by some municipalities. Nevertheless, due to logistical and administrative barriers, some of these measures showed significant delay in reaching the most vulnerable populations, a situation that generated social unrest in several parts of the Santiago Metropolitan Region. Moreover, the above-mentioned measures had only a limited effect in addressing social inclusion. In general, social-welfare policies designed to tackle the crisis did little to ensure social inclusion or combat growing social inequality.

Citation:

United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):
ECLAC (2020), Observatorio COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe – Impacto económico y social,
<https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Social Development (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia, MDS):

<https://www.ingresodeemergencia.cl/>

<http://www.desarrollosocialyfamilia.gob.cl/noticias/mas-de-8-millones-200-mil-personas-recibiran-el-sexto-aporte-del-ingreso-familiar-de-emergencia>

<http://www.desarrollosocialyfamilia.gob.cl/noticias/58-de-los-hogares-beneficiados-con-el-quinto-aporte-del-ingreso-familiar-de-emergencia-son-liderados>

<https://www.chileatiende.gob.cl/fichas/78385-ingreso-familiar-de-emergencia>

Last accessed: 12 January 2020

Library of the National Congress (Law IFE):

<https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=1145400>

Reports on social protection measures undertaken by the government:

CNN Chile, “Inició el cuarto pago del IFE: Conoce los montos máximos que corresponden a cada hogar según el número de integrantes,” 27 August 2020, https://www.cnnchile.com/economia/cuarto-aporte-ife-familias-cuatro-integrantes-100-mil_20200827/, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, “Gobierno entregará 2.5 millones de cajas de alimentos para enfrentar crisis por coronavirus,” 17 May 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/nacional/noticia/gobierno-entregara-25-millones-de-cajas-de-alimentos-para-enfrentar-crisis-por-coronavirus/AMWKYZTFQNCU7JQHEGIXCRDDOI/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Healthcare System Response

Health Policy
Response
Score: 7

On 18 March 2020, the government declared a state of catastrophe (estado de castástrofe) in order to anticipate and prepare for possible future stages of the pandemic. This gave it the power to increase security at hospitals and all healthcare sites, better protect the logistics chain, transfer medical supplies, facilitate the transfer of patients and medical personnel, evacuate people as necessary, safeguard compliance with quarantines and social isolation measures, and guarantee the production and distribution chain to secure the normal supply of vital goods (ECLAC 2020).

Movement restrictions and ultimately lockdowns were implemented on a communal level, depending on local caseloads. Furthermore, in April, the Health Ministry announced the mandatory use of face masks on public and paid private transportation, as well as in indoor public places.

The COVID-19 Social Committee (Mesa Social Covid-19) was inaugurated to address the health crisis from an intersectoral perspective. This new institution included representatives of the government and municipal associations, university rectors, the president of the Chilean Medical College, and the WHO and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) representatives in Chile, among others.

The president announced the creation of a fund totaling CLP 220 billion (about \$306 million) to be applied to the purchase of necessary supplies and

equipment, the strengthening of the operation of hospitals and diagnostic laboratories, the extension of opening hours, the provision of additional beds, and the construction of fast-track hospitals, among others tasks.

Although there have been peaks of severe pressure on the health system, especially in regions outside Santiago, the overall health system had not collapsed as of the time of writing. A mental-health support program for people affected psychologically by the pandemic was implemented by the government in June 2020.

In the early stages of the pandemic, Chile experienced a very high mortality rate in worldwide comparison. However, this situation changed over time. By the end of 2020, Chile had given more than six million PCR tests, ranking first in Latin America.

As of 23 December 2020, a total of 590,914 Chileans had contracted the coronavirus, and 16,228 had died.

Citation:

United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):
ECLAC (2020), Observatorio COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe – Impacto económico y social,
<https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud, MINSAL):

<https://www.minsal.cl/chile-supera-los-6-millones-de-examenes-pcr-ubicandose-en-el-primer-lugar-en-latinoamerica/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
<https://deis.minsal.cl/ministro-de-salud-es-designado-como-coordinador-interministerial-del-plan-de-coronavirus/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Chilean government:

<https://www.gob.cl/saludablemente/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
<https://www.gob.cl/mesasocialcovid19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

University of Oxford (2020):

<https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Data on COVID-19 by country:

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/chile/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports on the pandemic and the Chilean Health Care System:

CIPER, “El desastre está aquí,” 13 June 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/06/13/el-desastre-esta-aqui/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, “COVID-19: Chile no está aplanando la curva, la perdimos de vista,” 16 April 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/04/16/covid-19-chile-no-esta-aplanando-la-curva-la-perdimos-de-vista/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, “Los sesgos del gobierno de Piñera frente al Covid-19,” 18 June 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/06/08/los-sesgos-del-gobierno-de-pinera-frente-al-covid-19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Family Support
Policies
Score: 4

Family Policy Response

The crisis period led to a general increase in the unemployment rate (11.58% by the end of October 2020). However, due to general structural deficits with regard to family policies, the negative labor-market effects have been felt disproportionately by women.

By the end of 2020, the labor-force participation rate among women had dropped significantly from 52.7% (2019) to 41.3%, reaching a level similar to that of 10 years before. This situation is mainly explained by the fact that the economic and labor impact of the pandemic has had a regressive effect, with self-employed and informal workers affected most strongly by the crisis due to their dependence on close physical proximity to other people to offer their services or products.

The government has implemented social assistance measures for the most vulnerable households, for instance an increase in cash transfers (e.g., the Family Emergency Income (IFE), the COVID-19 Emergency Bonus payment). In addition, new labor-market and social-protection measures sought to cushion the negative effects of the crisis.

For instance, exceptional access to unemployment insurance benefits has been established. In cases when jobs have been suspended or working hours have been reduced, the employer has been obliged to continue paying the employee's social security and health contributions, but the worker was paid a portion of his or her remuneration through the unemployment insurance program.

Furthermore, the Protected Parenting-Law (Crianza Protegida) was enacted. For the time that the state of emergency is in force, this law allows postnatal parental leave to be extended for workers of the public or private sector (regularly employed or self-employed workers) through a Parental Preventive Medical Leave granted for 30 days, extendable up to two times (charged to the relevant health insurance provider). During this period, the worker is to receive a subsidy whose daily amount will be the same as the subsidy for postnatal parental leave. This law also establishes that workers holding unemployment insurance, who are in charge of the care of one or more children born after 2013, and who are not taking postnatal parental leave may request the suspension of their employment contract for care purposes, as long as schools and childcare centers remain closed. Parents or caregivers of children born after 2013 may unilaterally make use of this law.

Nevertheless, these legislative changes only apply to workers with formal labor contracts. It does not apply to informal (domestic) workers, for example.

Citation:

National Institute for Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE):

<https://www.ine.cl/prensa/2020/03/06/mujeres-en-chile-ganan-en-promedio-27-menos-que-los-hombres>

<https://www.ine.cl/prensa/detalle-prensa/2020/09/30/ine-publica-resultados-de-la-encuesta-nacional-de-empleo-del-trimestre-junio-agosto-de-2020>

<https://www.ine.cl/prensa/2019/09/16/solo-un-48-5-de-las-mujeres-participa-en-el-mercado-laboral-chileno-durante-2017-menor-al-71-2-de-participaci%C3%B3n-de-los-hombres>

Last accessed: 12. January 2021

Chilean Central Bank (Indicators on unemployment):

<https://si3.bcentral.cl/indicadoressiete/secure/IndicadoresDiarios.aspx>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On the “Protected parenting”-Law (Chilean Senate):

<https://www.senado.cl/extension-del-postnatal-de-emergencia-respaldan-proyecto-de-acuerdo-que/senado/2020-10-27/172440.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.chileatiende.gob.cl/fichas/80970-ley-de-crianza-prottegida>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):

ECLAC (2020), Observatorio COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe – Impacto económico y social, <https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

International Solidarity

International
Cooperation
Score: 6

Given the country’s size and level of development, and its relatively high vulnerability to the economic and social impact of the pandemic, Chile’s role in contributing to international solidarity in the context of the pandemic has rather been limited. As an active member of the World Health Organization, Chile adheres to this organization’s principles and guidelines, and fulfills its associated financial obligations. Two major universities participated in the phase II and III testing of different vaccines. So far, in the context of the pandemic, despite some minor donations of medical supplies and PCR tests and online capacity-building activities with other countries of the region, the country has primarily been the recipient of international donations and cooperation rather than an active donor.

Citation:

Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud, MINSAL):

<https://www.minsal.cl/llegan-al-pais-ventiladores-e-insumos-para-reforzar-la-red-de-salud-a-nivel-nacional/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://chilereports.cl/en/news/2020/11/12/undersecretary-rodriigo-y%C3%A1%C3%B1ez-participates-in-virtual-seminar-on-covax-global-initiative-for-equitable-access-to-covid-19-vaccines>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Resilience of Democracy

Media Freedom

Media Freedom
Score: 8

In general, the rules and practice of media supervision guarantee sufficient independence for the public media. Privately owned media organizations are subject to licensing and regulatory regimes that ensure independence from the government.

Given Chile's oligopolistic media landscape and its ideological and economic concentration, the degree of government influence over the media depends largely on which coalition is leading the government. This in turn clearly limits democratic debate. There is a strong ideological framing of (politically relevant) information, and policy discussions tend to distort the political options offered to citizens (e.g., the policy decisions and the social protests culminating in late 2019). In this sense, although the incumbent government respects the independence of media, disinformation and manipulation (in the broader sense of "not necessarily showing the whole picture") hinder public policy discussions. The Reporters without Borders' Freedom of the Press report on Chile (2020) summed this situation up with the headline: "Little pluralism, vulnerable journalists." In this index, Chile had dropped to rank 51, from 46th place in 2019.

Chile's newspapers and the main public TV stations tend to report tabloid-style news, employing bold headlines and reporting techniques with strong popular and infotainment appeal. Chile's largest free TV channel (TVN) is state-owned, but operates according to the market, and by law is required to provide balanced and equal access to all political views – a regulation overseen by the National Television Council (Consejo Nacional de Televisión, CNTV). Law No. 18,838 requires CNTV to ensure the proper functioning of all television services. Under these guidelines, the CNTV is tasked with safeguarding respect for principles such as democracy, pluralism, human dignity and fundamental rights recognized by the constitution and international treaties ratified by Chile.

As indicated by a CNTV study, there is no specific law that defines false news as a crime, but the content of news of this type could theoretically be

sanctioned through some laws (CNTV 2019). Article 31 of the Press Law (No. 19,733) enables sanctions to be applied against publications that promote hatred, protecting society from the incitement to hatred, but it does not cover the complex issue of disinformation. In accordance with the American Convention on Human Rights, this law also includes a right to clarify and rectify information.

At least theoretically, especially in the context of the pandemic, false or somewhat false information involving the assertion of false facts, could be qualified as a crime according to Article 268 Bis of the Criminal Code. In addition, publications on social networks that qualify as computer fraud (for example, those that promote the value of certain chemicals in fighting the COVID-19 virus), could be considered as inducing serious injury (Article 15 number 2 and Article 398 of the Criminal Code), since they provoke others to supply themselves with harmful substances. If death were to result, this misinformation could also be categorized as simple homicide (Article 391 number 2 of the Criminal Code). But in fact, this kind of disinformation and fake news distributed by unofficial media and social networks is typically not formally pursued.

:
Consejo Nacional de Televisión, CNTV (2019), “Noticias Falsas y Regulación,” 26 December 2019, http://prontus.cntv.cl/cntv/site/artic/20191226/asocfile/20191226171309/noticias_falsas_y_regulaci__n.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Study on media coverage of COVID-19 in Chile:

Anmpe + Cadem (2020), “Medios de Comunicación en Coronavirus,” <https://anmpe.cl/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Estudio-Medios-de-comunicaci%C3%B3n-en-coronavirus.-Presentaci%C3%B3n.pdf>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports on media coverage during the pandemic:

Ciper, “Covid-19 y el centralismo de los medios de comunicación,” 4 May 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/05/04/covid-19-y-el-centralismo-de-los-medios-de-comunicacion/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reporters without borders (2020). Freedom of Press Index: <https://rsf.org/en/chile>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Civil Rights and Political Liberties

Civil Rights and
Political Liberties
Score: 6

Chile’s constitution provides for four different types of state of exception (estados de excepción): 1) the state of assembly (Estado de Asamblea), 2) the state of siege (Estado de Sitio), 3) the state of emergency (Estado de Emergencia), and 4) the state of catastrophe (Estado de Catástrofe). Depending on the given state of exception’s type, different special powers and limitations to civil rights can be legally introduced. In the case of the management of the coronavirus crisis, the government relied on the state of catastrophe, ordinary legislation and constitutional amendment.

On 18 March 2020, President Piñera declared a state of catastrophe (Estado de Catástrofe) for the entire national territory, beginning on the following day.

This enabled the government to increase security for hospitals and all healthcare sites, better protect the logistics chain, improve the transfer of medical and other basic supplies, facilitate the care and transfer of patients and medical personnel, evacuate of people as necessary, and enforce compliance with quarantines and social isolation measures (ECLAC 2020). The state of catastrophe was first declared for 90 days, and then successively extended for 90-day periods by means of presidential decree. As of the time of writing, it was valid through 13 March 2021, in order to cover the (summer) holiday period.

Some rights such as the freedom of movement and the freedom of assembly have been limited under the restrictions imposed by the state of catastrophe. Courts can review emergency measures, but the declaration of the state of exception itself is not subject to judicial review, according to the constitution (Cofre 2020).

Specific measures applied during the state of catastrophe have included (local) lockdowns (based on WHO criteria), stronger border controls and sanctions for people testing positive for COVID-19 who have infringed rules, an overnight curfew, and stricter checks on persons carried out by the police and the military. The latter two measures can be seen critically, especially considering the confrontations between state security forces and demonstrators during the late-2019 protests. Given this history, it is questionable whether these measures can be understood as mere protective measures, and whether they are genuinely necessary and proportionate for health reasons.

As noted in a report on human rights in Chile in context of the pandemic, the right to confer privately with an attorney has been seriously limited in the current emergency. Moreover, the report indicates that there is no official protocol for implementing the necessary means for this right to be carried out (Observatorio Ciudadano 2020).

At the end of April 2020, the president presented the Safe Return Plan (Plan Retorno Seguro), which spelled out conditions for the return of public servants whose duties are considered essential for the community, of workers to their activities in the private sector and civil society, and of students to their educational establishments (ECLAC 2020). This plan was modified over time to reflect changing circumstances. In July 2020, the government launched the national Step by Step (Plan Paso a Paso) plan defining the different phases of a gradual relaxation of restrictions.

Citation:

On the restrictions and the national recovery-plan “step by step” (Chilean government):

<https://www.gob.cl/pasoapaso/>

<https://chilereports.cl/en/news/2020/12/07/special-health-restrictions>

[https://chilereports.cl/en/news/2020/08/20/paso-a-paso-\(step-by-step\)-plan-frequently-asked-questions](https://chilereports.cl/en/news/2020/08/20/paso-a-paso-(step-by-step)-plan-frequently-asked-questions)

Last accessed: 12 January 2021

La Tercera, “El enredo de prorrogar o no el Estado de Excepción con el 25-O a la vuelta de la esquina,” 19 August 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/la-tercera-pm/noticia/el-enredo-de-prorrogar-o-no-el-estado-de-excepcion-con-el-25-o-a-la-vuelta-de-la-esquina/74ZHCPCGGZEZJYWSBR2NMVGQM/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CNN Chile, “Presidente Piñera anunció que se extenderá el estado de catástrofe por otros 90 días,” 3 December 2020, https://www.cnnchile.com/pais/presidente-pinera-estado-catastrofe-90-dias_20201203/, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On the Chilean constitution and state of emergency

Cofre, Leonardo (2020), “Chile and COVID-19: A Constitutional Authoritarian Temptation,” <https://verfassungsblog.de/chile-and-covid-19-a-constitutional-authoritarian-temptation/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Becerra, Lidia Casas, “The Novel Coronavirus and Civil Rights: An Update from Chile,” 14 September 2020, <https://blog.petrieflom.law.harvard.edu/2020/09/14/covid19-chile-constitution-reform-plebiscite/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):

ECLAC (2020), Observatorio COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe – Impacto económico y social, <https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

On Human rights violations during the State of Catastrophe:

Observatorio Ciudadano (2020), “Informe sobre situación de los derechos humanos en Chile en el contexto de Pandemia COVID-19,” https://observatorio.cl/final_informecovidddhh_9_12/, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Judicial Review

Judicial Review
Score: 8

Within the margin that Chile’s strong presidential system offers independent entities during an active regime of exception, independent courts and the Comptroller General’s Office have exercised their right to review the administration’s actions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 2 April 2020, Law No. 21,226 was enacted. This law establishes a regime of exception for judicial processes, hearings and legal proceedings due to the impact of the COVID-19 disease in Chile. Based on this law, several measures have been decreed that affect the normal functioning of the courts of justice, including a move to remote work for judges, civil servants and lawyers; the suspension of public attendance at court hearings during the pandemic; the reduction of hours of operation, accompanied by criteria for suspending hearings and judicial proceedings; and the regulation of hearings of cases and other urgent matters within court rooms. In addition, each court of appeal was instructed to implement similar rules for its territory.

The Court of Appeals of Santiago reduced its hours of operation and the number of chambers operating, privileging cases associated with constitutional guarantees, appeals for protection and criminal-case appeals in which defendants had been deprived of liberty. Furthermore, special criteria for hearing family and labor cases were established. The civil courts in Santiago were ordered to remain closed, processing the cases and matters under their jurisdiction through a virtual judicial office system.

Under these conditions, during the period from March to August 2020, 27 laws (or modifications of laws) were enacted and 229 proposals were in progress (UC 2020).

The option of remote participation in hearings existed before the pandemic, but was offered only in isolated cases for people in prison. In the wake of the pandemic, completely virtual hearings were authorized, in which all parties, their lawyers and in some cases even the judges connected via video from their offices or homes. The telehearing procedure has very clear rules for identifying people, either by digital signature, email addresses validated by special systems, or simply by showing the identity document to the camera. There are also protocols for reacting if connectivity fails (contact by mobile phone with the parties, email, etc.).

Some experts have argued that this has actually increased the transparency of the legal, as hearings are recorded and can be analyzed at a later date. In addition, any person interested in participating in a hearing can be given connection access, upon a request to the judge (García Mejía 2020).

These modifications and suspensions also meant that people in pretrial detention have often been stuck in this situation significantly longer than stipulated by the regulations – an aspect that had been criticized by human rights organizations even before the pandemic.

Citation:

On Law 21,226 and operational processes of the judicial during the pandemic (Judicial Power of the Republic of Chile):

<https://www.pjud.cl/documents/396588/0/21226.pdf/c2bb01aa-c89b-423d-8a83-6c28f19db4b2>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.pjud.cl/noticias-emergencia-sanitaria>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Carey, “El funcionamiento de los tribunales nacionales a raíz del COVID-19,” 21 March 2020, <https://www.carey.cl/el-funcionamiento-de-los-tribunales-nacionales-a-raiz-del-covid-19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

García Mejía, Mauricio (2020), “Justicia y COVID-19: 3 formas de impartir justicia durante una pandemia,” <https://blogs.iadb.org/seguridad-ciudadana/es/justicia-y-covid-19-3-formas-de-impartir-justicia-durante-una-pandemia/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (UC) (2020), “Observatorio de Políticas Públicas “Covid-19 en Chile: Familia y sociedad,” https://issuu.com/centroucfamilia-uc/docs/observatorio_familia_sociedad_covid19, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Informal Democratic Rules

Informal
Democratic Rules
Score: 8

Since the return to democracy, ideological and political polarization in Chile has been strongly structured around the legacy of Augusto Pinochet’s military regime, with critics and advocates of Pinochet’s government constituting two different political camps. The binominal electoral system in force until 2015

strengthened the bipolar grouping of political parties along this cleavage in elections and within the parliament. At the same time, a political culture of agreement, consensus and compromise has prevailed among political actors, even across these two political camps. Therefore, party polarization as such has not been a major obstacle for policymaking in the past. This tendency was also observable during the coronavirus crisis, although the traditional constellation of political parties and their representation in parliament, especially within the traditional center-left alliance of the Nueva Mayoría, changed significantly following the presidential elections of 2017. Several new parties have been formed since then, and especially the Frente Amplio-Alliance, which seeks to be an alternative to the center-left coalition of the Nueva Mayoría parties, can be understood as a third block within the traditional Chilean political party landscape.

However, at the moment the coronavirus pandemic reached Chile, the country was mired in a deep social and political crisis. A public opinion poll by the Center for Public Studies (CEP 2020) indicated that, at the end of 2019, in the midst of the social upheaval, only 2% of the population had either “a lot” or “quite a lot” confidence in political parties – a historic drop in comparison with previous years. President Piñera’s approval rating also fell to a historic low of just 6%. The same survey showed that citizens evaluated the performance of the government and all political actors during the social crisis very critically, with 80% indicating that neither Congress nor the opposition were up to the task (72% rated the opposition negatively). Only 14% of Chileans indicated that they identified with a political party.

Although there has been a significant increase in party polarization due to the social crisis, parliament was finally able to reach agreement on the constitutional referendum. With the advent of the health crisis, the rising party polarization started to ease slightly. This became visible through cross-cutting agreements reached relatively quickly between the government and the opposition regarding health and economic measures.

Several politicians and parliamentarians resigned from their political parties during the period under review. This can be explained by the negative image currently held by political parties.

Citation:

Opinion polls on the government’s performance:

Centro de Estudios Públicos – CEP (2020), “Estudio Nacional de Opinión Pública 2019,” 16 January 2020, <https://www.cepchile.cl/cep/site/edic/base/port/encuestasCEP.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CADEM (2020), “Plaza Pública N° 360 – 7 de Diciembre,” 7 December 2020, <https://www.cadem.cl/encuestas/plaza-publica-no-360-7-de-diciembre/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Resilience of Governance

I. Executive Preparedness

Crisis Management System

Crisis
Management
System
Score: 5

When evaluating the capacity to handle the coronavirus crisis, it is important to take into account the profound political and social crisis that Chile has been experiencing since the end of 2019. This crisis not only limited the state's financial capacities to respond to the pandemic, but also left a huge gap regarding citizens' trust in state institutions and the government's management capacities in general.

Even before the first coronavirus case was detected in Chile, the government started to adopt a series of policies that were progressively announced and organized in different phases. Whereas the first phases were based on preparedness measures, advanced phases relied upon prevention and detection measures. The Ministry of Health has played a key role in the design and adaptation of the measures and in monitoring the pandemic's development. To a minor extent, hospitals conducted drills to prepare for the possible arrival of the coronavirus during February 2020.

On 11 March 2020, one week after the first coronavirus case was detected in the country, the Ministry of Health officially created the Scientific Advisory Council for COVID-19 (Consejo Científico Asesor por COVID-19), which brought together experts from the health sector (state and academic institutions) that were seen as politically close to the government. It was only after strong criticism from the academic sector, civil society and even municipalities, which are often skeptical about decisions taken on the national level, that the broader COVID-19 Social Roundtable (Mesa Social COVID-19) was created as an additional advisory body.

In January, when the impact of the pandemic in Europe started to raise concerns, the government introduced several measures intended to improve the

capacities of the health system (e.g., infrastructure preparedness, ensuring there was sufficient medical staff and equipment). Despite this preparation, the stock of personal protective equipment fell to a critical low especially at the beginning of the pandemic. In a survey conducted by the Chilean Medical College (Colegio Médico de Chile), 85.7% of health personnel indicated that there was a lack of protective equipment (Ciper 2020). A similar situation was registered elsewhere, for example in several National Service for Minors facilities (Servicio Nacional de Menores – Sename).

At the beginning, capacities to monitor the development of the pandemic seemed to be sufficient, as numbers remained at a reasonable level. This situation changed over time. The government opted to implement variable quarantines according to the incidence of the virus within different municipalities, and even within specific neighborhoods. Critics of these measures argued from the beginning that this type of quarantine required greater testing and contact-tracing capacities than would broader quarantine measures. Indeed, these capacities did not prove sufficient, especially when the pandemic reached the more vulnerable and less wealthy sectors of the Santiago Metropolitan Region.

Although the shortage of protective equipment was able to be remedied over time, a bias remains between different regions regarding the availability of some equipment (e.g., respirators). In comparison with other Latin American countries and even with some OECD countries, testing capacities were relatively high at the end of 2020 (196,660 tests per million); however, this too varied strongly between regions (Canals et al. 2020).

By the end of the period under review, the national plan Step by Step regulating restrictions and relaxations had been implemented. Moreover, the mobility restrictions imposed under the state of catastrophe, as well as the overnight curfew, were complemented by a virtual platform for the registration of special permissions. Nevertheless, it is not clear that authorities have the capacity to audit all permits issued.

Citation:

About the Step by Step – strategy of the Chilean government (Plan Paso a Paso):

<https://www.gob.cl/coronavirus/pasoapaso/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports of the Scientific Advisory Council for COVID-19 (Consejo Científico Asesor por COVID-19):

<https://sites.google.com/udd.cl/consejocovid19chile/p%C3%A1gina-principal>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About the COVID-19 Social Roundtable (Mesa Social COVID-19):

<https://www.gob.cl/mesasocialcovid19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Virtual police office (Comisaría Virtual)

<https://comisariavirtual.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, “Gobierno y datos del Covid-19: secretismo, manipulación y democracia,” 21 April 2020,

<https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/04/21/gobierno-y-datos-del-covid-19-secretismo-manipulacion-y-democracia/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, “Encuesta del Colegio Médico: 85,7% del personal de salud dice que faltan implementos de protección,” 31 March 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/03/31/encuesta-del-colegio-medico-857-del-personal-de-salud-dice-que-faltan-implementos-de-proteccion/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud):

<https://www.minsal.cl/se-inaugura-mesa-social-por-covid-19-y-acuerdan-sesionar-dos-veces-por-semana/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.minsal.cl/chile-lidera-latinoamerica-en-tasa-de-test-pcr-por-millon-de-habitantes/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://degreyd.minsal.cl/hospitales-realizan-simulacros-para-prepararse-para-eventual-llegada-del-coronavirus-covid-19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About the lack of protective equipment:

UNICEF, “UNICEF dona insumos de protección contra el Covid-19 a centros de la red del SENAME,” 29 May 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/chile/comunicados-prensa/unicef-dona-insumos-de-proteccion-contra-el-covid-19-centros-de-la-red-del>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About epidemic trends in Chile:

Canals M, Cuadrado C, Canals A, Yohannessen K, Lefio LA, Bertoglia MP, et al. (2020), “Epidemic trends, public health response and health system capacity: the Chilean experience in four months of the COVID-19 pandemic,” *Rev Panam Salud Publica*. 2020, <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/52574> last accessed: 12 January 2021.

II. Executive Response

Effective Policy Formulation

Effective Policy
Formulation
Score: 6

On 11 March 2020, the government announced the creation of the Scientific Advisory Council for COVID-19 (Consejo Científico Asesor por COVID-19), reporting to the Ministry of Health. This afterward served as the government’s main advisory body on health questions. The Council is composed of public health specialists, epidemiologists and academics. Virtually all members are considered to be politically close to the government. Especially at the beginning of the health crisis, the government was strongly criticized by civil society organizations, scientific groups and the opposition for making decisions behind closed doors, and for failing to consult with other key societal actors in the design of key coronavirus measures.

After persistent pressure from the Chilean Medical College (Colegio Médico de Chile) and the Chilean Association of Municipalities (Asociación Chilena de Municipalidades), the government created the COVID-19 Social Roundtable (Mesa Social COVID-19) on 22 March 2020 to address the health crisis from an intersectoral perspective. The roundtable brought together representatives of the government and municipal associations, university rectors, the president of the Chilean Medical College and the representative of the WHO/PAHO in Chile, among others. This body has commissioned situation analyses and proposals for public policies from key actors at a variety

of institutions (e.g., universities and think tanks). The creation of the COVID-19 Social Roundtable clearly facilitated the incorporation of a broader spectrum of experts into the decision-making and policy design processes. However, there have been a number of disagreements between the government and these two advisory bodies.

In mid-July 2020, the Scientific Committee for the National Vaccine Strategy COVID-19 (Comité Científico para la Estrategia Nacional de Vacunas COVID-19) was established under the auspices of the Ministry of Science. The government additionally set up a COVID-19 Educational Council (Consejo Educacional COVID-19), managed by the Ministry of Education. This council includes government officials, local authorities, academics and representatives from NGOs including UNESCO-Chile.

Both the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy have reached out to economic advisers and legal experts, as well as to various think tanks and research institutes that are attached to the government. However, in these policy fields, no advisory body has become as central to the decision-making process as the Scientific Advisory Council or the Social Roundtable.

In general terms, government decision-making and policy design during the pandemic has appeared to prioritize economic aspects over social concerns, deepening the discontent of a significant part of the population.

In particular, mayors within the most vulnerable communities often criticized the decisions made at the national level, given the impossibility of monitoring and implementing all the measures proposed or even ordered by decree. The persistent pressure exerted by the mayors of these communes helped convince the government to extend the quarantine measures, for instance by keeping schools and shopping centers closed.

On the other hand, the government has been singled out by the OECD for the success of its efforts to mitigate the economic effects of the crisis (CEP 2020/OECD 2020).

Citation:

Seminar held on the Chilean economic outlook:

Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP), “El camino a la recuperación,” 9 June 2020, <https://www.cepchile.cl/cep/noticias/notas-de-prensa/seminario-online-el-camino-a-la-recuperacion>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

OECD (2020), “Economic Outlook Chile by December 2020,” <http://www.oecd.org/economy/chile-economic-snapshot/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Reports of the Scientific Advisory Council COVID-19 (Consejo Científico Asesor por COVID-19):

<https://sites.google.com/udd.cl/consejocovid19chile/p%C3%A1gina-principal>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, “¿Quiénes son los expertos que asesoran al gobierno?,” 15 March 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/nacional/noticia/quienes-son-los-expertos-que-asesoran-al->

gobierno/F6OK6Q366ZB5PHZDY264FRBVNM/, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
 About the Scientific Committee for the National Vaccine Strategy COVID-19:
<https://www.minciencia.gob.cl/Vacunacovid19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
<https://chilereports.cl/noticias/2020/07/17/ministerio-de-ciencia-presenta-comite-cientifico-para-la-estrategia-nacional-de-vacunas-covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
 Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación):
<https://www.gob.cl/consejoeducacionalcovid19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
 About the COVID-19 Social Roundtable (Mesa Social COVID-19):
<https://www.gob.cl/mesasocialcovid19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
 CIPER, “Gobierno y datos del Covid-19: secretismo, manipulación y democracia,” 21 April 2020,
<https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/04/21/gobierno-y-datos-del-covid-19-secretismo-manipulacion-y-democracia/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Policy Feedback and Adaptation

Policy Feedback
and Adaptation
Score: 6

The Chilean government has regularly monitored and assessed the development of the pandemic as well as the effectiveness of its own measures. Academics and civil society organizations have been critical of the transparency of the decision-making process – especially at the beginning of the pandemic. However, by the end of the period under review, a broader consensus was evident, along with a more accurate assessment of the measures implemented.

COVID-19 management measures have been frequently adjusted as pandemic conditions have evolved throughout the country. However, given the economic crisis and fiscal pressure accumulated since the end of 2019, the government was unable to strike a balance between the restrictions necessary to contain the pandemic and the restart of activities needed to rekindle economic growth. On the one hand, it implemented the Step by Step plan, thus pursuing a transparent and differentiated strategy sensitive to local conditions. On the other hand, the auditing capacity of the various public agents involved in management has been limited.

The government has held biweekly meetings with the Scientific Advisory Council for Covid-19 since its creation. Meetings have been taking place with the broader-based COVID-19 Social Roundtable with a similar frequency. Reports and minutes relating to the activities of both advisory bodies have been published frequently. The Chilean Medical College (Colegio Médico de Chile) in particular has played a leading role as a neutral and critical body of experts with respect to the government’s crisis management. The Chilean Medical College has been critical of the weakness of the COVID-19 Social Roundtable, due to its lack of a clearly defined responsibility within the framework of the government’s strategy.

The Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation (MinCiencia) coordinates and updates the available COVID-19 data on almost

a daily basis. This includes data on the number of cases nationwide, the number of available hospital beds, the number of patients in critical condition and the total number of deaths, among other subjects.

A number of other independent and/or regional initiatives also provide critical data and analysis, including the School of Public Health of the University of Chile, the Observatory of Infectious Diseases and the Observatory of Public Policies COVID-19 in Chile (both of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile), and the Scientific Committee COVID-19 of the BioBío Region.

Citation:

Reports and minutes of the Scientific Advisory Council COVID-19 (Consejo Científico Asesor por Covid-19):

<https://sites.google.com/udd.cl/consejocovid19chile/p%C3%A1gina-principal>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About the COVID-19 Social Roundtable (Mesa Social Covid-19):

<https://www.gob.cl/mesasocialcovid19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Science – Covid-19 databases:

<https://www.minciencia.gob.cl/covid19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

School of Public Health (University of Chile):

<http://www.saludpublica.uchile.cl/noticias/162048/reporte-covid-19-al-dia>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Regional Committee on COVID-19 (BioBio):

<http://www.comitecovid19.cl/index.php>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (UC) (2020), “Observatorio de Políticas Públicas Covid-19 en Chile: Familia y sociedad,” https://issuu.com/centroucfamilia-uc/docs/observatorio_familia_sociedad_covid19, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Public Consultation

Public
Consultation
Score: 5

The president’s advisory ministry (Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia, Segpres) is primarily responsible for initiating and monitoring consultations. Depending on the issue, sectoral ministries may also be involved in consultation processes. Ad hoc advisory commissions include interest groups, experts and other stakeholders. Under normal conditions, consultations with civil society groups and particularly stakeholder organizations take place on a frequent basis. Chilean politics has been traditionally open to technocratic advice. However, in the context of consultations, economic interest groups tend to be given priority, whereas unions and environmental organizations are underrepresented.

This unlevel playing field has persisted during the COVID-19 crisis. Consultations have mainly been focusing on assessing measures addressing the effects of the pandemic. A variety of different economic interest groups have worked closely with the government to design measures cushioning the economic and labor impacts of the crisis. For example, the government has consulted closely with the Confederation of Production and Commerce (Confederación de Producción y Comercio, CPC) and the Association of

Pension Fund Administrators (Asociación de las Administradoras de Fondos de Pensiones, AAFP), which are politically attached to the governing parties. Both entities have had a significant influence on the crisis-response measures. There have been also several consultations with economic interest groups from the agricultural, mining and fishing sectors, the Chilean economy's main export sectors, in order to discuss responses to and implications of the crisis. The government has also consulted with environmental organizations in the context of the National Climate Change Strategy (Estrategia Nacional de Cambio Climático), as well with religious and indigenous communities, but these were not central to COVID-19 management.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia; MDS) has been playing a major role in channeling the demands of social organizations. Among other initiatives, it launched a platform that seeks to articulate the needs of civil society organizations during the COVID-19 emergency and match them with donors from the private sector, especially to help priority groups such as older adults or homeless people. Additionally, although with limited success considering the magnitude of the pandemic, the Social Organizations Division of the Ministry General Secretariat of Government (Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno de Chile, Segegob) has been seeking to engage social leaders from different regions of the country to assess needs and communicate the measures the government has implemented to assist communities during the pandemic.

All official consultations and audiences with government representatives are transparently registered, with information about them publicly accessible via a platform operated by the state agency Council for Transparency (Consejo para la Transparencia, CPLT).

In June 2020, a virtual platform was established (<https://congresovirtual.cl/>) with the objective of strengthening communication between the Congress and the citizens. The platform gives updates on draft laws, public consultations and congressional votes. It also allows citizens to give their opinions on draft laws, and where appropriate, to participate in public consultations carried out in accordance with the established rules. In addition, deputies as well as actors from civil society, when involved in consultations or parliamentary counseling, can request support from the Library of Congress (BCN) in order to find specific information. The same applies to citizens in general if they can demonstrate that their request is relevant for legislative support.

Citation:

Ministry of Social Development and Family (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia, MDS): <http://www.desarrollosocialyfamilia.gob.cl/noticias/lanzan-plataforma-que-conecta-necesidades-con-donaciones-para-ayudar-a-sectores-prioritarios-por-eme>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
<https://www.movidosxchile.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Social Organizations Division of the Ministry General Secretariat of Government (Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno, Segegob):

<https://dos.gob.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Chilean Transparency Council (Consejo para la Transparencia, CPLT):

<https://www.infolobby.cl/Portada#!busqueda-simple>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Chilean Congress:

Virtual Congress: <https://congresovirtual.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021

La Tercera, “Recuperación del empleo cruza reunión entre gobierno y los líderes empresariales,” 5 August 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/pulso/noticia/recuperacion-del-empleo-cruza-reunion-entre-gobierno-y-los-lideres-empresariales/BTG5NVHZSVDDFAICDCJ36H34LI/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Crisis Communication

Crisis
Communication
Score: 5

Communicating effectively with citizens has been a challenging task for the government since the protests of October 2019, and remained a problematic issue in the context of the pandemic. Several times, the state modified its methodology for categorizing and counting coronavirus cases and deaths. These changes generated confusion as to the pandemic’s real development in the country – not only among common citizens, but also in the scientific community. The Ministry of Science has been a target of criticism with regard to the quantity and quality of its data collection.

Moreover, official government representatives expressed a startling ignorance regarding the real (vulnerable) living conditions of a large part of the Chilean population. So-called lapses in communication that in fact reveal a lack of social sensibility are not a new phenomenon; indeed, they have been characteristic throughout the Piñera government, contributing to the social frustration and mobilization in 2019. In the context of the pandemic, an example of a communication lapse with high political cost was offered by then-Minister of Health Jaime Mañalich, who was in charge of designing and implementing the coronavirus response measures. Mañalich publicly acknowledged during a press conference that he had not been aware of the level of poverty and overcrowding suffered by a significant part of Santiago’s population (La Tercera, 28 May 2020). Two weeks after this statement, President Piñera announced that he was replacing Mañalich as Minister of Health.

The government’s communication of the various restriction and quarantine measures has been partially confusing, and in some instances even contradictory. Opposition parties, civil organizations and academics have blamed the government for claiming that the situation had improved, thus promoting a false sense of security, at times at which the pandemic data did not support this assessment.

Overall, the government’s public communication improved over time. The Ministry of Health held daily press conferences, presenting data on the evolution of the pandemic and describing the measures being implemented. These events were broadcast by the main public TV and radio stations, and they were also carried on social media platforms. The ministry additionally publishes key information on its website and on social media.

Citation:

Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud, MINSAL):

<https://www.minsal.cl/nuevo-coronavirus-2019-ncov/casos-confirmados-en-chile-covid-19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, “Ensayando la comunicación de crisis en plena crisis,” 1 April 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/04/01/ensayando-la-comunicacion-de-crisis-en-plena-crisis/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Radio Universidad de Chile, “Paula Daza y nueva normalidad ‘¿Me puedo juntar con amigos a tomar un café? Probablemente sí,’” 20 April 2020, “<https://radio.uchile.cl/2020/04/20/paula-daza-y-nueva-normalidad-me-puedo-juntar-con-amigos-a-tomar-un-cafe-probablemente-si/>,” last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, “Mañalich reconoce que en un sector de Santiago ‘hay un nivel de pobreza y hacinamiento del cual yo no tenía conciencia de la magnitud que tenía,’” 28 May 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/politica/noticia/manalich-reconoce-que-en-un-sector-de-santiago-hay-un-nivel-de-pobreza-y-hacinamiento-del-cual-yo-no-tenia-conciencia-de-la-magnitud-que-tenia/5BQZLGL0PVDDPKQ2SNSSSWRGYU/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About the Step by Step – strategy of the Chilean government (Plan Paso a Paso):

<https://www.gob.cl/coronavirus/pasoapaso/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Implementation of Response Measures

Implementation
of Response
Measures
Score: 6

The Chilean government reacted relatively quickly, implementing the first prevention measures in February, before the first official coronavirus case was registered in the country.

On 28 February 2020, a few days before the first coronavirus case was detected in Chile, the government enacted a decree requiring all travelers from abroad to make a health declaration stating whether they had been to a location with a high COVID-19 incidence, had been in contact with a sick person, and/or themselves had symptoms. The authority also provided for temperature checks to be carried out at border posts. At that time, President Piñera announced that Chile was prepared to face the pandemic. This discourse changed after a few weeks.

As the disease spread, the government began to adopt a series of policies that were progressively announced and organized in phases. Phase 1 consisted of preparedness measures, aiming to prevent the virus from entering the national territory. When the first imported cases began to be diagnosed, the executive moved on to Phase 2. In this phase, efforts were focused on preventing the transmission of the virus through hygiene measures, testing, and isolation of suspected and/or diagnosed cases.

On 14 March 2020, the country entered Phase 3, as secondary cases had appeared for which it was no longer possible to trace the origin of infection. A health customs office was created for the purpose of testing travelers, and mass events were prohibited, among other measures. A day later, primary and secondary school classes were suspended, a measure that was quickly extended to universities.

Phase 4 was launched on 18 March 2020, when there were 238 confirmed cases. President Piñera announced the imposition of a 90-day state of catastrophe, closed the country's borders, imposed an overnight curfew and forbid citizens from traveling to their second summer homes (the state of constitutional emergency as well as the overnight curfew have been extended, and were still active by the end of the period under review). Furthermore, the executive implemented a policy of "progressive quarantine" with different stages, including mobility restrictions. A virtual platform allowing citizens to request special exemptions from the various restrictions was implemented relatively quickly. Nevertheless, it is not clear that authorities have the capacity to audit all permits issued.

By the end of the period under review, a recovery strategy had emerged based on the national Step by Step (Plan Paso a Paso) plan. This lays out a phased reduction in the various restrictions and defines the gradual restoration of (economic) activities are defined.

The government launched a contact-tracing app to monitor COVID-19 infections, but due to severe data-protection problems, the app was abandoned just few weeks after the official launch. Tracing of (possible) positive COVID-19 cases is conducted via phone and registration on a centralized website (<http://epi.minsal.cl>).

In general terms, the Chilean government reacted quite fast and measures were implemented impartially. However, the effectiveness of these measures with regard to containing the spread of the virus can clearly be questioned. The measures designed to soften the economic blow seemed to be more effective – at least by the end of the period under review.

Citation:

About the Step by Step – strategy of the Chilean government (Plan Paso a Paso):

<https://www.gob.cl/coronavirus/pasoapaso/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Virtual police office (Comisaría Virtual)

<https://comisariavirtual.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):

ECLAC (2020), Observatorio COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe – Impacto económico y social,

<https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/covid-19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

El Pais.com – Agenda Pública, “La batalla de Chile contra el ‘Covid-19,’” 25 March 2020, <http://agendapublica.elpais.com/la-batalla-de-chile-contra-el-covid-19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud, MINSAL):

<http://epi.minsal.cl>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

National Coordination

National
Coordination
Score: 6

Chile is a centrally organized state that shows significant heterogeneity between the regions and municipalities regarding geography, level of development and density of population. Furthermore, there is a high level of income inequality. Coordination and cooperation between state institutions on the national and the regional levels are overseen by regional ministerial secretariats (Secretarías Regionales Ministeriales, Seremi). The national state’s Sub-Secretariat for Regional Development (Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Regional, Subdere) administers regional investment funds, and is overseeing sectoral responsibilities to the regional and municipal levels, with the aim of improving the targeting and effectiveness of public policies. The Ministry of Finance’s budget office monitors decentralized agencies and state-owned enterprises from a budgetary perspective very tightly and effectively.

Under normal conditions, local governments legally enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy concerning mandates and tasks that do not touch on constitutional issues, and which be executed within their allocated budgets. This range of action was significantly reduced under the state of catastrophe. The economic gap between different municipalities proved a particular hindrance in implementing and assessing measures effectively, as many of the more vulnerable municipalities simply lacked sufficient financial and technical capacities to carry out the measures needed. As long as the cases of infection were concentrated in the more affluent communities, it was possible to achieve social distancing and to slow down the rate of contagion. However, even this appearance of control was lost as soon as the virus reached the more vulnerable municipalities.

It was pressure from municipal authorities that forced the government to create the COVID-19 Social Roundtable (Mesa Social COVID-19), and to make the rapid decision to suspend classes at all levels of education. Minimizing social contact apparently helped to slow down the spread of the disease. Furthermore, it was local authorities that strongly recommended keeping shopping centers closed at a time when the central government was already moving to reopen the economy and ease restrictions. Since the establishment of the COVID-19 Social Roundtable, coordination meetings with local authorities have been more frequent, especially between representatives of line ministries such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. The

Association of Chilean Municipalities (Asociación de Municipalidades de Chile, Amuch), the Chilean Association of Municipalities (Asociación Chilena de Municipalidades, Achm) and the Association of Rural Municipalities (Asociación de Municipios Rurales, Amur) have been key actors in this intergovernmental coordination.

In addition, several digital platforms were created in order to improve coordination between the different state actors, and to make information accessible and more transparent to the population. For instance the Ministry of Health's Epivigilia platform reports on confirmed coronavirus case levels, while the Visor Territorial COVID-19 (Territorial Viewer COVID-19 of the Ministry of National Assets) provides additional data.

The Step by Step (Plan Paso a Paso) recovery strategy, which is guided by empirical developments and local particularities, had been implemented by the end of the period under review.

Citation:

OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19) - The territorial impact of COVID-19: Managing the crisis across levels of government (2020), <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-territorial-impact-of-covid-19-managing-the-crisis-across-levels-of-government-d3e314e1/#section-d1e1175>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Health (EPIVIGILA-platform / COVID-19 Territorial-platform): <http://epi.minsal.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.minsal.cl/revisal-la-plataforma-territorial-ministerio-de-salud-covid-19-con-datos-de-la-pandemia-en-cada-ciudad-del-pais/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of National Assets (Territorial Viewer COVID-19): <https://covid.visorterritorial.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

About the Step by Step – strategy of the Chilean government (Plan Paso a Paso): <https://www.gob.cl/coronavirus/pasoapaso/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

International Coordination

International
Coordination
Score: 7

In general terms, the government is endowed with the institutional capacity to contribute actively to international efforts to foster the provision of global public goods. Chile is of Latin America's most active countries with regard to foreign policy.

On 16 March 2020, President Piñera issued a decree establishing an inter-ministerial committee to coordinate the health crisis. The committee is headed by the minister of health, which determines how frequently the committee's sessions take place. It may also request the participation of other secretaries of state on a temporary or permanent basis, as well as that of heads of services or other officials of ministry services, institutions or units. The same coordinating committee evaluates the coronavirus-related measures implemented at the national level. In turn, the Ministry of Health maintains direct communication

with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the WHO regarding public policy recommendations. PAHO and WHO representatives also participate on the COVID-19 Social Roundtable, which advises both the president and the interministerial committee.

Separately, the Ministry of Foreign Relations leads meetings with the National Council for the Implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (Consejo Nacional para la Implementación de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible). This body comprises members of the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism; the Ministry of Social Development and Family; and the Ministry of the Environment.

Both coordinating committees communicate with the legislative branch and domestic stakeholders.

Citation:

Library of the National Congress (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile) - Decree on the creation of the interministerial committee, <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=1144098&idParte=&idVersion=>, published on 4th of April 2020, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Ministry of Foreign Relations (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile):

<https://minrel.gob.cl/noticias-antiores/canciller-encabeza-reunion-del-consejo-nacional-para-la-implementacion>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Learning and Adaptation

Learning and
Adaptation
Score: 6

The National Emergency Office of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security (Oficina Nacional de Emergencia del Ministerio del Interior y Seguridad Pública, Onemi) is in charge of coordinating and supervising the National Civil Protection System. But, as indicated by the OECD Governance of Critical Risks dataset, Chile has a risk management system for natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, droughts and tsunamis, but not for infectious diseases (OECD 2016).

The Ministry of Health, the interministerial committee overseeing COVID-19 measures, and the COVID-19 Advisory Council (Consejo Asesor COVID-19) all evaluate the coronavirus-related measures on a regular basis. In addition, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism have sufficient capacity and instruments to monitor the financial and economic impact of coronavirus-related public policies, enabling them to identify needed adjustments. The different roles and responsibilities of the entities involved at the national level are for the most part defined by the president on the basis of powers granted to him under the state of catastrophe. In making policy adjustments, the government takes into account recommendations and new knowledge provided by international organizations

such as the WHO.

The vast majority of public services, including the National Emergency Office of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security (Onemi), the Agricultural and Livestock Service (Sag), the National Service for Minors (Sename) and the National Service for the Elderly (Senama), have developed and adapted various management protocols in response to the health emergency. In addition, Onemi has developed and implemented simulation exercises relating to COVID-19 management.

Most of the laws and amendments passed during the pandemic were aimed at addressing the emergency, rather than at building capacity to deal with future pandemics. Some experts recommend explicitly recognizing public health crises as one of the grounds under which the president can declare a constitutional state of disaster emergency. Since this was not one of the categories contained in the emergency provisions, a wide range of measures and legal decisions had to be developed for the first time in connection with the coronavirus pandemic.

In this context, the government has pushed a number of reform initiatives and draft laws that seek to prepare the country more effectively for future crises of this type, or to improve the functioning of the public administration in such contexts. Among other initiatives, the following laws have already been approved:

- Law 21,220 regulates remote-working practices (teleworking).
- Law 21,219 created a constitutional reform that authorizes the National Congress to meet virtually in a number of specified circumstances.
- Law 21,240 amends the Criminal Code and Law 20,393, penalizing the failure to comply with isolation or other preventive measures ordered by the health authority in case of an epidemic or pandemic.

Draft laws which were still under review in Congress as of the time of writing include the following provisions:

- A modification of the Health Code to prohibit pharmaceutical-product price increases during a health crisis.
- A draft law that prohibits the speculation and hoarding of basic necessities during emergencies.
- A draft bill that limits the profitability of healthcare providers during epidemics, pandemics or other similar outbreaks, and declares ineffective any clauses in health insurance policies that might deny coverage in these cases.

Citation:

Draft laws (under review in the Congress):

https://www.camara.cl/legislacion/ProyectosDeLey/proyectos_ley.aspx, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

OECD (2016) dataset on Governance of Critical Risks: https://qdd.oecd.org/subject.aspx?Subject=GOV_RISK, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
 National Emergency Office of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security (ONEMI): <https://www.onemi.gov.cl/noticia/onemi-realiza-simulaciones-de-emergencia-para-fortalecer-capacidades-operativas/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
 Ahumada, Marcela (2020), “Los cambios que requiere la regulación del Estado de Catástrofe para enfrentar las pandemias,” 16 April 2020, <https://www.diarioconstitucional.cl/articulos/los-cambios-que-requiere-la-regulacion-del-estado-de-catastrofe-para-enfrentar-las-pandemias/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

III. Resilience of Executive Accountability

Open Government

Open
Government
Score: 7

During the first weeks after the emergence of the coronavirus in Chile, the government’s communication and information delivery was rather confusing. Several changes in the methodology for counting infections and deaths led to confusion among citizens and civil society organizations. This situation was rectified over time.

The government has published the most important pandemic-related data on a website (<https://www.gob.cl/coronavirus/pasoapaso/>), created specifically for this purpose, combining inputs from the various ministries and services involved in the management of the crisis (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of National Assets, among others). In general terms, the information is presented in an understandable and user-friendly way, and includes key indicators such as infection and death rates, as well as their temporal development (at the national, regional and community levels). It also includes the local distribution of infections, and more specific indicators that are partly used in the government’s own risk assessments, such as the ICU-bed occupancy rate by region and municipality. In addition, the Ministry of Health publishes official reports and makes daily presentations at press conferences, and direct access to the relevant databases was created for research and journalistic purposes.

Furthermore, the various bodies convened to advise the government also tend to have webpages publishing information on the issues they have discussed and decisions they have made.

Citation:

About the Step by Step – strategy of the Chilean government (Plan Paso a Paso): <https://www.gob.cl/coronavirus/pasoapaso/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
 Ministry of National Assets (Territorial Viewer COVID-19): <https://covid.visorterritorial.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.
 Virtual police office (Comisaría Virtual) <https://comisariavirtual.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

COVID-19 Educational Council:
<https://www.gob.cl/consejoeducacionalcovid19/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Legislative Oversight

Legislative
Oversight
Score: 8

In March and April 2020, the National Congress introduced an amendment to the constitution (valid for one year) adapting the procedural regulations of the lower and upper chambers to make virtual legislative work possible. The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate are now allowed to be in session virtually during a health quarantine or state of emergency that represents a serious risk to the health or life of the inhabitants of the country or in one or more regions, thus preventing the houses from meeting either totally or partially. They may thus meet, vote on bills and constitutional reforms, and exercise their exclusive powers virtually. At the same time, the new regulation indicates that the telecommunications-based procedure must ensure that the vote of the parliamentarians is personal, justified and cannot be delegated (IDEA 2020, pp. 51-52). As a result of the law, the parliamentary plenary and committees are enabled to operate in hybrid mode, combining physical presence as well as virtual participation. The Chamber of Deputies' sessions are streamed through an official platform. Protocols regarding the functioning of remote voting and participation in the committees have also been established. They regulate in detail aspects such remote participation, previous registration of participants, interventions, quorums and other topics.

A virtual platform with the objective of enhancing communication between the Congress and the citizens was established in late June 2020 (<https://congresovirtual.cl/>). This platform gives updates on draft laws, public consultations and voting results. The platform also allows citizens to offer their opinions on draft laws and, when appropriate, to participate in public consultations carried out in accordance with the established rules. In addition, deputies as well as actors from the civil society, when involved in consultations or parliamentary counseling, can request support from the Library of Congress (BCN) in order to find specific information. The same applies to citizens in general if they can demonstrate that their request is relevant for legislative support..

These quite rapid adaptations enabled the legislative bodies to execute their legislative oversight as defined by the constitution even during the era of restrictions. Limitations in this area resulted from the state of catastrophe (Estado de Excepción Constitucional de Catástrofe) in force, and the consequent concentration of power in the hands of the president rather than from any lack of technical or logistical resources.

Citation:

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, IDEA (2020), “Parliaments and Crisis: Challenges and Innovations – Parliamentary Primer No. 1,” <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/parliaments-and-crisis-challenges-and-innovations>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Senate of Chile (on the protocols for a telematic sessions): <https://www.senado.cl/acuerdan-protocolo-para-funcionamiento-telematico-de-sala-y-comisiones/senado/2020-04-08/173302.html>, last accessed: 12 January 2021

National Congress of Chile:

Virtual Congress: <https://congresovirtual.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021

Library of the National Congress of Chile (on the Constitutional reform regarding the functioning of the legislative body during the State of Catastrophe): <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=1143740>, last accessed: 12 January 2021

Inter Pares – Parliaments in Partnership (2020), Data Tracker for Parliamentary responses during the COVID-19 Pandemic, <https://www.inter-pares.eu/parliamentary-innovations-times-crisis>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Independent Supervisory Bodies

Auditing
Score: 7

In general terms, Chile’s General Comptroller (Contraloría General de la República, CGR) has far-reaching competences, and is invested with significant political and legal independence. These competences largely apply even during an active constitutional state of emergency (Estado de Excepción Constitucional de Catástrofe). The comptroller has oversight power over all government bodies, and investigates specific issues at the request of legislators serving in the Chamber of Deputies. The office presents an annual report simultaneously to the National Congress and the president.

On 19 April 2020, the CGR launched a platform designed to provide information to the public about its activities in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Through this channel, the CGR provides ongoing reports on its work overseeing public resources and reviewing the legality of the state’s administrative acts. The website compiles the opinions and notices issued by the Comptroller General’s Office since the declaration of the pandemic, and describes the actions taken, laws reviewed, budget modifications decreed and primary oversight actions initiated by the agency in the context of the health emergency. It also contains details on internal measures taken by the institution to protect the health of civil servants and citizens, along with a section containing health information from national and foreign agencies.

Due to the number of measures and the time pressure under which decisions needed to be made, the CGR’s investigations and legal opinions were not always carried out in a timely manner. This was specifically the case in the context of emergency medical supply procurement, the provision of additional space for quarantining infected patients, and public hospital management. On several occasions, the CGR acted more decisively due to pressure generated by the media or civil society institutions dedicated to the issue of transparency in

public spending, such as the Fiscal Observatory Foundation. By the end of the period under review, several coronavirus-related investigations were still ongoing.

Citation:

General Comptroller's COVID-19 website: <http://www.contraloria.cl/web/cgr/covid19>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Fiscal Observatory Foundation (Fundación Observatorio Fiscal):

<https://observatoriofiscal.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://comprasocovid.observatoriofiscal.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, "Los datos que analiza la FNE por posible colusión: sector público paga \$500 por mascarillas que antes costaban \$13," 18 June 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/06/18/los-datos-que-analiza-la-fne-por-posible-colusion-sector-publico-paga-500-por-mascarillas-que-antes-costaban-13/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Data Protection
Score: 5

Chile lacks an effective data-protection system, even though Article 19 of the constitution guarantees a right to privacy. Law 19,628, last modified in February 2020, regulates the conditions and requirements that must be met in order to collect and process an individual's personal data. Further modifications in order to comply with OECD recommendations are in the pipeline.

In August 2019, the Legal Constitution, Justice and Reglementary Commission of the Senate ruled that the Chilean Transparency Council (Consejo para la Transparencia, CPLT) should be the authority in charge of data protection. The Transparency Council is responsible for ensuring public sector compliance with data-protection rules, but its institutional capacity to audit other public institutions in this area is still (legally) limited. The CPLT produces recommendations rather than performing compliance audits or issuing penalties in cases of infringement.

The period under review saw two quite controversial cases involving the CPLT in relation to the protection of personal data. In the first case, several journalistic investigations and independent experts revealed serious deficiencies in the "Coronapp" contact-tracing app with regard to the protection of personal data. A few weeks after its launch in March, the CPLT issued recommendations to authorities noting the data-protection problems. The application was subsequently withdrawn. In the second case, the minister of finance sent a letter to the superintendent of pensions to request the data and the taxpayer identification numbers (Rol Único Tributario, RUT) of the people who had withdrawn the legal maximum of 10% of their pension fund. The CPLT announced that it would work with the Ministry of Finance to determine whether this action was allowed under the current regulations. The case had not been resolved by the end of the period under review.

Citation:

Chilean Transparency Council (Consejo para la Transparencia, CPLT):

<https://www.consejotransparencia.cl/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

<https://www.consejotransparencia.cl/cplt-remite-recomendaciones-a-autoridades-para-asegurar-adecuado-resguardo-de-datos-personales-que-recoge-su-aplicacion-coronapp/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

DerechosDigitales, “CoronApp: La inutilidad del atajo tecnológico desplegado por el Gobierno y sus riesgos,” 16 April 2020, <https://www.derechosdigitales.org/14387/coronapp-la-inutilidad-del-atajo-tecnologico-desplegado-por-el-gobierno-y-sus-riesgos/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Library of the National Congress (on Law 19.628):

<https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=141599>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

Bulletin on COVID-19 of Library of the National Congress (On the Chilean Tracing app “CoronApp”):

https://obtienearchivo.bcn.cl/obtienearchivo?id=documentos/10221.1/79593/1/boletin_coronavirus_10.1_FINAL.pdf, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, “Protección de datos en Chile: cómo será la nueva regulación,” 18 June 2020, <https://laboratorio.latercera.com/laboratorio/noticia/proteccion-de-datos-en-chile/1014666/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

La Tercera, “Centenares de denuncias contra Briones ante Contraloría por pedir RUT de quienes retiraron el 10%,” 5 November 2020, <https://www.latercera.com/pulso/noticia/centenares-de-denuncias-contrabriones-ante-el-consejo-para-la-transparencia-y-contraloria-por-pedir-rut-de-quienes-retiraron-el-10/TT3YWAOU2RF63FFYAUHW6UNDGE/>, last accessed: 12 January 2021.

CIPER, “Problemas de protección de los datos personales de la aplicación «CoronApp»,” 22 April 2020, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/04/22/problemas-de-proteccion-de-los-datos-personales-de-la-aplicacion-coronapp/>, last accessed: 12 January 2020.

Address | Contact

Bertelsmann Stiftung

Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 256
33311 Gütersloh
Germany
Phone +49 5241 81-0

Dr. Christof Schiller

Phone +49 5241 81-81470
christof.schiller@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Dr. Thorsten Hellmann

Phone +49 5241 81-81236
thorsten.hellmann@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Pia Paulini

Phone +49 5241 81-81468
pia.paulini@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Klein, F., Zilla C. & M. Thunert (2021).
Chile Report. Sustainable Governance in the Context
of the COVID-19 Crisis. Bertelsmann Stiftung: Gütersloh.
<https://doi.org/10.11586/2021084>

www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de
www.sgi-network.org