

# **From Politics by Individuals to Party Militancy: Socialization, Political Competence and Electoral Growth of the Chilean UDI (1989-2001)\***

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A party that goes from getting 9.8% of the vote in a parliamentary election to 25.2% 12 years later can be safely considered a prosperous party. However, when that party achieves such significant electoral expansion despite its strong public adherence to the unpopular legacy of a harsh military dictatorship, the prosperity of the party and its electoral success worry many of those concerned with democratic consolidation and the strengthening of democratic institutions. In what follows, we discuss the rapid electoral growth of the Independent Democratic Union (UDI, by its Spanish acronym) in Chile. We describe its electoral strengths and analyze the homogeneity of its leadership and parliamentary delegation.

Historically, the Chilean party system was characterized by the existence of 5-6 strong parties aligned on a right-left continuum, with no more than 2 parties catering to the conservative electorate. The Conservative and Liberal parties firmly held control of the conservative vote from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until 1964, when both parties opted to abstain from having their own presidential candidate and instead chose to support centrist Christian Democratic (PDC) leader Eduardo Frei Montalva. That choice responded to the concern over the electoral strength of socialist candidate Salvador Allende, who narrowly lost the 1958 presidential election to conservative independent Jorge Alessandri. In the end, Eduardo Frei won a sweeping victory but did not bring the Liberal or Conservative parties into his government cabinet. A year later, in the 1965 parliamentary election, the PDC won a large plurality of votes, while the Conservative and Liberal parties performed dismally, losing most of their seats in both chambers. That electoral defeat forced both parties to merge into a single unified conservative party, the National Party (PN), in 1967. With the election of socialist Salvador Allende as president in 1970, the PN actively and decisively led the opposition, forming a strategic alliance with the PDC, to bring about the end of the Allende government.<sup>1</sup> When the military stepped in and overthrew the Allende government in 1973, the PN immediately dissolved itself as a party, adhering to the instructions of the new dictatorship government. Although many

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed history of Chilean political history before 1973 see Valenzuela and Valenzuela 1976, 1986; Collier and Sater, 1996 and Gil 1966. For a history of conservative parties before 1973 see, in addition, Moulián and Torres Dujisin 1988.

PN leaders and militants joined the new government as ministers, advisors, ambassadors or local government officials, the party was officially dissolved when the military Junta banned all party activity shortly after taking power.

During the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990), political party activity was officially banned and political parties were made illegal.<sup>2</sup> The dictatorship actively prosecuted the leaders of leftist parties. Many socialist and communist leaders were killed, others were exiled and most active militants suffered prosecution and human rights violations. The dictatorship tolerated the existence of the centrist PDC in part because that party had opposed the Allende Popular Unity (Socialist and Communist) alliance and in part because many of the 1973 coup leaders were sympathetic to the PDC. The National Party, however, did not make an effort to regroup after the coup, creating an opportunity for new conservative political movements to emerge.

The dictatorship consolidated in power after the coup and sought to create a new political system free of threat of socialism and communism. A new constitution was written and approved in a national plebiscite in 1980. Although the government claimed that 67% of the voters supported the new constitution, the plebiscite was denounced as illegitimate by most foreign observers. That constitution became effective in March of 1981, when General Pinochet was inaugurated for an 8-year presidential period. Although limited political party activity was allowed for in the new constitution (although Marxist parties were straightforwardly banned), transitional articles allowed the government to delay the adoption of the appropriate laws that would regulate party activity.<sup>3</sup>

The 1982 economic crisis severely hit Chile, bringing unemployment levels close to 30% and causing a recession that shrank the economy by 14,2% (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 185). Popular discontent with the regime skyrocketed and protests and strikes became daily occurrences. The PDC openly joined the opposition and led the formation of a wide front of opposition parties and groups. In joining the more moderate groups that previously supported the Allende government, the PDC openly carried out political party activities and made it easier for other leftist and conservative parties to de facto defy the ban on political parties still in effect.<sup>4</sup>

Although the ban on political parties was formally lifted in 1987 with the passage of the Political Parties Law by the military Junta (Law #18,603, made effective on March 23, 1987), the social and political protests that erupted as a result of the 1982 economic crisis forced the military dictatorship to hold talks with representatives from opposition political parties starting in 1983. Together with the PDC, leaders from the Socialist, Social Democratic and Radical parties formed a unified front that would later evolve into

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed history of the Pinochet dictatorship see Huneuss 2001; Cavallo, Salazar and Sepúlveda 1997 and Constable and Valenzuela 1991.

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent discussion of the 1980 Constitution and the process that led to its adoption, see Barros 2002.

<sup>4</sup> For an overall history of the transition and democratic consolidation periods, see Cavallo, Salazar and Sepúlveda, 1997; Cavallo, 1998; Otano, 1995; Constable and Valenzuela, 1991; Portales, 2000; Huneuss, 2001; Barros, 2002; Drake and Jaksic, 1999.

the *Concertación de Partidos por el No*. The *Concertación* was officially formed to oppose General Augusto Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite, but the coalition's true origin can be traced back to the 1983 alliance formed to oppose the dictatorship and to bring about a transition to democracy.

With political party activity openly flourishing among opponents to the Pinochet regime, the supporters of the regime swiftly moved to react by resurrecting the old National Party and by creating new groups and organizations that sought to defend and promote the ideological vision of the military dictatorship and to defend it against attacks by the opposition. This is the context where the Independent Democratic Union (UDI) was created. Officially founded in 1983, the group's roots can be traced to the mid 1960s, when a group of young students from the Catholic University of Chile in Santiago became politically active against the PDC and leftist groups that controlled the university's student federation. The group, known as *gremialistas*, was headed by law student Jaime Guzmán, and sought to promote conservative catholic values, authoritarian order and traditional principles. Vehemently opposed to the reformist PDC approach and with staunch anti-communist stances, the *gremialistas* were correctly identified as sympathizers with the Franco regime in Spain and with the most conservative wing of the National Party in the country.

As it has been convincingly demonstrated,<sup>5</sup> many *gremialista* leaders joined the military dictatorship after 1973 and although the group never really acquired a legal status before 1973, it nominally disbanded with the other conservative parties and groups as ordered by the military. But the *gremialistas* continued to operate as a homogeneous group and exerted strong influence over the constitution making process that resulted in the 1980 Constitution. In addition, *gremialistas* took control of the government's Youth Secretariat and filled many appointed posts as local mayors and provincial governors.

When political parties reemerged, the *gremialistas* joined the mushrooming number of conservative and pro-Pinochet groups by creating the *Independent Democratic Union* (UDI). The UDI officially formed in 1983 as a group of Pinochet loyalists that sought to build support for the dictatorship in urban shantytowns and who aspired to build a new conservative party, free of the ills and tribulations of the past. Because the dictatorship banned political party activity the UDI never constituted into a formal political party until 1987. That year, the UDI joined other conservative groups to form National Renovation (RN). Taking advantage of the political opening forced upon the military dictatorship by the democratic opposition, RN quickly moved to begin the legal process to acquire official recognition as a political party. A legal framework for political parties had recently been approved by the dictatorship and the joined effort undertaken by all major conservative groups led many to believe that the past history of divisions and fragmentation of the conservative forces observed before 1973 would not repeat itself after the end of the dictatorship.

However, the life of the united conservative party did not last long. In mid 1988, as a result of a political quarrel to control RN, a number of UDI leaders were sanctioned

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<sup>5</sup> Huneeus 2001; Cristi 2000.

and expelled from RN for tampering with internal party elections. The entire UDI faction abandoned RN and quickly moved to officially form a new party, the *Unión Demócrata Independiente*. The UDI sought to differentiate itself from RN by strongly campaigning for Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite. Although it also endorsed Pinochet, RN had previously entertained the possibility of promoting the candidacy of a ‘consensus’ conservative candidate other than Pinochet. In the eyes of public opinion and, most importantly among conservative Pinochet supporters, the UDI had positioned itself as the dictatorship-loyalist party.<sup>6</sup>

With the return of electoral politics in 1988, the UDI rallied behind General Augusto Pinochet in the national plebiscite (October 5, 1988) and worked diligently to improve the electoral chances of the dictator who ruled the country with an iron fist since overthrowing the socialist government of Salvador Allende in 1973. After supporting General Pinochet losing bid in the 1988 plebiscite, the UDI opposed the efforts championed by the triumphant democratic opposition to reform the Pinochet custom-made 1980 Constitution. Despite having lost by a 56-44% margin in the 1988 plebiscite, Pinochet vowed to oppose any reforms to the transitional calendar established in the constitution. As established in the Constitution, the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 1989 restored democratic government. A coalition of centrist and leftist parties, most notably the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), Socialist Party (PS) and Party for Democracy (PPD), known as *Concertación* won the presidential election and achieved majority control of the Chamber of Deputies and among the elected members of the Senate. With the support of appointed senators, the conservative opposition - comprised of the UDI and National Renovation (RN)— gained control of the Senate and, because of appointments made by the outgoing dictatorship, it retained control of most municipal governments.

Between 1988 and 2001, the *Concertación* won all presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections. Yet, because of appointed senators and a number of deadlock provisions left in the 1980 Constitution by the Pinochet dictatorship, the conservative coalition (*Alianza por Chile*)<sup>7</sup> has successfully exerted more power over the political system than what its dismal electoral performance would have given it until 1997. In 1999, the *Alianza* came barely short of defeating the *Concertación* presidential candidate. Barely 9 years after the Pinochet dictatorship ended, the UDI had positioned itself as a credible political alternative to the *Concertación* government in Chile.

## 1) Electoral Trajectory

After Pinochet lost the plebiscite, the road to open and competitive elections was smoothed out during the rest of 1988 and most of 1989. Several constitutional reforms

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<sup>6</sup> For a detailed history of the conflicts between UDI and RN see Durruty, 1999 and the analytical and semi-autobiographical book by Allamand, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Opposition Alliance comprised by the two conservative parties, *Unión Demócrata Independiente* (UDI) and *Renovación Nacional* (RN). RN is a party comprised of conservative, nationalist and liberal factions whose leading figures also actively participated in the military dictatorship.

were approved to make the 1980 Constitution more democratic and civilian authorities less subject to military control. The military also devised electoral rules to regulate how the Senate (with 38 elected and 9 appointed members) and the 120-member Chamber of Deputies would be elected. Because the dictatorship strongly opposed the adoption of more permissive proportional representation rules, the electoral designers cleverly moved to adopt a proportional representation system that would dramatically reduce its proportionality provisions. Thus, an across-the-board 2-seat proportional representation district arrangement was adopted for both Chambers. The Chamber of Deputies was comprised of 60 2-seat districts—drawn in such a way as to over represent areas where Pinochet had done well in the 1988 plebiscite—and the Senate was comprised of 19 2-seat senatorial districts, assigned by the d'Hondt electoral allocation formula.<sup>8</sup> The system (dubbed by Chilean experts as binomial) makes it very difficult for any party to clinch both seats in any district. To secure one seat, a party needs to muster 33 1/3% + 1 of the vote. To secure both seats, a party needed to get twice as many votes as the runner-up. The system was designed to over represent the forces loyal to Pinochet after the plebiscite results made it clear that the opposition commanded majority electoral support, but it also has an incentive structure that diverts parties from the median voter, because one can “buy” 50% of the seats in every district with 1/3 of the votes.

In addition, rather than competing separately, parties had incentives to form electoral alliances and maximize their chances of passing the 1/3 of the vote threshold that would guarantee them one of the two seats in every district. When the *Concertación* worked out an electoral coalition, the parties loyal to Pinochet were forced to put their differences aside and joined into an electoral coalition as well. The electoral alliance, called *Democracy and Progress*, changed names after 1989, calling itself Participation and Progress in 1992, Union for Chile's Progress in 1993, Union for Chile 1996-97 and Alliance for Chile (*Alianza por Chile*) in 1999, 2000 and 2001, but we refer to it as “*Alianza*” from here on. Although some smaller parties and groups entered and left the *Alianza* during the period, RN and UDI have remained as the two leading partners of that electoral coalition.

Having won three consecutive presidential, 4 parliamentary and 3 municipal elections, the *Concertación* is the most successful electoral coalition in the country's modern history. The conservative opposition, on the other hand, experienced difficulties as it tried to overcome Pinochet's 1988 electoral defeat. The *Alianza* first had a chance to contest the *Concertación*'s hegemonic power after 1997. That year, the *Concertación* barely obtained over 50% of the vote, signaling a loss of electoral strength. Although the *Alianza* only obtained a 36.3% support—well short of Pinochet's strong 44% in 1988—the weakness of the *Concertación* seemed to have woken up the conservative coalition.

Because the *Concertación* chose socialist Ricardo Lagos as its candidate for the 1999 presidential election —signaling an ideological shift towards the left, as Lagos was preceded by PDC's Patricio Aylwin (1990-94) and Eduardo Frei (1994-2000)—, the

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the Chilean electoral system and its counter majoritarian incentives, see Magar, Rosenblum and Samuels, 1998; Rahat and Sznajder, 1998; Siavelis, 1997 and 2000; Siavelis and Valenzuela, 1997.

*Alianza* sought the opportunity to cater its message to moderate voters. In addition, because the *Concertación* barely clinched a majority in 1997, the *Alianza* correctly perceived that they could successfully challenge the *Concertación*'s electoral hegemony. In the first round 1999 presidential election, the *Alianza* candidate, UDI's Joaquín Lavín, obtained an impressive 47.5% of the vote, surpassing the Pinochet's 1988 record of 44%. Although the *Concertación* candidate went on to win the run-off election by a 52-48% margin, the 1999 elections brought to word 'contested' to the forefront of Chilean politics for the first time since the 1988 plebiscite. In the two elections held after 1999, the *Alianza* coalition has done fairly well. Although it lost by 12% to the *Concertación* in the 2000 municipal elections, it was the narrowest margin since 1992 for municipal contests. In the 2001 parliamentary election, the *Alianza* obtained 44.3% of the vote, 3.6% less than what the *Concertación* obtained.

**Table 1. 1988-2001 Electoral Results in Chile, selected parties and coalitions**

Election	UDI		Alianza		Concertación		Valid Votes
	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	
1988-Pleb	0	0	3,114,923	44.0	3,963,088	56.0	7,078,011
1989-Dep	667,369	9.8	2,323,581	34.2	3,499,713	51.5	6,797,122
1992-Mun	652,954	10.2	1,901,815	29.7	3,417,154	53.3	6,410,906
1993-Dep	816,104	12.1	2,471,789	36.7	3,733,276	55.4	6,738,859
1996-Mun	211,840	3.4	2,046,001	32.5	3,536,842	56.1	6,301,298
1997-Dep	837,736	14.5	2,101,392	36.3	2,927,692	50.5	5,795,773
2000-Mun	1,040,349	16.0	2,612,307	40.1	3,396,274	52.1	6,515,574
2001-Dep	1,538,835	25.2	2,703,701	44.3	2,925,800	47.9	6,107,140
<b>Presidential Elections</b>							
1989	2,052,116	29.4	2,052,116	29.4	3,850,571	55.2	6,979,859
1993	1,701,324	24.4	2,132,274	30.6	4,040,497	58.0	6,968,950
1999	3,352,199	47.5	3,352,199	47.5	3,383,339	48.0	7,055,128

Source: <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>, Pleb=plebiscite, Dep=Chamber of Deputies, Mun=Municipal elections.

The electoral success of the *Alianza* can be directly linked to the electoral fortune of the UDI. While the UDI only clinched 9.8% of the vote in 1989, by the 1997 parliamentary elections it climbed to 14.5% and by 2001 it became the largest national party with 25.2% of the valid votes. Running in districts where it could find competitive candidates, recruiting among local leaders and forging alliances designed to limit the influence of RN rather than to increase its own, the UDI can be characterized as an obstructionist party until 1996. The UDI was a party interested in protecting the legacy of the Pinochet dictatorship rather in joining the *Concertación*, and occasionally RN, in democratizing the Constitution and the political system.

Rejecting the notion of political party militancy as a useful tool to facilitate governability and to foster accountability, most UDI candidates for mayoral posts in the 1996 municipal election renounced their party militancy and ran as independent candidates within the *Alianza* coalition. For that reason, the UDI fell from 10.2% of the vote in the 1992 municipal elections to a mere 3.4% in 1996. Notably, one of the UDI best-known mayors seeking re-election chose not to abandon the party and ran as a UDI

candidate in the 1996 municipal election in the wealthy municipality of Las Condes, in the larger Santiago metropolitan region. Joaquín Lavín obtained an impressive 77.6% of the municipal vote to easily win re-election. Lavín's 86 thousand votes accounted for 40% of all UDI official votes that year. His electoral victory and his loyalty to the party allowed him to easily become the party's presidential hopeful in 1999.

Since 1989, the UDI has always managed to impose its presidential candidate on RN, the larger coalition partner. In 1989, Hernán Büchi, a former Finance Minister of Pinochet, became the conservative coalition presidential candidate. The UDI successfully imposed him upon RN when that party failed to present credible alternatives. In 1993, RN had strongly campaigned to have one of his own as the *Alianza's* (then *Unión por Chile*) presidential candidate. In a U.S.-style convention, the UDI candidate surprisingly withdrew his candidacy and threw his party support behind an independent conservative candidate. Portrayed as a consensus candidate, Arturo Alessandri easily clinched the coalition nomination, shattering RN's hopes. He went on to suffer a humiliating defeat (58 to 24%) to *Concertación's* Eduardo Frei (PDC). In 1999, RN again sought to position one of his own as the *Alianza's* presidential candidate, but Lavín had successfully secured that role as his standing in pre-electoral polls was much higher than that of any other conservative leader and his well-financed campaign began in earnest well over a year before the election.

Lavín's success in 1996 had much to do with his ability to secure the position of *Alianza* presidential candidate, but the 1997 parliamentary election results also helped. The UDI went from 12.1% of the vote in 1993 to 14.5 in 1997, but its share of seats improved. While in 1993, the *Alianza* distribution of seats was 29-15-6 (RN, UDI, other conservatives), for a total of 50 seats in the 120-seat Chamber of Deputies, in 1997 that distribution changed to 23-17-7. In the Senate, the 1993 distribution was 5-2-2 for a total of 9 seats won by the *Alianza* that year. But in 1997, the distribution was 2-3-4, again for a total of 9 seats. Altogether, the UDI had 5 senators, plus the loyalty of 4 independent conservative senators and at least 4 of the 9 appointed senators. The overall distribution of seats in the Senate after 1997, counting both elected and appointed senators, was 24-22 in favor of the *Alianza* (20-18 in favor of the *Concertación* among elected senators). But the UDI commanded the support of 14 of the 24 conservative senators, overpowering RN that commanded only the support of 10 senators. Despite having lower levels of electoral support than RN, UDI still had more political clout than their coalition partners.

The retirement of General Pinochet from the Army in March of 1998 and his entry into the Senate as a lifetime member might have turned out to complicate the UDI's process of image renewal. But Pinochet's arrest in London in October of 1998 eventually turned out to help the UDI. Although the UDI, as most conservative groups, expressed outrage at Pinochet's arrest and demanded a decisive action on the part of the *Concertación* government to see that Pinochet be released and returned to Chile, the arrest of the aging dictator might have been a blessing in disguise for the party that took pride in identifying with the Pinochet legacy. UDI presidential candidate Lavín surprised many when he declared that he thought Pinochet should be tried in Chile for human rights abuses committed during his 17-year dictatorship. Because our concern is not with

human rights or with the fascinating process of truth, justice and memory triggered by Pinochet's arrest, we will simply state that with the arrest the UDI successfully presented itself as defending Pinochet's legacy rather than Pinochet himself. That distinction allowed Lavín to call for Pinochet's trial in Chile while at the same time he argued against significant changes to the constitutional framework left in place by Pinochet. Although Lavín did attempt to court the moderate and centrist votes with proposals long advocated by the *Concertación* and opposed by his party, the UDI's success emanates from Lavín's strategy to separate Pinochet's fate from the institutional structure devised by the dictatorship that sought to establish a model of protected democracy in the country.

It is not our objective here to explain political developments in Chile, but to outline what lies behind the recent electoral success of the UDI. Drawing on the multiple explanations advanced and discussed in Chile, we have constructed two general hypotheses that will help us test the explanations for the UDI's success. First, some have claimed that the UDI is simply becoming the hegemonic party within the right. By taking over the electoral support previously enjoyed by conservative independents and RN, the UDI has consolidated as the hegemonic party within the right. Thus, according to this hypothesis, the UDI has simply captured the conservative vote. While Pinochet obtained 44% of the vote in the 1988 plebiscite (out of 7.078 million voters), in the most recent Chamber of Deputies election in December of 2001, the conservative parties obtained 44.3% of the vote, with more than 6.1 million voters. Even the superb electoral performance of Joaquín Lavín in 1999 barely surpassed the vote obtained by Pinochet in 1988. With 3.35 million votes (out of 7.055 million voters), Lavín obtained 47.5% in the first round, marginally improving what Pinochet's obtained in 1988, but still losing to the *Concertación's* presidential candidate in the run-off election by a 52-48% margin. According to this view, the growth of the UDI has really come at the expense of RN and other conservative candidates, but the neo-right party has failed to gain enough support beyond the traditional conservative vote.

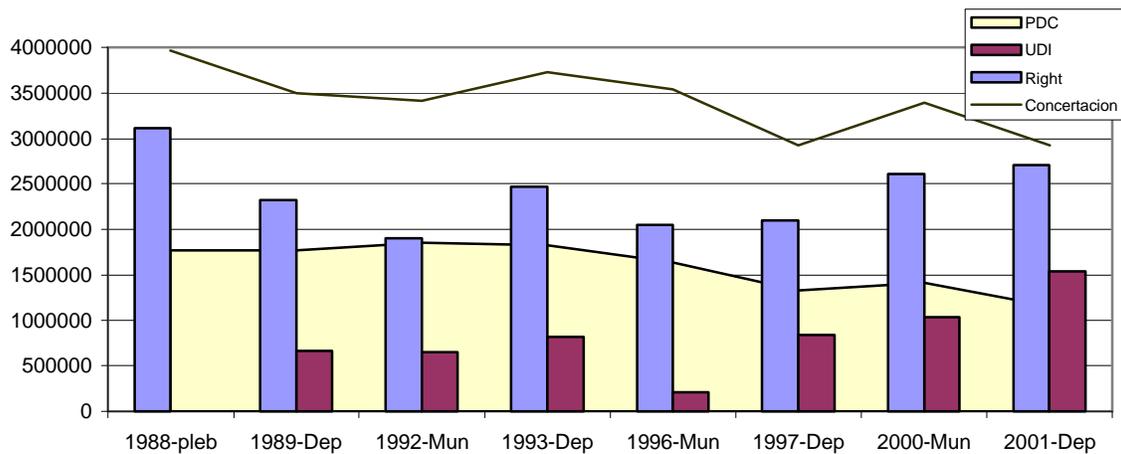
The other hypothesis links the fall in the support for the *Concertación* to the electoral growth of the UDI. While the *Concertación* safely obtained a majority of votes in all elections before 1996, the government alliance has wavered around 50% of the vote since 1997. The fall in the electoral support for the *Concertación*, and most specifically the fall in the support for the centrist PDC would explain the UDI's electoral prosperity. Thus, the absence of a PDC presidential candidate in 1999—when the socialist Ricardo Lagos defeated PDC Andrés Zaldívar in the *Concertación* primaries to become the coalition's presidential candidate—tilted the decision of many centrist voters who chose to vote for the UDI candidate. And once those centrist voters cast their votes for the UDI candidate in 1999, they continued voting for that party in the 2000 municipal elections and the 2001 parliamentary contest.

In theory, both hypotheses need not be mutually exclusive. It might well be that on the one hand the UDI can successfully position itself as the largest conservative parties and attract the support of conservative voters who previously cast votes for RN or independent conservative candidates. On the other, the UDI might have also made gains

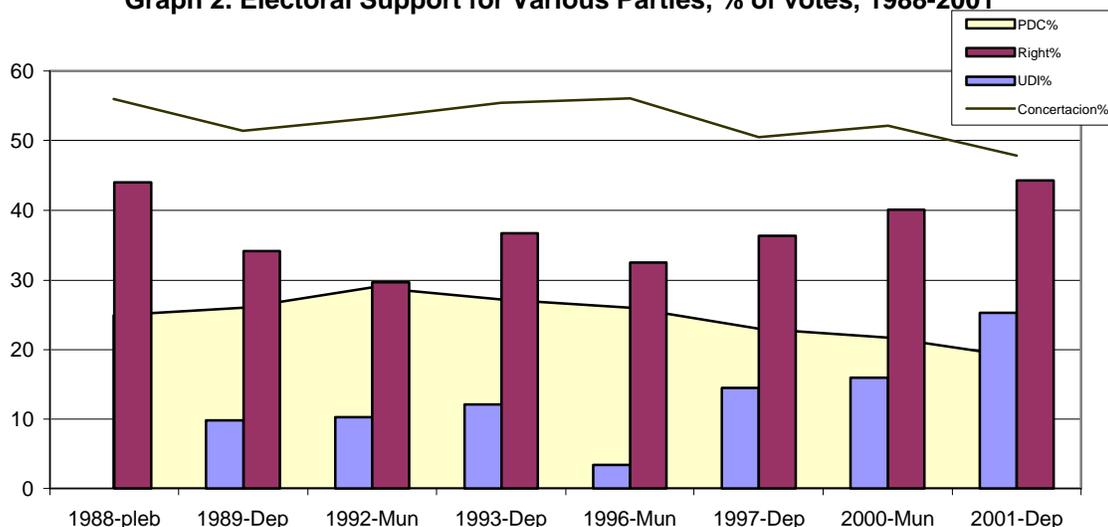
among voters that previously cast votes for the *Concertación*, especially for the PDC. We claim that in fact both things are happening concurrently after 1996 and especially starting with the 1999 presidential election. We underline how the UDI came to gain majority control of the electoral support of conservative voters and how it made inroads among centrist *Concertación* voters. We highlight how the UDI has increased its support primarily among women, restoring a pattern observed before 1973 when women voted overwhelmingly for conservative, particularly PDC, candidates. By targeting women voters, the UDI has lived up to its stated objective of replacing the PDC as the most important centrist and Catholic party in Chilean politics.

Graphs 1 and 2 show some evidence that is consistent with the two hypotheses. The UDI has clearly advanced over the years as it has gone from capturing about one third of the *Alianza*'s vote in 1989 to capturing more than half of the total conservative vote in the most recent parliamentary election. Yet, the total conservative vote is lower in percentage and smaller in number in 2001 than in the 1988 plebiscite. With the exception of the 1999 presidential election (not shown here), the conservative parties have not successfully obtained more votes than Pinochet did in 1988. True, the decline observed in the first years after 1988 has been reversed and the conservative parties are now giving the *Concertación* a run for the money. The growth of the UDI comes, to a large extent, at the expense of RN and independent conservative candidates. Overall, the *Alianza* has grown little compared to its 1988 peak—it has grown significantly compared to its 1992 low—but the UDI has successfully captured the bulk of the conservative vote.

**Graph 1. Electoral Support for Various Parties, Valid Votes, 1988-2001**



**Graph 2. Electoral Support for Various Parties, % of votes, 1988-2001**



The growth of the conservative vote, and particularly that of the UDI, has occurred concurrently with a definite decline of the *Concertación*. The decline has been particularly stiff for the PDC. Having reached its peak in 1992, the PDC has seen its share of the vote decline in every parliamentary and municipal election since. Because PDC votes have fallen at a faster rate than overall *Concertación* vote, most analysts have correctly concluded that a number of former PDC sympathizers are now voting for other *Concertación* parties. But because the overall *Concertación* vote has fallen, and the vote for the left has not grown, most analysts suggest that the PDC has lost votes to the *Alianza* as well.

Because overall electoral participation has declined —more people cast valid votes in the 1988 plebiscite than in any election ever since, despite a 20% increase in the number of eligible voters in the 1988-2001 period— the absolute number of votes going to the *Concertación* and *Alianza* have also declined overtime. While almost 4 million people voted against Pinochet in 1988 (and 3.1 million voted “Yes” in the plebiscite), only 2.9 and 2.7 million voted for the *Concertación* and the *Alianza* in 2001 respectively. Several analysts have argued that the *Alianza*, and particularly the UDI, have made little real inroads in winning over *Concertación* (and specifically PDC) support. If anything, they argue, the *Alianza* voters have abstained at lower rates than the rest of the population and that is what explains the *Alianza*’s renewed electoral strength.

Table 2 shows the behavior of women voters. Because men and women vote at different precincts in Chile and votes are tallied separately, gender-specific results are ready available. While the UDI went from 9.8 to 25.2% in its national share of the vote between 1989 and 2001, Lavín’s party has done much better among women voters. With 10.8% of the women’s vote in 1989 and 26.6% in 2001, the UDI has always obtained a higher percentage of votes among women than among men. Overall, women regularly cast about 56% of UDI votes. Because there are more women voters than men, about 53% of all votes are women’s. Yet, the UDI is the only party that has consistently

obtained higher levels of support among women than among men. That trend of larger conservative support among women than men was also present in Chile before 1973. Salvador Allende obtained 36.1% of the vote in the 1970 presidential election, edging out conservative Jorge Alessandri by a 1.1% margin. However, Allende widely defeated Alessandri by a 41.5-31.7 margin among men voters and lost decisively by 38.6-30.5 among women voters. Conservative and PDC candidates always received more support among women while leftist candidates did better among men.

In the 1988 plebiscite, Pinochet lost with 44% of the vote, but he lost much more narrowly among women (49.7% to 50.3%) than among men (52.5% to 47.5%). In the 1989 presidential election, the gender gap decreased as Patricio Aylwin, of the *Concertación*, captured 51.6% of the women’s vote and 55.2% of the total vote. In 1993, the gender gap almost vanished, with *Concertación*’s Eduardo Frei capturing 58% of the overall vote and 57.5% of women’s. Yet, when in 1999 the *Concertación*’s candidate was no longer a PDC but a Socialist, the gender gap reemerged. Alianza’s Lavín narrowly lost the 1999 presidential election, but forced a run-off election. Yet, he obtained 50.6% of the women’s vote in the first round, safely defeating *Concertación*’s Ricardo Lagos, who got only 45.4% of the women’s vote. In the runoff, Lavín once again edged Lagos among women, but lost so decisively among men that Lagos went on to win the presidency. The gender gap appeared again in the 2001 parliamentary election, when the *Concertación* obtained 49.1% among men and 46.9% among women. The *Alianza* got 41.9% and 46.4% respectively. Although the gap was lower than in 1999, it was sufficiently large to have altered the distribution of seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

**Table 2. Women Votes and the Growth of the UDI and the Alianza**

Election	UDI Women Votes	%	Alianza Women Votes	%	% UDI Votes cast by women	% Alianza Votes Cast by women	% Total Votes Cast by women
1989 Dep	383,964	10.8	1,312,233	37.0	57.5	56.5	52.1
1992 Mun	364,478	10.9	1,047,917	10.2	55.8	55.1	52.3
1993 Dep	458,351	12.9	1,357,075	38.3	56.1	54.9	52.5
1996 Mun	112,030	4.3	872,766	33.4	52.9	55.3	53.2
1997 Dep	479,369	15.5	1,118,553	38.1	57.2	56.3	53.5
2000 Mun	583,368	16.8	1,439,422	41.6	56.1	55.1	53.3
2001 Dep	872,154	26.6	1,517,409	46.4	56.7	56.1	53.6
1989 Pres			1,181,565	32.5		57.6	52.0
1993 Pres			949,407	26.0		55.9	52.4
1999 Pres			1,883,621	50.6		56.2	52.8

Source: <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>

Although the UDI has experienced electoral growth since 1990, and although there is some evidence to suggest that the UDI is making gains among segments of the population that previously voted for the PDC (as in the case of women), we have not discussed the underlying reasons that can account for this electoral phenomenon. The following section takes on that task by analyzing the UDI parliamentary delegation and candidates. That analysis sheds light on some properties and political attributes of its members. Let’s recall that it is ultimately the appeal of individual candidates—however close they might be associated with a given political party and in some cases precisely

because they are associated with it—what explains electoral support. In understanding what makes the UDI parliamentary delegation different from those of other parties, we seek to identify potential explanatory causes for the UDI's recent electoral success.

## 2) Sociology of the UDI Parliamentary Delegation

Between 1990, the formal moment of the beginning of Chile's transition to democracy—in what Bourdieu (1982) called a rite of institution that in Chile is identified as the passing of the presidential sash from August Pinochet to democratically elected Patricio Aylwin—a profound transformation of Chile's party system took place. Concurrently, despite being a relatively new party<sup>9</sup>, the UDI has successfully built an objectified capital that goes beyond its immediate material (party local offices) and symbolic (flags, traditions) expressions. Although a good number of UDI legislators entered the party with baggage acquired outside the organization (profitable professions, names linked to traditional and prestigious families, extended social networks built by family relations and by homogenous educational and religious background),<sup>10</sup> the growing party political capital, what leads the party to influence its members but not the other way around, undermines and subordinates the individual assets of its members whose value and sense of belonging depend ultimately on a organization that distributes and gives value to them. That is, perhaps, a specific characteristic of the UDI, the convergence on the same party organization of extraordinarily homogeneous individual resources and assets that, rather than making the UDI evolve into a party of factions influenced by the individual traits members bring in, have made the UDI a disciplined and orderly political force that has achieved electoral success. UDI legislators can present a caricaturized image of “just one man,” because of a common political and cultural identity that antecedes the organization itself: a predominance of Catholic schooling among its legislators, attendance to catholic universities, a strong generational homogeneity and similar political experiences, limited professional pluralism, similar tools and training, and strong experience as local government officials appointees during the dictatorship, particularly as mayors.

Together with analyzing the party's electoral evolution, one would need to study carefully the social properties and characteristics of its leadership that has been overwhelmingly comprised of senators and deputies.<sup>11</sup> A certain ‘common sense’

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<sup>9</sup> There is also a debate over the origin of the UDI. Soto (2001) correctly notes that in 1987 the trademark UDI already had value (for an interesting analysis of the difficulties and challenges involved in working with political parties genealogies see Offerlé, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> Sawicki suggests that “social properties” of certain social or political groups can only be understood in light of “relationships established between social groups and political formation” in the context of “sites of particular interactions.” The notion of “*political milieu*” also plays a role in the case of UDI deputies, since the “*political milieu*” is comprised of the “set of consolidated relations between groups whose members do not have as their final objective to participate in the construction of a political parties, even if they contribute to doing precisely that through their activities and actions” (Sawicki, 1997, p.23-24).

<sup>11</sup> Throughout the years, the UDI leadership (comprised of a president, 5 vice presidents, a general secretary and, since 1994, a pro-secretary) the percentage of those holding leadership positions and legislative office has gone from a low of 57% (1989-1994) to a high of 75% (1994-1998). Because of the incorporation of elected municipal mayors to the UDI leadership, that figure has fallen since 1998.

explanation for the UDI's electoral success lies in what its leadership is comprised of socially. Although the UDI clearly benefits from the hard local work carried out since the 1980s by its leaderships—whose objective was to induce a “vertical cut” in society aimed at ending with the “old understanding that identified the wealthy with the right and the poor with the left”<sup>12</sup>—, it is impossible not to identify a *vicious-virtuous* circle comprised of non-democratic (vicious) resources and social (virtuous) properties that makes the UDI legislative delegation an exceptionally homogeneous group. Insofar as non-democratic tools is concerned, we must correctly measure the return of the political resources available to UDI leaders at the beginning of the transition period: intensive use of territorial positions occupied during the dictatorship —appointed mayors, governors and deputy regional ministers<sup>13</sup>—, use of mal apportioned electoral districts and effective use of the binomial electoral system that has allowed conservatives to win 50% of the seats with just 1/3 of the votes in every district. Yet, it is also important to explain, in the early stages of the UDI objectification like a party-in-form, the social characteristics of its leadership, which is the equivalent of seeking to reconstruct the social-political relations through an analytical approach that puts the “success” in perspective utilizing a basic mirror, that which reproduces a social reflection of its members.

By compiling biographical data on the 42 UDI deputies elected between 1989 and 2001 (4 four-year parliamentary periods). With data from the National Congress Library, UDI data and from reports from Chilean newspapers (*El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*), we constructed a biographical datasheet for each UDI deputy. We also conducted a similar study for deputies from the other 5 largest parties for the 1989-1997 period. Thus, our sample is comprised of 42 UDI deputies, 50 RN deputies, 71 PDC deputies, 27 PPD deputies, 21 PS deputies and 8 PRSD deputies.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Cement of the Party: Catholic Socialization in Schools and Universities**

Without being a confessional party, there is a strong predominance of a Catholic educational background in primary, secondary and university education among UDI legislators. 73.1% of UDI deputies attended Catholic schools, and 2 Catholic institutions account for one third of all educational institutions attended. UDI deputies attended Catholic schools more so than the deputies from the conservative RN and the (sometimes confessional) PDC. Although part of the reason might be that many PDC deputies come from lower and middle class families—and therefore could not afford private Catholic education—the marked homogeneity in the Catholic schooling of UDI deputies is no accident. Wealthy families are more likely to send their children to private schools, but that does not imply catholic schools.

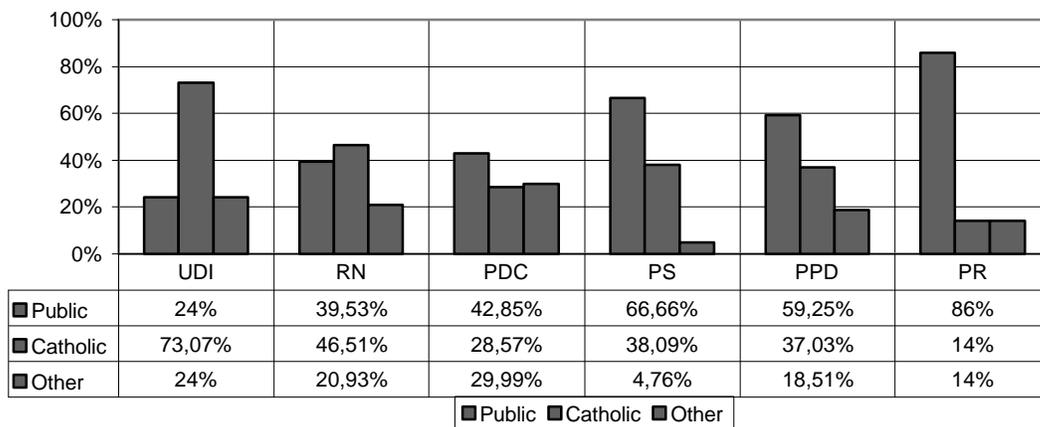
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<sup>12</sup> Alfredo Gadames interview, conducted by Emmanuel Falcon, for the political seminar taught by Alfredo Joignant in the International Studies Institute of the University of Chile in 2001.

<sup>13</sup> In 1989, 71.4% of UDI deputies had been appointed mayors during the dictatorship. In 1993, the number went down to 70.6%. By 2001, the number stood at 33%, although one of the 16 newly elected deputies had been an appointed mayor during the dictatorship. This same aspect can be found in an intuitive form in the work by Morales y Bugeño (2001, p.228 and 235).

<sup>14</sup> Independents elected on a party list are categorized as belonging to that party. Deputies from smaller parties and independents are not included.

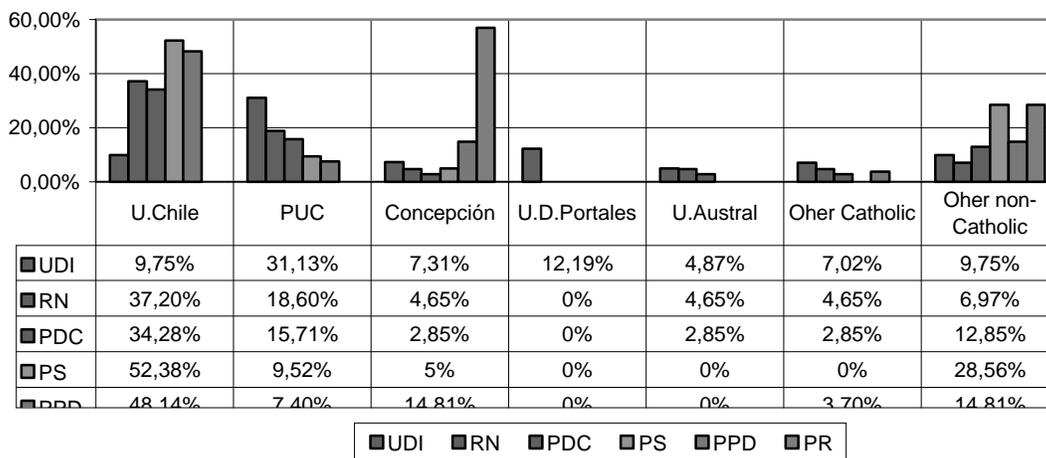
**Graph 3: Religious School Affiliation by Political Party Delegation, Chamber of Deputies, 1990-2002**



The sum for each party adds to more than 100% because deputies that attended catholic and non-catholic schools are counted twice. 'Other' includes foreign and private non-confessional schools.

Taking into account the historical importance of universities as avenues of political socialization, one cannot but establish a connection between attending Catholic schools (Graph 3) and universities (Graph 4), especially with the Pontifical Catholic University (PUC). 31% of all UDI deputies attended PUC, and an additional 7% attended other Catholic universities. In addition, there are important historic and political elements here. As discussed, the UDI origins can be intellectually traced back to the *gremialismo* movement in the 1960s.

**Graph 4: University Affiliation by Political Party Parliamentary Delegation, Chamber of Deputies, 1990-2002**



There seems to be an important cohesive function of the UDI religious values, which, paraphrasing Elster (1989), works as “cement” of that organization to the point of becoming a *weltanschauung* that even incorporates elements of Karl Schmitt’s thought (Cristi, 2000). That moral and value cement, which allows UDI members to recognize each other as equal or at least as equivalent (as in the Weberian concern for ‘elective affinities’), explains the need to contrast the cultural homogeneity of that party with the more heterogeneity observed in other parties, particularly the PDC. That is what we attempt with the index of cultural homogeneity of the UDI parliamentary delegation. The contrast with RN<sup>15</sup> and PDC is striking.

**Table 3: Cultural Homogeneity Index, UDI, RN y PDC Deputies, 1990-2002**

		# Attributes			
Parliamentary Period	Political Party	0 %	1 %	2 %	3 %
1990-94	UDI	7.1	42.9	42.9	7.1
	RN	23.3	53.3	20	3.3
	PDC	7.9	57.9	23.7	10.5
1994-98	UDI	17.6	41.2	35.3	11.8
	RN	22.2	47.2	27.8	2.8
	PDC	11.3	54.7	24.5	9.4
1998-2002	UDI	19.2	34.6	34.6	11.5
	RN	21.4	45.2	28.6	2.4
	PDC	12.7	53.5	22.5	9.9

This index includes three attributes: 1) attending Catholic elementary or secondary schools, 2) attending Catholic universities, and 3) having served as president or vice president at the national, regional or local level of the party *before* being elected Deputy. In 1990, half of the UDI deputies score 2 or higher—they possess two attributes—more than twice as many as RN deputies and almost twice as many as PDC deputies. By 1998, only 34% of UDI deputies scored at least 2 or higher, slightly more than RN (28.6%) and PDC (22.5%). There is a considerable homogeneity over time. If we restrict the index only to the Catholic schooling and university (Table 4), only 7.1% of UDI deputies did not go through the Catholic school system in 1990. Because a high proportion (one third) of those who attended Catholic schools went primarily to two different educational institutions, the homogeneity is even more striking.

<sup>15</sup> There seem to be two different cultural universes for the RN and UDI delegation. Although the data is inconclusive, there is a more marked nationalist and traditional associative trends among RN deputies. 20.9% of RN legislators have occupied leadership positions in country clubs, cowboys and traditional rodeo clubs, while only 7.3% of UDI legislators have done the same.

**Table 4: Religious Socialization Index of UDI and PDC Deputies**

Years	Political Party	# Attributes		
		0 %	1 %	2 %
1990-1994	UDI	7,14	57,14	35,71
	PDC	63,15	26,31	10,52
1994-1998	UDI	11,76	52,94	35,29
	PDC	60,37	28,30	11,32
1998-2002	UDI	15,38	50	34,61
	PDC	60,56	25,35	12,67

Attributes: 1) graduation from Catholic secondary or elementary schools, 2) catholic universities, for those occupying party leadership positions.

This type of cultural integration explains a good deal of what many analysts have referred to as the UDI parliamentary ‘discipline.’ It is really a moral-based community. Yet, the importance of a common schooling and university background does not explain everything. There is an important generational component as well.

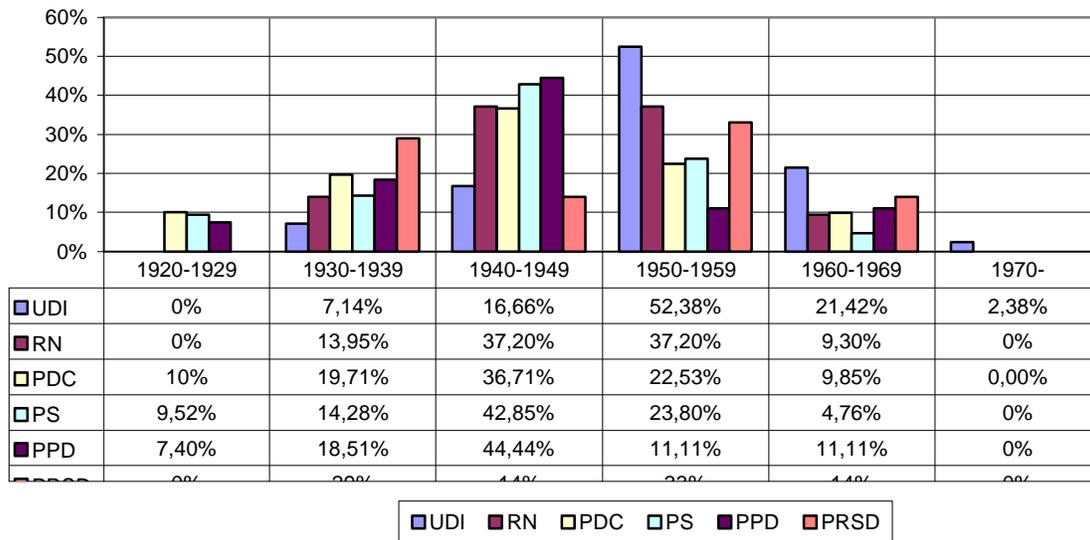
### **From Moral to Political Community: Electoral Competency of UDI Deputies**

It is possible to identify two UDI generations of Deputies. Although classifying political actors by age just by virtue of a biological association might be misleading — especially if we refer to certain “time period effects”<sup>16</sup>—, it is pertinent to utilize it here because there are certain common political experiences that render that distinction relevant. 52% of all UDI deputies were born between 1950 and 1959. That generation experienced the historic transition, in the context of university student movements, from a polarized democracy where the PDC and the left led the movement to a political authoritarian order that eventually became institutionalized during the dictatorship. The parliamentary delegations of the other parties are on average ten years older, which means that their first political experiences correspond to a historic order whose biographical impact came before that of the UDI deputies.

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<sup>16</sup> For a study that delineates the frontiers between fluctuating categories, see Percheron (1985) and Delli Carpini (1989), and for an analysis that relates generational logics with the socialization ‘surroundings,’ ‘contexts’ and ‘networks,’ see Joignant (1997, 541 and forward).

**Graph 5: Birth Years by Political Party Parliamentary Delegation, Chamber of Deputies, 1990-2002**



The second generation of UDI deputies is marked less by its youth than by a community of political experiences characterized by the struggles around the transition to democracy of the late 1980s and the ‘pragmatic’ preservation of—an ever-distant direct association with—the authoritarian legacy. In that sense, 21% of UDI deputies born in the 1960s entered politics in the context of a declining military dictatorship or with the UDI already in the opposition. Both generations represent 2/3 of the UDI deputies, significantly higher than the other parties and distinct enough to feed the public discourse of rejection of ‘old style politics’ and promotion of ‘modern’ approaches. This political community funded upon homologous biographical experiences does not prevent the emergence of different ways of entering professional politics (Table 5). Even though there is overwhelming evidence of utilization of public sector positions and appointed political posts to gain electoral advantages by the first generation UDI deputies elected in 1989, that trend falls progressively as time went by and as independents and younger candidates found their way to the party lists with credible chances of winning office (11% in 1993, 23% in 1997 and 33% in 2001). That would seem to indicate the existence of a different set of socializing experiences.

**Table 5. Index of Institutional Resources Available for Electoral Use for UDI Deputies and Senators, 1990-2002**

Years	Type of Office	# Attributes		
		0 %	1 %	2 %
1990-1994	Deputies	-	64.3	35.7
	Senators	-	50	50
1994-1998	Deputies	11.8	64.7	29.4
	Senators	20	60	20
1998-2002	Deputies	23.2	61.5	19.2
	Senators	50	40	10
2002-2006	Deputies	33.3	57.1	11.9
	Senators	46.2	38.5	15.4

Attributes: 1) Positions in business (*gremiales*) and trade organizations, and 2) appointed mayors by the dictatorship.

The evidence should not obscure the dynamics that antecede an electoral contest. In fact, if we take as constitutive elements of an electoral competence those variables that help one build a political machine and amass a sufficiently large electoral war chest of money, resources and connections, the tools at hand for UDI deputies and senators are also striking (Table 6).

**Table 6: UDI Electoral Competency Index by Business and Trade Associations, and Government Post Before Being Elected Deputies or Senators**

Type of Office & Years	# Attributes			
	0 %	1 %	2 %	3 %
Deputies 1990-1994	-	35.7	64.3	-
Senators 1990-1998	-	-	100	-
Deputies 1994-1998	5.9	47.1	52.9	-
Senators 1994-2002	-	40	60	-
Deputies 1998-2002	11.5	46.2	42.3	-
Senators 1998-2006	20	40	40	-
Deputies 2002-2006	21.4	40.5	38.1	-
Senators 2002-2010	23.1	30.8	38.5	7.7

Attributes: business and trade associations, party leadership positions and government appointed posts (mayors, governors and regional governors)

Table 7 includes all territorial positions and party leadership positions held by an individual, assuming that access to those positions is evidence of constitutive knowledge of an acquired electoral competency in three institutional areas that make them better prepared to face an election. UDI deputies have a type of pre-electoral competency that amply transcends the mere experience of being an appointed mayor, since at least two thirds of them had experienced two or more attributes. Certainly, as time progressed and the importance of independent deputies that lacked these attributes grows—although it is still small—the trend of candidates with access to resources and constitutive pre-electoral experiences (which are naturally updated at the time of running in an election) remains. The importance of this pre-electoral competency is confirmed even if we eliminate the attribute of occupying territorial positions during the dictatorship with the objective of

singling out the properties of the agents that win a Chamber of Deputies seat in 2001, that is, only among those who could only benefit from leadership experiences in business and trade associations and in the political party. Those attributes are present in more than half of the deputies.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 7: Electoral Competency Index, Restricted to Trade & Business Organization and Party Positions Held by UDI Deputies and Senators Before Being Elected**

Type of Office & Years	# Attributes		
	0 %	1 %	2 %
Deputies 1990-1994	35.7	42.9	21.4
Senators 1990-1998	-	50.0	50.0
Deputies 1994-1998	47.1	41.2	17.6
Senators 1994-2002	20.0	40.0	40.0
Deputies 1998-2002	46.2	38.5	19.2
Senators 1998-2006	40.0	30.0	30.0
Deputies 2002-2006	42.9	33.3	23.8
Senators 2002-2010	38.5	30.8	30.8

The comparison with RN deputies is telling, because even though both groups tend on average to go towards equilibrium, UDI deputies present three times as many attributes that make up this pre-electoral competency index, regardless of the parliamentary period (Table 8).

**Table 8: Electoral Competency Index, Restricted to Trade & Business Organization and Party Positions Held by UDI and RN Deputies Before Being Elected**

Years	Political Party	Percentage of Attributes		
		0 %	1 %	2 %
1990-1994	UDI	35.7	42.9	21.4
	RN	40.0	53.3	6.7
1994-1998	UDI	47.1	41.2	17.6
	RN	41.7	52.8	5.6
1998-2002	UDI	46.2	38.5	19.2
	RN	35.7	59.5	4.8
2002-2006	UDI	42.9	33.3	23.8
	RN	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

In synthesis, UDI deputies have possessed a solid level of competency before they face an election. That does not contradict the well-established trend of incorporating a broad number of independent candidates to the party list. In that sense, the characteristic UDI attribute, in its public discourse as much as in its socialization tools for its leadership recruits, consistent with efficiently performing functions that articulate corporative

<sup>17</sup> 5 of them (31%), who were between 32 and 35 years of age at the time of election, had their first political experiences—or at least the most explicit ones—in a historical context of transition to democracy. These are agents that could not have held territorial functions during the dictatorship.

interests in student, professional or business interest areas, can also be understood as a mass identity and competence principle, capable of rivaling the traditions of social mobilization in the parties of the left (see Table 9).

**Table 9: Deputies That Held Leadership Positions in Trade, Business and Social Organizations (Includes Student Federations)**

Party	%
UDI	47.6
RN	27.9
PDC	45.1
PS	47.6
PPD	55.6
PRSD	57.0

The corollary of the competencies involved in the socialization experiences of the UDI parliamentary delegation gets expressed in the increasingly objectified form of the party whose existence is imposed upon its members. In that sense, an approximate indicator of the importance and objectification of the trademark and the organization may be derived from the growing number of deputies that, before being elected, occupied individual party positions in different territorial levels. As Table 10 shows, UDI deputies come last among parties in the ranking of individual party positions. Although we should not forget, however, that this is a party of ‘recent’ creation and that there are always risks in the task of compiling party genealogies.

**Table 10. Individual Leadership Position Occupancy Rates at the National, Regional, Provincial or Local Levels (includes youth political organizations)**

Party	%
UDI	31.7
RN	44.2
PDC	77.5
PS	80.9
PPD	48.1
PR	71.0

## Conclusion

The growth of the UDI can be partially attributed to its ability to attract the support of conservative voters and position itself in a dominating role within the *Alianza*. Yet, even in the midst of growing abstention levels in the electorate, the UDI has also been successful at reducing the number of dissatisfied voters and/or making inroads among voters who previously preferred centrist *Concertación* candidates. Particularly among women, the UDI has led the *Alianza* effort to capture the support of centrist women voters and make true its electoral objective of replacing the PDC as the leading centrist party in Chile. By catering primarily to centrist women voters, the UDI has successfully achieved a position where greater electoral prosperity seems to be written all over its future.

However, on the other hand, different lessons can be drawn from the social and political properties shared by the UDI parliamentary delegation. The warlike concepts referred to above reflect a clear behavior by many UDI leaders marked by a conviction whose border with intolerance is almost indistinguishable. That conviction, sometimes dubbed as ‘zealousness’ and even ‘fanaticism,’ is rooted in the historical conditions that gave birth to the party, those characterized by a military regime with a functioning logic that sought to deny the need for political parties. It is certainly paradoxical that an electoral successful political party emanates from such a regime, even when that initial linkage with that regime grows weaker and weaker. The UDI constitutes an interesting expression of an objectified trademark that brings together individuals privately endowed with capital and vital resources, both quantitatively and qualitatively, but that at the same time join without restrictions in the formation of an objectified capital valued by everyone. From that starting point, it is necessary to account for the electoral penetration logic that goes beyond the mere periodic tallying of votes. Without a doubt, the indelible print left by its founding leader and the historical conditions surrounding the birth of the party explains the UDI characteristics and electoral rooting (Panebianco 1990). That framework continues to play a role several years later in the organizational forms and its vertical logics of functioning that inhibit, if not fully annul, all possible expressions of dissident voices. The inhibition is not achieved within the party through the articulation of deliberate will, but through the tacit convergence of social properties and homologous experiences of its leaders. For that reason, it is possible to affirm that while the value and cultural cement of the party persists—that is, that set of social, moral and political principles whose function is to homogenize the organization—the UDI will continue to be the object of not well founded descriptions aimed at highlighting it—not without some contradiction—as a conservative vanguard party, or a particular type of a Leninist party, founded on a community of values, biographies and competencies rather than on a coherent project developed within a globally utopian framework.

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