

## Legislative Candidate Selection in Chile

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### I. Introduction

In this paper, I analyze the process of legislative candidate selection in Chile for the four elections held so far during the post-Pinochet period (1989-2001). I argue that most candidates conform to the *party loyalist* type. Although party elites do not fully control it, they exercise an effective veto power in the candidate selection process. A person who successfully builds support for her candidacy in a district must, at the same time, prevent a veto by the party elite to actually become a candidate representing that party. Negotiations between parties that belong to the same political coalition give party elites additional influence to block individual candidacies that have been pursued outside the realm of influence of the party elites. In the cases where internal pro-democracy reforms have resulted in closed or semi-open primaries to select the candidates, the party elites have retained power to overrule primary results. So far, no open primaries have been used to select legislative candidates, reflecting the strong influence that party elites exercise over candidate selection. However, the penetration of pre-electoral polls and surveys, and the fierce intra-coalition competition that exists have forced parties to pay more and more attention to the electability of potential candidates.

In what follows, I discuss how the center-left *Concertación* coalition—comprised of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), Socialist Party (PS), Party for Democracy (PPD) and Radical Social Democratic Party (PRSD)—and the conservative *Alianza* coalition—comprised of National Renewal (RN) and the Independent Democratic Union (UDI)—have nominated their candidates for legislative elections since 1989. After analyzing the legal variables that shape the electoral process for legislative elections and discussing the electoral results for the 4 elections covered in the analysis, I address the candidate selection process as a dependent variable of the existing legal and political system. Then, I discuss the candidate selection process as an independent variable that helps explain the pattern of executive-legislative relations that has emerged in Chile’s post authoritarian democracy.

### II. Legal Variables

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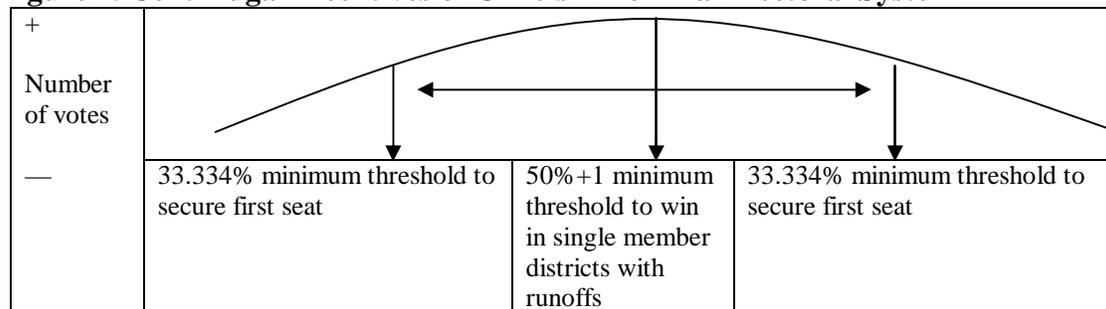
There are a number of legal variables that affect the candidate selection process and shape the strategies of different candidates, parties and coalitions. These variables refer to the electoral rules, restrictions on independent candidates and political coalition formation, re-election restrictions and residency requirements. Each of those is analyzed separately below.

### 1) The Electoral Rules

Chile has used an open list proportional representation system for all its Senate and Chamber of Deputies elections since 1989. Senators are elected for 8-year terms and Deputies are elected for 4-year terms. Senatorial elections are staggered, with half of the senatorial districts electing two senators each every four years. Two legislators are elected in each of the 19 senatorial districts and 60 Chamber of Deputies districts using the D'Hondt seat allocation system.<sup>2</sup> Thus, seats are allocated first to parties. Then, within parties or coalitions, candidates are allocated seats according to their individual votes.

The system was created with two objectives in mind, to reduce the overall number of political parties (with respect to what existed before the military coup of 1973) and to maximize the number of seats that conservative parties could obtain given their expected minority status (Siavelis, 1993; Siavelis and Valenzuela, 1997; Fuentes, 1999; Navia, 2003). Yet, as it has been demonstrated (Magar, Roseblum and Samuels 1998), the binominal system creates incentives for parties to diverge from the median voter and, as it has been shown (Siavelis, 1997; Montes, Mainwaring and Ortega 2000; Scully, 1995; Valenzuela and Scully, 1997) that the multiparty system in existence in Chile before 1973 has reemerged in the post 1990 period. Figure 1 shows how the binominal system creates incentives for parties to divert from the median voter, since a 1/3 vote is sufficient to secure 50% of the representation in each district.

**Figure 1. Centrifugal Incentives of Chile's Binominal Electoral System**



Source: Navia, 2004.

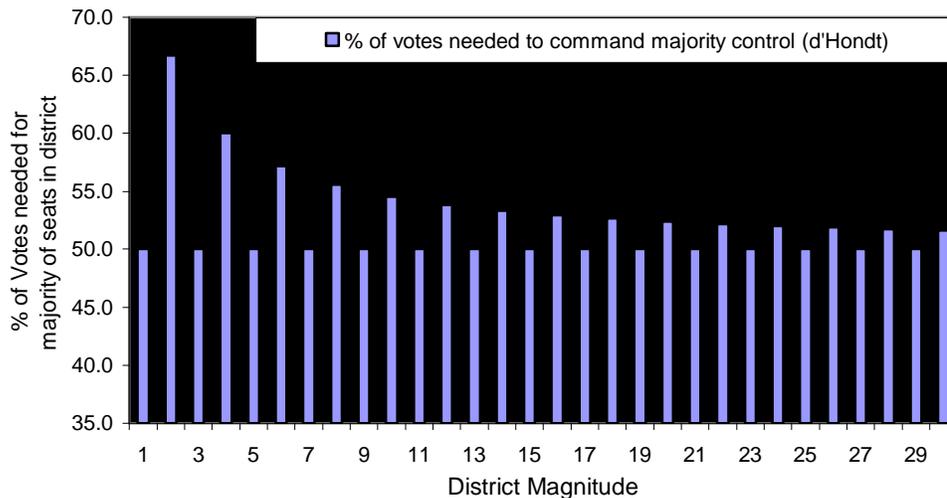
In fact, the binominal system can be best understood as an insurance mechanism against an electoral defeat (Navia, 2004). Because of the high threshold required to transform an electoral majority into a commanding majority of seats in each district, the binominal system works as an insurance mechanism that minimizes the cost of an electoral defeat. If

<sup>2</sup> For an explanation of how different seat allocation formulas work see the Administration and Cost of Elections Project website, <http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esc06.htm>

a party/coalition can secure about 1/3 of the votes in a district, that party/coalition will get 50% of the seats in the district. The insurance mechanism will kick in and the electoral defeat will not result in minority representation in that district. However, if the party obtains more than 50% of the votes (but less than two-thirds), the cost of the insurance premium will mean that the party will not be able to transform its electoral majority into a commanding majority of the seats in that district.

Figure 2 depicts the threshold needed by a majority party to transform its electoral majority into a majority command of the seats, assuming d'Hondt seat allocation rules and assuming that there is only one other party/coalition. As shown, the highest threshold that exists for a party to convert its electoral majority into a majority of seats in any district is under a 2-seat proportional representation arrangement. As the district magnitude increases, the threshold decreases. The highest threshold exists with district magnitudes that are small and even numbers. If the district magnitude is an odd number, the majority party in a two-party election will always get more seats than the minority party. If the district magnitude is even and small, the insurance mechanism successfully protects the minority party from becoming a minority party in the allocation of seats.

**Figure 2. % of Votes Needed for Majority of Seats in a District**  
(assuming only one opposition party)



Source: Navia, 2003, chapter 4.

Thus, the binominal electoral system makes it very difficult for a single party/coalition to transform an electoral majority into a commanding majority of seats in any given district. As I discuss below, this electoral system has helped consolidate a sort of electoral duopoly in legislative elections. The two leading coalitions, the *Concertación* and *Alianza* will most likely get one seat in each district almost regardless of their electoral support. It turns out to be very rare that a coalition can clinch both seats in any given district, especially when the election is more competitive. The more competitive the election, the more likely the seats will be distributed equally among the two coalitions. Other parties will find it extremely difficult to win seats. Voters are left with the only

option of selecting which candidate from anyone of the two coalitions they are willing to send to parliament.

## 2) Coalition Formation and Independent Candidates

Two or more parties can form an electoral coalition before an election. Electoral coalitions are nationally binding, in the sense that two parties that enter an electoral coalition in one district cannot run separately in other districts. For vote counting and seat allocation rules, each coalition is treated as one party.<sup>3</sup> In addition to candidates from the member parties, coalitions can also include independent candidates. Since democracy was restored in 1989, two dominant coalitions have emerged, the center-left *Concertación* and the conservative *Alianza por Chile*.<sup>4</sup> In addition, other coalitions have also been formed, but with limited or inexistent success. In 1989, a leftist coalition, PAIS, was formed by some Socialist Party factions and other leftist groups.<sup>5</sup> In 1997, the Center-Center Progressive Union (a party formed by maverick conservative personalist businessman Francisco Javier Errázuriz)<sup>6</sup> ran a separate slate and won two seats. Thus, even though there were 7 different coalitions in 1989, 4 in 1993 and 5 in 1997 and 2001, the *Concertación* and *Alianza* have combined to obtain 98.3% of all the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and an average of 89.2% of the vote, since democracy was restored.

Provisions for coalition formation were originally absent from the *Ley Orgánica Constitucional sobre votaciones populares y escrutinios* (LOC-VPE). Yet, when the outgoing military dictatorship introduced legislation to establish the binomial electoral system for Chamber of Deputies elections and the boundaries for the 60 districts, provisions for coalition formation were also introduced. That reflected, in part, the successful pressure exercised by the multi-party democratic opposition. But it also responded to the need to accommodate a dispute within conservative forces that had led to the break up of the National Renewal Party, into RN and the UDI, in 1988 (Allamand, 1999a: 125-147, 189-212; 1999b).

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<sup>3</sup> Ley Orgánica Constitucional sobre votaciones populares y escrutinios (#18700, May 6, 1988), article 3.bis (modified by Law #18799, May 26, 1989) For the full text of this law see [http://www.elecciones.gov.cl/elecciones/contenido/ley\\_municipales/leyes.htm](http://www.elecciones.gov.cl/elecciones/contenido/ley_municipales/leyes.htm)

<sup>4</sup> In 1989 it was called *Democracia y Progreso*; in 1993 it was *Unión por el Progreso de Chile*; in 1997 it was *Unión por Chile* and since 1999 it has been called *Alianza por Chile*. Yet, RN and UDI have remained as its two largest parties.

<sup>5</sup> The Socialist Party ended its long process of reunification in December of 1989, two weeks after the election. Although the PAIS was an autonomous slate, it negotiated with the *Concertación* coalition so that no socialist candidates within the *Concertación* coalition ran in districts where PAIS candidates were running. The two PAIS deputies elected in 1989 (Juan Pablo Letelier in district 33 and Juan Martínez in district 45) joined the unified Socialist Party and, thus, became members of the *Concertación* coalition before the new congress was inaugurated in March of 1990.

<sup>6</sup> The UCCP was formed after Errázuriz ran as independent in the 1989 presidential campaign and placed third with a respectable 14.5% of the vote. In 1993, the Center-Center union joined the *Alianza* (see Siavelis 2002) and won three seats, one in the Senate and two in the Chamber of Deputies. In 1997, the UCCP ran a separate slate and won two seats in districts 32 and 35. Shortly after the election, the deputy from district #35 joined RN.

Although restrictions on independent candidates are somewhat lax, independents have not been very successful in winning legislative seats. To get their names on the ballot, independent candidates must collect enough signatures to pass a threshold set at 0.5% of the votes cast in the corresponding previous election in the Chamber of Deputies or Senate district. Only voters not formally affiliated with a legally registered political party can sign such a petition.<sup>7</sup> Independent candidates must have not been affiliated with a political party for at least 2 months before the registration deadline. Similarly, candidates from a political party must have been members for at least 2 months before the registration deadline.

The deadline to register a coalition slate or an independent candidacy for the legislature is 150 days before the scheduled election.<sup>8</sup> Such a long registration deadline makes it harder for independent candidates to get their names on the ballot, since their petition drives must be held way long the campaign season begins and long before people are showing interest in the upcoming election. However, incumbents who are not nominated by their parties might find it easier to run as independents.<sup>9</sup> They have sufficient name recognition and can easily fulfill the requirements to place their names on the ballots. Yet, if their chances of winning a seat are high, it is unlikely that they will not be nominated in the first place by their parties. In the rare occasions where incumbents have not been nominated and they have chosen to run as independents, the results have been mixed. Some incumbents have performed miserably, but others have easily retained their seats.<sup>10</sup>

### 3) Re-Election Restrictions

No re-election restrictions exist in the Constitution for legislators. As Table 1 shows, a moderately high number of deputies seek re-election when their terms expire. No fewer than 70% of those serving in the Chamber of Deputies seek to be re-elected every four years. Their success rate is moderately high as well. More than 80% of those who seek re-election win a new term. Between 1993 (the first election with incumbents after the end of the dictatorship) and 2001, 73.3% of the sitting deputies sought re-election. The success rate was 82.2%. Consequently, about 40% of all deputies in each legislative period are serving their first term. Thus, although there are no re-election restrictions, the turnover ratio in the Chamber of Deputies is rather high (Carey, 2002).

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<sup>7</sup> LOC-VPE (#18700), articles 10-11.

<sup>8</sup> LOC-VPE (#18700), Article 6.

<sup>9</sup> A similar point is tangentially made by Carey and Siavelis, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Two anecdotal examples are Samuel Venegas, elected as a DC deputy in district 15 (San Antonio) in 1993. In 1997, the PDC nominated a different candidate and Venegas successfully ran as independent. Because the PDC candidate also won and Venegas joined the PRSD, another *Concertación* party, after the election, the *Concertación* ended up with the two seats in the district. In 2001, Venegas won but the other seat went to the *Alianza* RN candidate. In district 55 (Osorno) Marina Prochelle, a RN deputy first elected in 1989 was not nominated by her party (instead RN supported an independent pro-RN candidate, Fernando Becker). Prochelle ran as independent, but her dismal 5.8% left her out of the Chamber. One seat in the district went to the *Concertación* and the other to the UDI candidate in the *Alianza* slate.

**Table 1. Deputies Seeking and Losing Re-Election Bids, 1993-2001**

Election Year	Deputies Seeking Re-election		Deputies Losing Re-election Bids	
	#	%	#	%
1993	88	73.3%	17	19.3%
1997	84	70.0%	12	14.3%
2001	92	76.6%	18	19.6%

Source: author's calculations from <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>

#### 4) Residency Requirements

Although there are formal stringent residency requirements, they are laxly enforced. Constitutional articles 44 and 45 establish that candidates for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, respectively, have to reside in those districts for at least two years before the election. However, as it has been widely documented and it is openly practiced, many politicians who consider running for certain districts reside in Santiago and establish a second residency in the districts where they seek to run to formally meet the residency requirement. In the few cases where deputies have switched districts and have ran in districts different from those they currently represent, the same practice has been widely used to formally meet the residency requirements.

The practice that made it acceptable for politicians living in Santiago to represent provincial districts goes back to the pre-military dictatorship tradition. It was not unusual, especially among the parties of the left, that their best known figures would be placed as candidates in districts where the party had little organization but sufficiently good chances of getting at least one seat.<sup>11</sup> Although the military wanted to promote the emergence of locally-based representatives—who presumably would be less inclined to be political party loyalists—the political tradition and the strength of existing parties in 1989 made it more difficult for these strict residency provisions to be effectively enforced.

### III. The Electoral Results

As Table 2 shows, the *Concertación* won all legislative elections between 1989 and 2001. Although the largest margin of victory was observed in 1993, the *Concertación* dominance was clear between 1989 and 1997. However, in 2001 the *Concertación* marginally edged the *Alianza* coalition by a mere 3.6% in the Chamber of Deputies election.

Within the *Concertación*, the initial dominance of the PDC dissipated over the years. Although the PDC obtained 26% in 1989, contributing with more than half of the *Concertación* votes, that party fell to 18.9% of the vote by 2001, contributing with 39.5% of the *Concertación* vote share. The parties of the left increased both their share of votes and share of seats within the *Concertación* over the period. But overall, the *Concertación*

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<sup>11</sup> The best know and most emblematic case, but certainly not the only one, was that of socialist leader Salvador Allende. Allende was first elected deputy in 1937 in Valparaíso (6<sup>th</sup> district), then Senator in 1945 (9<sup>th</sup> senatorial district), 1953 (1<sup>st</sup> senatorial district) 1961 (3<sup>rd</sup> senatorial district) and 1969 (10<sup>th</sup> senatorial district).

lost votes and seats between 1989 and 2001. After a high of 55.4% of the votes and 70 seats in 1993, the *Concertación* only managed to obtain 47.9% of the votes and 62 seats in 2001. Although in absolute terms the *Concertación* experienced a slow but continuous decline, the relative fall of the PDC was much more pronounced. The relative importance of independent candidates on the *Concertación* ticket decreased over time. Yet, that is more a product of the fact that the ban on the PS to officially register as a party was lifted only after the July 1989 constitutional reforms and that party did not have enough time to formally register to run candidates under its official name. Therefore, with the dubious exception of 1989, the role of independent candidates in the *Concertación* has been very limited.

In the conservative *Alianza por Chile* coalition there was also a shift in the breakdown of support for RN, UDI and independents. While RN comprised 53.5% of the total *Alianza* vote and obtained 60.4% of the *Alianza* seats in 1989, its predominance has fallen over time to a low of 31.1% of the vote and 31.6% of the seats in 2001. The UDI went from 9.8% of the total vote in 1989 to 25.2% in 2001. Independents running on the *Alianza* ticket combined to obtain 6.1% of the vote and 16.7% of the seats in 1989. They maintained their share of votes and their absolute number of seats in 2001. Overall, in Chamber of Deputies elections we witness more continuities than change over the 4-election, 12-year period. The *Concertación* slightly lost seats and votes, but within the parties of the left increased their share to the expense of the PDC. In the right, there was an overall increase overtime, but the UDI advanced while RN also lost support.

**Table 2. Chamber of Deputies Elections, 1989-2001**

Party	1989		1993		1997		2001	
	% votes	# seats						
PDC	26.0	38	27.1	37	23.0	38	18.9	23
PPD	11.5	16	11.8	15	3.3	16	12.7	20
PS	---	--	11.9	15	11.1	11	10.0	10
PRSD	3.9	5	3.8	2	12.6	4	4.1	6
Others	10.1	10	0.8	1	0.5	1	2.2	3
<b>Concertación Total</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>47.9</b>	<b>62</b>
RN	18.3	29	16.3	29	16.8	23	13.8	18
UDI	9.8	11	12.1	15	14.5	17	25.2	31
Others	6.1	8	8.3	6	5.0	7	5.3	8
<b>Alianza Total</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>57</b>
Others	14.3	3	7.9	---	13.2	4	7.8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120</b>

Source: author's calculations with data from <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>

Table 3 shows the results for Senatorial elections between 1989 and 2001. A similar pattern to Chamber of Deputies elections can be observed. The PDC went from 32.2% of the vote in 1989 to 22.8% in 2001, but the *Concertación* only fell from 54.6% to 51.3% in 12 years. A growth of the electoral support for the leftwing *Concertación* parties made up for the electoral strength loss experienced by the PDC. On the right, the *Alianza*

increased its share of the vote from 34.9% in 1989 to 44% in 2001. Unlike the results in the Chamber of Deputies elections, the intra-*Alianza* electoral strength of RN and UDI candidates remained highly stable.

Most notably, support for senatorial candidates affiliated to other parties or running independently decreased significantly between 1989 and 2001. In many regards, the 1989 results should be analyzed separately. Because that was the first election after military rule, there were many information asymmetries and the political party system was suffering from excessive dynamism. Just as it happened with Chamber of Deputies elections, many leftwing candidates ran as independents within the *Concertación* coalition, while others ran outside the *Concertación*. In addition, because senators are elected to staggered 8-year terms, 1989 was the only year where the 19 senatorial districts had elections. At any event, the pattern observed for the four Senate elections shows a striking stability in the overall results. The *Concertación* always got more votes than the *Alianza* and alternative candidates failed to get enough votes to clinch seats. In addition, with the exception of 2001, the overall support for the *Concertación* and *Alianza* was almost identical for Chamber of Deputies and Senate elections. That is, there was little ticket-splitting observed in Chile between 1989 and 1997.<sup>12</sup>

In 2001 the *Alianza* opted to avoid confrontation between UDI and RN Senate candidates. Among the 9 senatorial districts up for election, UDI and RN candidates competed against each other in only 2 districts (Districts I and IX South). In the other 7 districts, the *Alianza* presented only one candidate or two candidates from the same party (or independents).<sup>13</sup> Because it would be unlikely that the *Concertación* could clinch both seats in any senatorial district—an event that has only happened four times in 47 senatorial district races, 3 of which were in 1989—the rightwing coalition opted to avoid internal confrontation between RN and UDI. Overall, that ended up helping the overall senatorial vote for the *Concertación*. While the government coalition obtained 47.9% in the Chamber of Deputies election, its share of the vote in the 9 senatorial districts that had elections was 51.3%. The 2001 legislative elections showed some evidence of ticket-splitting across coalitions, where a sizable number of voters who cast ballots for non-*Concertación* deputies voted for senatorial candidates from the government coalition.

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<sup>12</sup> A notable exception was the election in Senatorial District #8, Santiago Poniente, in 1997. Communist Party senatorial candidate Gladys Marín obtained 15.7% of the vote, well above of the votes obtained by Communist Party candidates for the Chamber of Deputies. Inversely, *Concertación* candidates for the Chamber of Deputies did much better than the *Concertación* candidates for the Senate, pointing to some ticket-splitting among leftwing *Concertación* voters who cast senatorial votes for Marín.

<sup>13</sup> RN candidates ran in senatorial districts III, V-Interior, IX-North and XI. UDI candidates ran in senatorial districts V-Coast, VII-North and VII-South.

**Table 3. Senate Elections, 1989-2001**

Party	1989		1993		1997		2001	
	% votes	# seats						
PDC	32.2	13	20.2	4	29.2	10	22.8	2
PPD	12.1	4	14.7	2	14.6	1	12.7	3
PS	--	--	12.7	3	4.3	--	14.7	4
PRSD	2.2	2	6.4	--	1.8	--	1.1	--
Others	8.1	3	1.5	--	--	--	--	--
Concertación Total	54.6	22	55.5	9	49.9	11	51.3	9
RN	10.8	5	14.9	5	14.9	2	19.7	4
UDI	5.1	2	10.2	2	17.2	3	15.2	3
Others	19	9	12.2	2	4.5	4	9.1	2
Alianza Total	34.9	16	37.3	9	36.6	9	44.0	9
Others	10.5	0	7.2	--	--	--	4.7	--
Total	100	38	100	18	100	20	100	18

Source: author's calculations with data from <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>

Despite the overall dominance enjoyed by the *Concertación* in all legislative elections between 1989 and 2001, the distortional effect of the binomial electoral rules have effectively served as an insurance protection mechanism for the right wing *Alianza* coalition. As can be inferred from Tables 2 and 3, the *Alianza* consistently obtained a higher share of seats in Chamber of Deputies and Senate elections than its share of votes. Although the *Concertación* also benefited by obtaining a better share of seats than votes, the *Alianza* benefited more and successfully prevented the *Concertación*, particularly in the Senate, to transform its electoral majority into a safe commanding majority of seats between 1993 and 2001.<sup>14</sup>

#### IV. Party Variable: Candidate Selection as a Dependent Variable

Political parties react to existing electoral rules and strategize accordingly to maximize the number of seats they can get given their expected electoral support. Naturally, they also seek to nominate candidates that will help increase their electoral support. Thus, a dual dynamic process takes place. Parties seek to nominate candidates that will get more votes than what the party would usually expect in a given district. But also, given that Chilean parties form coalitions and cannot have candidates in all districts, parties seek to identify districts where they can nominate strong candidates and have better chances of transforming those votes into seats.

##### A.) Chamber of Deputies Elections

As Table 4 shows, the parties that comprise the two coalitions have experienced different success rates (elected/nominated yield) in getting their nominated candidates elected to

<sup>14</sup> In addition, the existence of non-elected Senators, who overwhelmingly vote alongside the conservative coalition, has given the *Alianza* a majority control of the Senate between 1990 and 1998 and since 2002. Because of the impeachment of Senator Errázuriz and the inclusion of life-time senators Augusto Pinochet (for a brief period in 1998) and Eduardo Frei, since March 2000, there was a tie in the Senate between 1998 and March 2000 and a *Concertación* majority between March 2000 and March 2002.

the Chamber of Deputies. Because of the distortions produced by the electoral system, the success rates of the *Concertación* and Alianza coalitions fluctuate around 50%. However, success rates within coalitions vary from party to party and across elections. For example, in the most recent election (December 2001), the PPD did remarkably well, by having 21 of its 24 candidates elected to the Chamber. The UDI also did fairly well, by achieving to get 31 of its 54 candidates elected. Inversely, the PDC success yield has decreased over time. While 84.4% of all PDC candidates were elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1989, only 42.6% of all PDC candidates were elected in 2001. This is partially a result of the overall decrease in electoral support for the PDC over time, but as I show below it also results from the better candidate selection strategies adopted by other *Concertación* parties, especially the PPD, in recent years.

**Table 4. Chamber of Deputies Elections, # Candidates and # Elected, 1989-2001**

	1989		1993		1997		2001	
	# candidates	% elected	# candidates	%# elected	# candidates	% elected	# candidates	% elected
PDC	45	84.4	48	77.1	55	69.1	54	42.6
PPD	25	64.0	25	60.0	29	55.2	24	83.3
PS	--	--	28	53.6	26	42.3	21	47.6
PRSD	16	31.3	15	13.3	8	50.0	14	42.9
Others	30	33.3	4	25.0	2	50.0	7	42.9
<i>Concertación</i> Total	116	59.5	120	58.3	120	57.5	120	51.7
RN	66	43.9	41	70.1	52	44.2	45	40.0
UDI	30	36.7	29	51.7	47	36.2	54	57.4
Others	23	34.8	50	12.0	20	35.0	20	40.0
Alianza Total	119	40.3	120	41.7	119	39.5	119	47.9
Others	184	1.6	144	---	203	2.0	142	0.7
Total	419	28.6	384	31.3	442	27.1	381	31.5

Source: author's calculations with data from <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>

### A.1) Candidate Selection in the *Concertación*

How can parties secure a higher elected/nominated yield for the districts they get in their intra-coalition negotiation? The dynamic process can be explained succinctly. Each *Concertación* party knows that there are 60 districts where they can have at most one candidate per district.<sup>15</sup> Because the PDC emerged as the strong moderate party during the transition to democracy, that party has exercised a leading role in the *Concertación*, with two of the three Chilean presidents elected so far having been PDC members. Because the PDC will likely present candidates in most districts, the real strategizing occurs among the other *Concertación* parties. True, the PDC does some strategizing in choosing a handful of districts where it will abstain. But the real strategic choices over which districts they will seek to secure slots for their candidates occurs in the other *Concertación* parties.

<sup>15</sup> Only once has that principle been violated. In 1989, the two *Concertación* candidates in district 34 were PDC members.

Siavelis (2002: 424) has explained how the *Concertación* initially solved the problem of assigning districts to its different members by the formation of two sub-pacts within the *Concertación*: the PDC and the PS-PPD. The other *Concertación* parties, which eventually merged into the PRSD after the 1993 election, could bargain with both sub-pacts to maximize the number of districts where they could field candidates. However, because Siavelis looked primarily at the 1993 and 1997 elections, he tended to treat the PS and PPD interchangeably as one party. Post-1997 political developments have made it clear that, despite belonging to the same sub-pact, the PS and PPD have acquired distinct identities and should no longer be treated as two wings of the same party. Below, I discuss in more detail how each *Concertación* party has strategized to maximize the number of districts where they can put candidates on the *Concertación* ballots and the number of candidates that can actually get elected. Overall, whereas the PDC did fairly well in the first years of this democratic period (with 84.4% success rate in 1989 and 77.1% in 1993), the PPD did outstandingly well in the most recent parliamentary election.

Also, as Table 4 shows, the overall number of candidates that each *Concertación* party has been assigned has remained fairly constant from 1993 to 2001. Again, 1989 is not a good year to evaluate, since the PS was not formally legal and many PS members ran as PPD candidates or as independents within the *Concertación* ticket. The relative weight of independent candidates within the *Concertación* slate has diminished. But that is as much a reflection of the ban on the PS that was lifted only in mid 1989 as evidence of the consolidation of the 4-party nature of the *Concertación* coalition since the Radical Party (PR) and Social Democratic Party (PSD) merged into the PRSD in 1994.

Yet, the informal agreement within the *Concertación* is that there are two sub-pacts, one comprised by the PDC and the other comprised by the PS-PPD. No PPD candidate has faced a PS candidate in any of the 60 districts since 1993. Every time that possibility has arisen, one of the two parties has vehemently opposed it. The last time when that could have been the case (district #1, 2001), the PPD fiercely fought to prevent the PDC from giving up that seat to a more electable PS candidate. In the end, the PS candidate resigned from the party and successfully ran as an independent (the other seat went to the *Alianza* incumbent candidate). After the election, the independent candidate re-joined the PS and has consistently voted with the *Concertación* ever since. But the unwritten principle that PS and PPD candidates cannot run against each other within the *Concertación* has not been violated.

Because neither sub-pact has candidates in all of Chile's 60 districts (given that candidates from the PRSD and some independents must be accommodated), the sub-pacts have to negotiate which districts each sub-pact will keep and which districts will go to the PRSD and independent *Concertación* candidates. In the most recent election (2001), the PDC secured 54 districts (out of 60), but in two other districts, the independent candidates that ran on the PDC sub-pact were PDC members who did not update their registration documents on time.<sup>16</sup> Thus, there were 56 districts with PDC candidates in 2001 (93%). This was the highest number of PDC candidates since the restoration of

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<sup>16</sup> This was the case of Jorge Canals in District 26 and Alejandra Sepúlveda in District 34.

democracy in 1989. Thus, there is less strategizing in the PDC on which districts to select than there is on the PS, PPD and PRSD. The PDC has candidates in all districts, with a very few exceptions.

The PPD, PS and PRSD, however, do a lot of strategizing and bargaining to divide the remaining slots in the *Concertación* slate. From a high of 75 available slots (those not taken by PDC candidates) in 1989 to a low of 62 available slots in 2001, the other *Concertación* parties have to identify districts where they stand a good chance of getting more votes than the PDC candidate and where they can present a strong candidate. Although that strategizing was constrained by the close links that existed between the PPD and PS in 1989 and 1993, much of the strategizing in 1997 and 2001 occurred within the PS and PPD as the two parties negotiated over which districts each party would keep for its candidates.

Because this is a dynamic process, there are some considerations that are taken into account. First, all *Concertación* deputies who will be seeking re-election are almost automatically guaranteed that their districts will be assigned to their parties (Siavelis 2002.) Only rarely in the negotiations has a party lost a district where the incumbent deputy was seeking re-election. Whenever that was the case, the party elite made no effort to defend the deputy's seat. That is, the deputy lost the seat because the party elite chose not to exercise its *holder's keeper* right. Because approximately 75% of the Deputies seek re-election, the actual number of open slots for PS, PPD and PRSD is lower than 60. Out of the 31 PS-PPD-PRSD deputies elected in 1997, 26 sought re-election in 2001. Among them, 23 ran in the same districts where they had been elected in 1997. Three others switched districts, with two winning re-election to the Chamber in their new districts.<sup>17</sup>

A second consideration has to do with the potential running mates that PS-PPD candidates will have in the *Conertación* ticket. Parties often renounced to presenting candidates in districts where there is a strong incumbent from a different *Concertación* party or where no strong candidate from the party has expressed the intention to run. Thus, parties self-select out of many districts. Again, the process is dynamic in the sense that potentially strong candidates often choose not to pursue a candidacy if they think that the candidate from the other sub-pact is too strong.<sup>18</sup> Also, because incumbents have a moderately high re-election rate (more than 80% for all elections between 1993 and 2001), those districts where an incumbent from the other sub-pact seeks re-election are understandably considered difficult districts. Occasionally, incumbents do lose at higher rates. For example, in 2001, 25 incumbent PDC candidates sought re-election, but only 17 won (68%). Yet, in general, candidates have fewer chances of winning when running together with an incumbent from another party from the same coalition.

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<sup>17</sup> Both of them were PPD members, Laura Soto switched from District 14 to neighboring District 13 and Aníbal Pérez switched from District 32 to neighboring District 35.

<sup>18</sup> Examples abound, but District 26 might be a good example. Carlos Montes (PS) won in 1997 with 40.5% of the vote. In 2001, no strong contender from the PDC attempted to run in that district.

Surely, although it has become increasingly rare, the *Concertación* sometimes manages to win the two seats in a handful of districts. Yet, it is not evident ahead of time in which districts the *Concertación* can successfully obtain both seats. Usually, those districts where the *Concertación* won two seats in the previous election are seen as possible repeats, but on the same token, the *Alianza* also knows that those districts are places where by getting 33.4% of the vote, that coalition can secure 50% of the seats. Thus, the *Alianza* can spend more resources in those districts than in districts where the *Alianza* has already secured more than 1/3 of the vote, ensuring that one of the two seats in that district will go to an *Alianza* candidate.

Yet, in most districts where the *Concertación* has won both seats, the success results from a high concentration of votes for one *Concertación* candidate. The running mate benefits primarily from the trickle down effect of the d'Hondt seat allocation rules. Thus, although there is evidence that in 1989 and 1993 the *Concertación* did place strong candidates in some districts where it had good chances of winning the two seats (Siavelis 2002, Carey and Siavelis 2003), in recent years, as politics has become more competitive, fewer 2-strong candidate slates are filled by the *Concertación* or the *Alianza* in Chamber of Deputies elections. In the next section, I discuss how each of the *Concertación* parties has sought to maximize the number of candidates they can get elected given the district slots they get in the *Concertación* internal bargaining.

#### **PDC:**

In 1989, PDC candidates for the legislature were selected by the Juntas Provinciales (Provincial Boards) of the party. Because electoral districts for the most part are drawn within provincial boundaries, the already existing governing structure of the party was used to select candidates. Juntas Provinciales appointed candidates to each of the 60 Chamber of Deputies districts and to 15 of the 19<sup>th</sup> senatorial districts (in the other 4 senatorial districts, the PDC had previously agreed to support the candidate from the PR). When *Concertación* parties negotiated, the PDC withdrew candidates from several districts to make room for candidates from other *Concertación* parties. Because everyone expected that the popularity of *Concertación* presidential candidate Patricio Aylwin, a member of the PDC, would marginally benefit PDC legislative candidates, the party made concessions to its coalition partners. Those concessions were brokered by Aylwin himself, whose moral stature and unquestionable leadership as the presidential candidate prevented tensions from arising within the *Concertación* coalition. In the end, the PDC did fairly well by getting 38 of its 45 candidates for the Chamber of Deputies elected in 1989.

In 1993 and 1997, the PDC held closed primaries to select the candidates in districts where more than one PDC member had expressed his or her intention to run. Although in most occasions strong challengers were dissuaded from running against an incumbent, some primaries were held to select PDC candidates.<sup>19</sup> In most occasions, primaries were not highly contested. In a few cases, the winner of the closed primaries was prevented from becoming a legislative candidate because the party agreed to give that district to candidates from other *Concertación* parties. Yet, as the number of districts with PDC

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<sup>19</sup> For example, that was the case in District 10, where Ignacio Walker won a closed PDC primary in 1997.

candidates increased over the years, that situation has become rare. However, in 1993 and 1997 the PDC did abstain from presenting candidates in some districts to make room for smaller *Concertación* parties. In both years, Eduardo Frei (presidential candidate in 1993 and Chile's president in 1997) intervened to convince the PDC to give up districts in favor of other *Concertación* parties' candidates.

In part because the PDC had more candidates, the yield of elected/nominated decreased in 1993. That year, 37 of 48 candidates nominated by the PDC won Chamber of Deputies seat. The yield was still higher for the PDC than for the *Concertación* as a whole (77.1% versus 58.3%), but it was lower compared to 1989. In 1997, the yield was 69.1, slightly lower than in 1997, but still higher than for the entire *Concertación* (57.5%).

In 2001, the PDC experimented with open primaries to select its candidates. In most cases where there was an incumbent, open primaries were not necessary as there were no challengers. In others, open primaries were held with different results. In Senatorial District 15, incumbent Senator Jorge Lavandero was challenged by Deputy Francisco Huenchumilla. Lavandero easily won the senatorial primary. In Chamber of Deputies District 24, the results of the open primaries were challenged and the Junta Nacional of the PDC ruled that the incumbent deputy, José Tomás Jocelyn-Holt, should be the candidate, despite having been apparently defeated in the district's open primary. He went on to get 12% of the vote in the election, losing his seat. In part because of the overall decline in support for the PDC and the stabilization in the electoral strength of the PS and PPD, the elected/nominated yield decreased again in 2001 to 42.6% (54 candidates nominated, 23 elected), lower than the *Concertación* yield of 51.7%.

Overall, the PDC has fostered a process in which militants have a greater influence in selecting the candidates for the party. However, as several interviewees suggested, the PDC has suffered from unilaterally promoting more democratic participation in the candidate selection mechanism. As former party president and former deputy Gutenberg Martínez suggested, when closed primaries (or open primaries with very low levels of participation) are held, a small organized fraction of PDC militants can elect a local party leader, who lacks the skills and appeal beyond party militants to win enough support to clinch a seat. When only one party promotes democratizing the selection of candidates, other parties can benefit by strategically identifying stronger candidates who can then obtain more votes than the democratically elected PDC candidate. Martínez and others have expressed their disillusionment with the unilateral adoption of democratic procedures to select candidates. If other parties continue to keep the candidate selection process in the hands of the party elite, the parties that adopt more democratic practices might end up losing seats because their candidates are not the most electable but the ones that can best mobilize the small number of voters that actually participates in closed or semi-open primaries.

**PS:**

The PS has experienced with different mechanisms to select its legislative candidates. In 1989, the party was not legally established and thus could not formally present legislative candidates. Yet, the party managed to present candidates in two different coalitions, the

*Concertación* and the PAIS. Because the party was undergoing a reunification process at the time of the deadline for candidate registration, the selection process was particularly convoluted. PS delegates negotiated within the PPD the names of the candidates that the PS Central Committee had agreed upon. Only those candidates proposed to the PPD National Council meeting by the PS central committee delegates were selected as PPD candidates. In addition, the PS directly negotiated with the entire *Concertación* coalition to place some of its members—who were not formally affiliated with the PPD—as independent candidates in the *Concertación* ticket. Finally, a few PS members opted to run in the PAIS ticket, with the PS making sure that no other PS or PPD candidate could run in the same district in the *Concertación* ticket.

By 1993, the PS and PPD had formally separated and the two parties competed against each other in seeking safer districts in the negotiations within the *Concertación*. Thus, it would be a mistake to consider the PS and PPD as the same party running under two different names. Even though the two parties have many things in common and have formed a sub-pact that prevents them from facing each other in a legislative election, the parties do care about the militancy of the candidates from their sub-pact that actually win seats. The differences between the PS and PPD were made openly evident in the negotiations for the 1997 parliamentary elections. That year, the two senatorial districts in Santiago were up for re-election. Initially, the PPD and PS had agreed to assign one district to each party. Yet, when the negotiations were being finalized, the PS, under the leadership of party president Camilo Escalona (a member of the Chamber of Deputies) offered to trade the senatorial district assigned to the PPD for 5 districts initially assigned to the PS in the Chamber of Deputies. The PPD immediately agreed, foregoing an opportunity to run a senatorial candidate in one of Santiago's two senatorial districts, but gaining 5 additional Chamber of Deputies districts. At the end, the gamble did not pay off for the PS as the two senatorial candidates in Santiago went on to lose against the PDC candidates for the single seat the *Concertación* won in each senatorial district. Even worse, the PS lost 4 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, dropping from 15 to 11.

Overall, between 1993 and 2001, the PS experienced with different mechanisms to select its legislative candidates. These mechanisms have ranged from closed party primaries to selection by the Central Committee. But the process has been primarily characterized by the strong influence of the local party organization in selecting the candidates. When the PS has held primaries, only registered party militants have been allowed to vote. Yet, the primary winners have not always gone on to become candidates in the parliamentary election. Either because the party finally gives up that district in the negotiation with other *Concertación* parties or because the party overrules the primary results on technicalities, having a socialist party primary does not automatically result in the nomination of the winner by the central socialist party leadership.

Although the party has made efforts to introduce more elements of internal democracy in the candidate selection process, the ability of local party caudillos to exercise control of the small number of party members in any given district often results in the nomination of a candidate that is correctly deemed unelectable by the party leadership. Because many potentially better candidates are not willing to submit themselves to the need of co-opting

the local party militants, strong candidates are dissuaded from pursuing their party nomination to legislative office because of the existence of district-level closed party primaries. Yet, the PS has not moved to change its system of candidate selection. Instead, the party has passed resolutions to make the system more accountable to the local party organization and reduce the influence of the PS Central Committee in determining the names of the PS legislative candidates for the upcoming 2005 election.

**PPD:**

Since 1993, the PPD has formally empowered its National Board (Directiva Nacional) with the power to nominate candidates. However, the way in which the process has actually worked has varied somewhat over the years. In some instances, Regional Councils have made proposals to the Directiva Nacional and in other occasions, there have been closed primaries to select the nominee. That was the case for example in 1997, when Patricio Hales won the closed PPD primaries in District 19 to become the candidate and win 31.9% of the vote. In some instances, when there is more than one person interested in running in a district, the Directiva Nacional has unilaterally chosen the candidate that it perceives has a better chance of winning.

In short, as PPD secretary put it, “the candidate selection process occurs in a complex interaction where the internal actors of the party play some role and negotiate the nominee list before it is formally ratified by the National Board” (René Jofré Interview, January 8, 2004). Yet, some informal rules can be identified. The *holder’s keeper* principle applies. Incumbent deputies are almost guaranteed their slots, but the party leadership can also work to convince some incumbents to switch districts and use their name recognition to successfully run in a different district, as it happened in 2001 in Districts 32 and 14, where the incumbent PPD deputies switched districts and won new seats. Although there is no formal rule to prevent a candidate from challenging a PPD incumbent, Jofré reminded me that “those who have tried to unseat an incumbent deputy have generally failed to even get a shot at a party closed primary” (René Jofré Interview, January 8, 2004).

Unlike other *Concertación* parties, the PPD leadership takes an active role in recruiting potential candidates and securing good districts for them. Whereas in the PDC and PS the interested candidates have to struggle to position and consolidate their electoral bids, in the PPD the party leadership actively recruits potential candidates by offering them districts where they stand a good chance of getting elected. Often times, that means that the PPD will not seek to get as many districts as possible nor will it go after the most populated districts (where a good electoral performance will carry a greater weight in increasing the overall national vote for the party), but instead it selects those districts that can be matched with an electable candidate.

Because the decision-making is centralized, the PPD leadership has successfully used pre-electoral polls to identify districts where the *Concertación* incumbent is weak or where a left-leaning candidate has better chances of winning a seat. Because the PS will likely have potential candidates for more districts than the PPD, the PPD leadership can successfully help strengthen PS candidates in districts other than where the PPD is more

likely to win and thus secure those districts for the PPD. That fine-tuning in the strategic selection of districts has allowed the PPD to get more candidates elected even when presenting fewer candidates. According to party leaders and to leaders from other *Concertación* parties, the ability of the party leadership to negotiate districts without the pressure from candidates that have won closed party primaries has allowed the PPD to achieve the highest nomination/election yield among all *Concertación* parties.

### **PRSD:**

Because it is the smallest of the four *Concertación* parties, the PRSD strives to maximize two objectives when negotiating for seats with other candidates. On the one hand, the PRSD wants to get a few deputies elected. On the other, the party needs to get enough votes to pass the 5% minimum national vote threshold to maintain its legal status as a registered political party. Thus, the PRSD is willing to accept districts where it stands few chances of winning seats, but where it can collect enough votes to help pass that 5% vote threshold. In addition to pressuring to keep districts for its incumbents, the PRSD has also sought to obtain districts where no *Concertación* incumbent is running for re-election. Since the Radical Party merged with the Social Democratic Party after the 1993 elections (thus forming the PRSD), that party has sought to negotiate concurrently with the PDC and PS-PPD for slots in the *Concertación* legislative slate. In 1997, the PRSD obtained 8 slots in 8 different districts. In 2001, the PRSD got 14 slots in 14 different districts, but in most cases those slots were located in districts where the incumbent PDC deputy was widely expected to win re-election. Surprisingly, 2 PRSD candidates managed to defeat incumbent PDC deputies and another ran in a district where the *Concertación* managed to clinch both seats. Thus, the gamble paid off for the PRSD as it increased its number of seats from 4 in 1997 to 6 in 2001.

### **A.2) Candidate Selection in the *Alianza***

There has been less continuity in the *Alianza* coalition. Whereas RN has lost districts since 1989, UDI has grown as it has gained districts over the years. In part this is a result of the fact that *Alianza* had more independents elected to the Chamber in 1989 than the *Concertación*. In addition, there were always more districts where there was no *Alianza* incumbent since the *Concertación* has historically been more successful in capturing both seats in a larger number of districts. Given that there were more *open seats* for the *Alianza* and that challenging an independent *Alianza* incumbent did not generate conflicts between RN and UDI, the UDI could initially grow by competing against non-RN incumbents or by presenting strong candidates in open districts.

Yet, because it has been much less likely for the *Alianza* than for the *Concertación* to get its two candidates elected (in fact, the *Alianza* has succeeded in doing that only 3 times, always in district 23), once there is an *Alianza* legislator seeking re-election, it is highly unlikely that another *Alianza* candidate can run a successful campaign. Thus, the overall numbers here should simply be used to reflect on the conservative parties' ability to successfully identify districts where they have a good possibility of winning a seat if they present a candidate. Table 4 also shows how the UDI has successfully evolved from being a party with candidates in only half of all the districts in 1989 to having a well-

established national presence after 2001, with candidates in 54 of the nation's 60 districts.<sup>20</sup>

Overall, the candidate selection process in the *Alianza* has become simplified over the years. As the UDI has grown and consolidated as national party, independent candidates only run in districts where either the UDI or RN are not filling candidates. There are very few districts where there is not at least one RN or UDI candidate. Although it is not completely accurate, we could describe the negotiation within the *Alianza* as a two-step process. First, RN and UDI announce which districts they will present candidates. They select districts considering whether there are conservative incumbents and whether the *Concertación* has any chance of getting both seats in that district. Second, they complete their party candidate list with independents that need to be aligned with either party to sit at the negotiating table. Ever since the UDI and RN decided in 1997 not to negotiate with other small conservative parties (as they did in 1989 and 1993), the nomination selection process has become simplified in the conservative coalition.

### **UDI:**

The UDI has developed the most centralized candidate selection process among Chilean parties. The UDI has an electoral commission that works during non-election years to identify and prepare potential candidates for districts where there is no UDI legislative representation. Similarly, in districts where the incumbent UDI deputy will likely seek a senatorial seat elsewhere, the UDI works to identify a new candidate that can help retain the seat for the conservative party.

According to UDI General Secretariat, the rationale that is used to strategize to make best use of the electoral rules is that individual legislative careers are less important than the strength of the party. Be it because weak incumbents are replaced by more electable candidates or new recruits are assigned into districts years before the election is to take place, the UDI's electoral commission has successfully centralized the candidate selection process with one objective in mind, to get the highest possible nomination/selection yield so that the number of safe UDI districts—where an incumbent UDI deputy was elected in the previous election—in the next election can be constantly increasing. With that strategy, the UDI has gone from a low of 30 districts to a high of 54 districts with UDI candidates in Chamber of Deputies elections. In 2001, 57% of UDI candidates won a seat in the Chamber of Deputies.

Out of all political parties with legislative representation in Chile, the UDI has the most centralized and top-down approach to candidate selection. The party leadership controls the entire process. That party does not promote, nor does it consider it necessary, closed or open primaries to select its legislative candidates. Because the party has been so successful in increasing its legislative representation, other parties have underlined the apparently negative effects that promoting bottom-up mechanisms in the candidate selection process eventually bring about for the parties that do not centralize the candidate selection mechanism.

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<sup>20</sup> For more on the UDI see Joignant and Navia 2003.

**RN:**

The way in which RN has selected its candidates for the slots the party has negotiated with the UDI has not formally varied over the years. The National Council (Consejo General) has formally ratified all the candidacies. Yet, the informal mechanisms used to agree on the list of names to be presented to the National Council have varied markedly over time and across districts. Because RN is a party primarily comprised of local leaders with very little ideological homogeneity, the National Council is highly respectful of local leaderships and political incumbents. In order for a candidate to secure his/her nomination, the candidate must first exercise firm control of the local level party apparatus. That can be accomplished either by winning control in an internal party election or simply by 'taking over' the local party apparatus. In some instances, where the party does not have local presence, the National Council can centrally appoint candidates. These candidates are assigned the district following a franchising rationale. If the candidate wins, he/she will become the RN leader in the district and will join other local leaders in the National Council. If the candidate loses, the party will likely not consolidate a presence in the district unless the candidate, or someone else, is willing to do it on her own.

In that sense, RN is much more an electoral party than an ideological party. RN leaders stay together because the RN banner allows them a party structure that can protect them against the growing hegemonic power of the UDI, but the party does not require them to obey by the decisions and agreements reached by the national leadership. In the most recent legislative election, RN leaders negotiated an agreement with the UDI whereby intra-coalition competition was minimized in the Senatorial elections. Out of the 9 Senatorial districts, RN obtained 4 districts where the UDI abstained from running candidates. In turn, RN abstained from running candidates in 3 other senatorial districts. The remaining two districts had senatorial candidates from both the UDI and RN. That negotiation reduced intra-competition at the Senatorial level and, apparently, set precedent to minimize future intra-coalition competition. The success of that negotiation partially responds to the power structure within RN. Because the party is a loose association of local leaders, they are more than willing to give up other districts to the UDI if they can be guaranteed that they will not face strong competition from UDI candidates in their own districts.

**B) Senate Elections**

Senate elections results also reflect the rate of success of the strategies developed by different political parties to secure safe districts and to get as many of their candidates elected. In the *Concertación*, there seems to be a zero-sum game situation. In 1989, the PDC got 13 of its 15 senatorial candidates elected, but the PPD got only 4 of their 9 candidates elected (in 19 different senatorial districts). In 1993, where there were 9 senatorial districts electing 18 senators, the PDC also did fairly well, with 4 of its six candidates elected. The best PDC performance came in 1997, where that party got its ten candidates elected in each of the 10 senatorial districts up for re-election. Altogether, the other *Concertación* parties did rather poorly, winning only one seat despite having

candidates in all 10 senatorial districts. In 2001, the opposite was the case. The PDC only got 2 of its 9 candidates elected in the 9 senatorial districts up for re-election. Only in those districts where PDC candidates ran together with PRSD candidates, did the PDC candidates clinch seats. The PS and PPD got all of their candidates elected, defeating their PDC party list partners.

There is fierce competition between *Concertación* senatorial candidates. That competition is partially moderated in Chamber of Deputies races, where sitting deputies can successfully prevent many strong contenders from running in the *Concertación* slate. But when it comes to senatorial races, the *Concertación* parties always seek to present strong contenders willing to compete for the single seat that the coalition will likely get. Since 1989, there have been only 4 occasions where the *Concertación* has clinched two seats in a senatorial race, three of those in 1989 and 1 in 1997. Thus, the parties that comprise the *Concertación* understand that the senatorial race is a zero-sum game. The seats that go to the PDC are seats lost for the PS-PPD and PRSD, and vice-versa. Incumbency also constitutes a strong advantage in the Senate. Most incumbents have chosen to seek re-election, but naturally, as incumbent senators age, the number of open seats will tend to increase. In 2001, 7 of the 9 (77.8%) incumbent *Concertación* Senators ran for re-election, and 6 (85.7%) won their re-elections. In 1997, 7 out of 10 (70%) incumbents ran for re-election, with 6 succeeding (85.7%). However, the success rate of incumbents has not prevented challengers from other *Concertación* parties from running strong campaigns. Historically, senatorial elections have been more contested than Chamber of Deputies elections, with competitive races in almost all senatorial contests within the *Concertación* since 1993.

In the *Alianza*, the senatorial candidate selection process has been faced with different strategies by the two largest parties. In 1989, RN had 15 senatorial candidates, the UDI only had 3 and the other 20 candidates were Independents running on the conservative coalition slate. The strong presence of independents continued in 1993, when 8 out of the 18 rightwing senatorial candidates were independent. Yet, in 1993, the success rate of independent candidates within the *Alianza* was dismal, only 1 out of the 8 independent conservative candidates won a seat. RN was most successful by getting 5 of its 6 candidates elected. Just as in 1989, the UDI only got 2 senatorial candidates elected in 1997. Because the UDI was primarily concentrated in increasing its legislative presence in the Chamber of Deputies, that party did not focus on senatorial elections until 1997. That year, the UDI got 3 candidates elected out of the 5 UDI candidates that ran for the Senate. In addition, two independents that were elected joined the UDI in 1998. The RN performance in 1997 was unsatisfactory. Only 2 out of 8 candidates won Senatorial seats. In 2001, as discussed above, the negotiations between the UDI and RN allowed for the two parties to exclude independents and divide the 9 available districts in the following manner: 4 districts for RN candidates, 3 districts for UDI candidates and 2 senatorial districts with competition between RN and UDI candidates (in the end, those two districts were equally split by RN and UDI winners).

The decision by the *Alianza* parties to forgo competition in Senatorial elections was perhaps the most controversial and debated tactical move of the 2001 parliamentary

elections. Given that it was most likely that, given the electoral system, each coalition would get one seat in every senatorial district (as it indeed happened), the decision to forgo competition within the *Alianza* practically allowed that coalition to appoint Senators without much regard for the preferences of voters. Yet, the problem is not that *Alianza* parties strategically used the existing electoral rules to minimize intra-coalition conflict, but rather that the existing rules make it very difficult for voters to produce results other than a 1-1 divide of the two seats in each district for the two dominant political coalitions.

**Table 5. Senate Elections, Number of Candidates and Number of Elected, 1989-2001**

	1989		1993		1997		2001	
	# candidates	% elected						
PDC	15	86.7	6	66.6	10	100.0	9	22.2
PPD	9	44.4	4	50.0	4	25.0	4	100.0
PS	--	--	4	75.0	5	--	3	100.0
PRSD	4	50.0	3	--	1	--	2	0.0
Others	8	37.5	1	--	0	--	--	--
Concertación Total	36	61.1	18	50.0	20	55.0	18	50.0
RN	15	33.3	6	83.3	8	25.0	6	66.7
UDI	3	66.6	4	50.0	5	60.0	4	75.0
Others	20	45.0	8	25.0	6	66.7	4	50.0
Alianza Total	38	42.1	18	50.0	19	47.4	14	64.3
Others	66	0	19	--		--	14	--
Total	110	34.5	55	32.7	66	30.3	46	39.1

Source: author's calculations with data from <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>

### C) Candidate Selection as Dependent Variable: Summary

As Table 6 shows, the five leading political parties in Chile use different mechanisms to select their legislative candidates. Because those internal mechanisms produce candidates who are in turn subject to intra-coalition bargaining to determine the coalition slate, the process is not a clear cut, two-step process. There is much dynamic concerns and strategizing that goes on within parties and within coalitions.

Yet, only the PDC has made significant strides in promoting internal democracy in its legislative candidate selection process. Other parties have continued to control the selection mechanism at the national, or in some instances, local level. Yet, because the PDC has suffered most dramatically a fall in its electoral performance and a drop in the number of its legislative seats, the expansion of democratizing practices to select legislative candidates is not likely to occur in other parties. To the contrary, the PDC will likely centralize the process of candidate selection in future elections to maximize the chances of nominating candidates that are electable rather than nominating candidates who can win control of the local party apparatus.

Although the adoption of reforms that promote the use of open primaries for the candidate selection process might be desirable, a unilateral adoption of open or closed primaries by a specific party might not produce positive results for the party. Moreover, given that the final decision of what parties will have candidates in which districts depends on the intra-coalition negotiations, the adoption of open primaries will not automatically result in the nomination of those candidates that win their party primaries. Unless primaries are held at the coalition level, rather than the party level, the adoption of open or closed primaries will not limit the existing powers of the party elites to influence the candidate selection process in Chile.

**Table 6. Candidate Selection Mechanism by Party, 1989-2001**

	Party	1989	1993	1997	2001
Concertación	PDC	Provincial Juntas	Closed primaries	Closed primaries	Open Primaries
	PPD	National Board	National Board	National Board	National Board
	PS	Central Committee	Central Committee / Closed Primaries	Central Committee / Closed Primaries	Central Committee / Closed Primaries
Alianza	RN	National Council	National Council	National Council	National Council
	UDI	Party Leadership	Party Leadership	Party Leadership	Party Leadership

Finally, Table 7 depicts the nature of legislative candidates given the candidate selection process that currently exist in Chile. Although when transition to democracy first occurred, there were some candidates that could be best described as ‘delegates’ or ‘entrepreneurs’, as parties consolidated their strength and coalitions were primarily dominated by a few parties, party loyalists emerged as the dominant candidate type among Chilean legislative candidates.

**Table 7. Candidate Types as Dependent Variable, Legislative Elections, 1989-2001**

Candidate Type	1989	1993	1997	2001
<b>Party Loyalists</b>	Conc/Alianza	Conc/Alianza	Conc/Alianza	Conc/Alianza
<b>Constituents</b>	-----	Conc/Alianza*	Conc/Alianza*	Conc/Alianza*
<b>Delegates</b>	Few, mostly PDC	Few, mostly PDC	-----	Few, mostly UDI
<b>Entrepreneurs</b>	Few, mostly Alianza	Some, Alianza	-----	-----

\* Important to secure party nomination and to keep district for party in coalition bargaining

## V. Party Variable: Candidate Selection as an Independent Variable

Because of the way legislative candidates are nominated, the interaction legislators have with the executive and with their own parties can also be seen as a variable that is itself explained by the institutional design and the way parties have reacted and develop strategies to maximize the number of seats they obtain. True, because Chile has only had presidents that belong to the *Concertación* coalition, the dynamics of legislative-executive interactions that we have observed so far might be partially the result of internal *Concertación* dynamics than the pure result of existing institutional incentives. Yet, several scholars have highlighted the strong nature of Chile’s presidential system (Siavelis, 2000; Londregan, 20002; Aninat et al 2004), although Siavelis has

appropriately described Chile as a strong presidential system with moderate presidents (2000).

Despite their moderation, the strong attributions granted to the president by the Constitution give the executive an enormous influence over the legislative process. For all practical matters, the president exerts agenda control in the legislature (Aninat et al. 2004). Yet, presidents still require the legislature to approve the legislative initiatives they sent to Congress. Moreover, given that the legislature has the ability to block and delay—although not radically alter—the executive legislative initiatives, one should not discard the Chilean legislators are irrelevant actors.

Given the distortional effects produced by the binomial electoral system, the electoral support that a president elected with a large majority of the vote can command will not easily transform into a commanding majority of the seats for the president's party/coalition in the legislature. Because each coalition is likely to get one seat in every district, the co-tail effect that a popular presidential candidate can have over the legislative election is minimized. Moreover, given that concurrent presidential and parliamentary elections occur only every 12 years (last in 1993 and next in 2005), the effect that a popular presidential candidate can have on the legislative election is even more limited. The existence of non-elected senators makes it even harder for a popular president to transform her popularity into a commanding majority of votes in the upper chamber regardless of whether legislative and presidential elections are held concurrently or separately.

Because the electoral system for legislative elections can be best described as an insurance mechanism against an electoral defeat, the influence a president can have on the legislature does not depend on the president's electoral or popular approval. Rather, the loyalty of coalition legislators to a large extent depends on the intra-coalition party discipline that exists in the President's coalition. Similarly, the president's ability to get opposition legislators to support his legislative initiatives depends on the executive's ability to reach agreements with the opposition party leadership. Or, as it has been the case with the RN legislators, the executive can also negotiate with individual RN legislators who are not likely to be penalized by its decentralized party leadership.

## **VI. Conclusion**

In this paper, I have shown how the institutional set up has affected the legislative candidate selection process in Chile between 1989 and 2001. After highlighting the way the electoral rules influence the candidate selection process, I discussed how the different coalitions and parties have developed and implemented strategies to select their legislative candidates and negotiate with their coalition partners to form their list of coalition legislative candidate. I then finished by discussing how the electoral rules make it difficult for the executive to influence the behavior of legislators.



## Appendix 1

### Non-PDC Concertación Candidates, Legislative Elections, 1989-2001

#	1989	1993	1997	2001	#	1989	1993	1997	2001
1	PR	PPD	PPD/RSD	PPD	31	PPD/PR	PPD/RSD	PPD	PPD
2	Ind/PPD	PPD/RSD	PPD	PS	32	Ind	PS	PPD	PPD
3	Ind	RSD/Ind†	PS	PS	33	Ind/Ind	RSD/PS	PS	PS
4	PPD†	PS	PS	PS	34	X	RSD	RSD	RSD/ind*
5	PR	PS	PPD/RSD	PPD	35	PPD	PPD	PPD	PPD
6	PPD†	Ind/PS	PS	PRSD	36	PPD	PS	PS	PS
7	PPD	PPD	RSD	PPD	37	Ind†	PS	PS	PS
8	Ind	PS	PS	PS	38	Ind/PR	PPD/RSD	PPD	PPD
9	PPD	PS	PPD	PPD/0	39	Ind†/Ind	RSD/PS	PS	RSD/PPD
10	Ind†	PS	PS	PRSD	40	PPD	PPD/RSD	PPD	PPD
11	PRϕ	PPD	PPD	PRSD	41	Ind†	PS	RSD/PS	RSD/PS
12	Ind/PPD	RSD	PS	PS	42	Ind/Ind*	PPD	PPD/RSD	PPD
13	PR	PPD	Ind**	PPD	43	PPD/PR	PPD	PPD	RSD/PPD
14	PPD	SD	PPD	PPD	44	PPD†	PS	PPD	PRSD
15	PPD	PS	PPD	PRSD	45	PR	PS	PS	PS
16	PPD/PR	PS	PS	Ind	46	PR	PPD/RSD	PPD/RSD	PS
17	PPD	PPD	PPD	PPD	47	PPD/PR	PPD/RSD	RSD	PRSD
18	Ind	PPD	PPD	PPD	48	PR	PS	PPD	PS
19	PPD	PPD	PPD	PPD	49	Indϕ/Ind	PPD	PPD	PPD
20	Indϕ	PS	PS	PS	50	Ind	PS	PS	PS
21	0	Ind	PS	PPD	51	Indϕ/PR	PPD/RSD	PPD	PPD
22	PPD	PPD	Indϕ	Indϕ	52	Ind	Ind	PS	PRSD
23	PPD	PPD	PPD	PRSD	53	Ind	PS	PS	PS
24	Ind/0	PS	PS	PPD	54	Ind/PR	PPD/RSD	PPD	PPD
25	Ind	PPD	PPD	PPD	55	0	PPD	PPD	PS
26	PPD†	PS	PS	PS/ind*	56	PPD	RSD	PS	PS
27	Ind†	PS	PS	PS	57	PPD	PS	PPD	PRSD
28	Ind†	PPD	PPD	PS	58	Ind/PR	PS	PS	PRSD
29	PPD†	PS	PS	PS	59	PR	PPD	PPD	PPD
30	0	PS	PS	PPD	60	Ind/PPD	PS	PS	PS

Source: author's compilation from <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>

X=two PDC candidates;

\*=joined PDC after election; ϕ=joined PPD after election;

†=joined PS after election; 0=no other candidate

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## **Interviews Conducted**

### **PDC:**

Ignacio Walker Prieto, Deputy (194-2002) and senatorial candidate in 2001 (1/05/04)

Gutemberg Martínez, Deputy (1990-2002), former party secretary general (1/13/04)

Eduardo Frei, President (1994-2000), party president, Senator (1990-94) and life-time Senator (1/8/04).

Patricio Aylwin, former president (1990-1994), former party president and Senator (1/6/04).

Alejandro Foxley, former party president and Senator (1998-2006)

### **PS:**

Álvaro Elizalde, Deputy candidate, 2001; former Socialist Youth president (12/31/03)

Jorge Arrate, former party president and general secretary (1/9/04)

### **PPD:**

René Jofré, chief negotiator in 2001 and party secretary (1/08/04)

Sergio Bitar, Senator (1994-2002) and former party president (2/20/04)

### **RN:**

Andrés Allamand, Deputy (1994-98), senatorial candidate (1997) and former party president (1/15/04)

### **UDI:**

Juan Coloma, Deputy (1990-2002), Senator (2002-10), party general secretary (1/22/04)