

Chapter 4

Legislative Candidate Selection in Chile

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Introduction

I analyze legislative candidate selection in Chile for the first four elections held in 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 power to block aspirants that have pursued candidacies outside the realm of influence of 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, though open primaries have been used in the PDC to select legislative candidates at the party level, at the coalition level the results can be overruled reflecting the strong influence that party elites exercise over candidate selection. However, the diffusion of pre-electoral polls, 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 discussing the electoral results for the period, I analyze candidate selection as a dependent variable. I first look at the legal variables that shape the electoral process for legislative elections and then analyze the party variable that influence the way candidates are selected. Then, I discuss the candidate selection process as an independent variable, looking at legal and

party variables that help explain the current dynamics of executive-legislative relations in Chile. I conclude highlighting that a combination of political tradition and institutional incentives has contributed to make *party loyalists* the primary type of legislators. I also speculate how the adoption of more transparent mechanisms to select candidates—including open primaries—can affect the dominance of *party loyalists* as the primary type of successful legislative candidates in Chile.

II. The Electoral Results

As Table 1 shows, the *Concertación* won all legislative elections between 1989 and 2001. But overall, the *Concertación* 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. The conservative *Alianza por Chile* increased its share of votes and seats during the period. Yet, in Chamber of Deputies elections, there were more continuities than change over the 4-election, 12-year period.

Table 1. Chamber of Deputies Elections, 1989-2001

Party	1989		1993		1997		2001	
	% votes	# seats	% votes	# seats	% votes	# seats	% 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
Concertación Total	51.5	69	55.4	70	50.5	69	47.9	62
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
Alianza Total	34.2	48	36.7	50	36.3	47	44.3	57
Others	14.3	3	7.9	---	13.2	4	7.8	1
Total	100	120	100	120	100	120	100	120

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

Table 2 shows the results for Senatorial elections in the same period. 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 vote share from

34.9% in 1989 to 44% in 2001. Overall, 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, support for the *Concertación* and *Alianza* was almost identical for Chamber of Deputies and Senate elections. That is, there was little ticket-splitting between 1989 and 1997.¹

In 2001 the *Alianza* opted to prevent open 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. In the other 7 districts, the *Alianza* presented only one candidate (or two candidates from the same party).² Because it was unlikely that the *Concertación* could clinch both seats in any district, the rightwing coalition avoided intra-coalition competition. Overall, that ended up helping the *Concertación* vote share (but not its seat share, the seats were equally split between the two coalitions in the 9 senatorial districts). While the government coalition obtained 47.9% in the Chamber of Deputies election, its share of the vote in the senatorial election 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.

¹ 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.

² 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 2. Senate Elections, 1989-2001

Party	1989		1993		1997		2001	
	% votes	# seats	% votes	# seats	% votes	# seats	% 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>

As can be inferred from Tables 1 and 2, the *Alianza* consistently obtained a higher share of seats 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 2001.³

III. Candidate Selection as Dependent Variable

Legal Variables

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. They all contribute to making *party loyalists* the most viable candidate type that can win seats in the legislature. Each of those legal variables is analyzed separately below.

³ In addition, the existence of non-elected Senators, a majority of who 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.

1) The Electoral Rules

Chile has used an open list proportional representation system for all its legislative elections since 1989. Senators are elected for renewable 8-year terms and Deputies are elected for renewable 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 method.⁴ 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 electoral support (Siavelis, 1993; Siavelis and Valenzuela, 1997; Rabkin, 1996; Fuentes, 1999; Navia, 2003). Yet, as it has been demonstrated (Magar, Roseblum and Samuels 1998, Dow 1998), the binominal system creates incentives for parties to diverge from the median voter and, as it has been shown that the multiparty system in existence in Chile before 1973 has reemerged after 1990 (Siavelis, 1997; Montes, Mainwaring and Ortega 2000; Scully, 1995; Valenzuela and Scully, 1997).

In fact, the binominal system can be best understood as an insurance mechanism against an electoral defeat (Navia, 2005). If a party can secure about 1/3 of the votes, that party will get one of the two seats (50%) in the district. The insurance mechanism will kick in and the electoral defeat will not result in minority representation in that district. But when a party obtains a majority of votes (but less than two-thirds), the insurance premium will prevent it from transforming it into a commanding majority of the seats as the two seats will be split between the majority and minority party.

This system has helped consolidate an electoral duopoly in legislative elections. Since the threshold to secure the first seat is rather high (about 1.3 of the vote), parties have

⁴ 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>

incentives to form electoral coalitions to pool their votes to secure half of the seats in every district. The two leading coalitions, the *Concertación* and *Alianza* will most likely split the two seats in every district almost regardless of their electoral support. Very rarely does a coalition clinch both seats in a district. In fact, the more competitive the election, the more likely the seats will be split among the two coalitions. Other parties 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. The existing electoral rules makes it very difficult for the two largest coalitions to win a majority of seats in every district, but it also makes it very unlikely that each coalition will not clinch at least one seat in every district. Thus, the fact that coalitions are almost guaranteed one seat per district creates strong institutional incentives for candidates to be *party loyalists*, so that they can secure their party and coalition nomination.

2) Coalition Formation and Independent Candidates

Two or more parties can form a nationally binding electoral coalition. 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.⁵ Coalitions can also include independent candidates. Since 1989, two dominant coalitions have emerged, the center-left *Concertación* and the conservative *Alianza por Chile*.⁶ Other coalitions have enjoyed limited or no success. In 1989, a leftist coalition, PAIS, was formed by PS factions and other leftist groups.⁷ In 1997, the Center-Center Progressive Union (a party formed by conservative businessman Francisco Javier Errázuriz)⁸ ran its own slate and

⁵ LOC-VPE (#18700, May 6, 1988), article 3.bis (modified by Law #18799, May 26, 1989) For its full text see http://www.elecciones.gov.cl/elecciones/contenido/ley_municipales/leyes.htm

⁶ *Democracia y Pograma* in 1989, *Unión por el Progreso de Chile* in 1993, *Unión por Chile* in 1997 and *Alianza por Chile* since 1999. RN and UDI have remained as its two largest parties.

⁷ The Socialist Party (PS) completed its reunification two weeks after the December 1989 election. Although the PAIS was an autonomous slate, it negotiated with the *Concertación* so that no socialist candidates from the *Concertación* coalition ran in districts where there were PAIS candidates. The two PAIS deputies elected in 1989 (Juan Pablo Letelier in district 33 and Juan Martínez in district 45) joined the unified PS and thus became members of the *Concertación* coalition before the new congress was inaugurated in March of 1990.

⁸ The UCCP was formed after Errázuriz ran as independent presidential candidate in 1989 and ended up third with 14.5% of the vote. In 1993, the Center-Center union joined the *Alianza* (see Siavelis 2002) 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 1989.

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 conservative parties dispute that resulted in the break up of the National Renewal Party, into RN and the UDI, in 1988 (Allamand, 1999a: 125-147, 189-212; 1999b).

Although restrictions on independent candidates are somewhat lax, independents have largely failed to win legislative seats. To get their names on the ballot, independents must collect enough signatures to pass a threshold set at 0.5% of the votes cast in the corresponding district in the previous election. Only voters not affiliated with a legally registered political party can sign those petitions.⁹ Independent candidates must have not had party affiliation 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. In addition, the deadline to register a coalition slate or an independent candidacy for the legislature is 150 days before the scheduled election.¹⁰ Such a long registration deadline makes it harder for independents to get their names on the ballot, since petition drives must be held long before people are showing interest in the upcoming election.

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 deputy from district #35 joined RN.

⁹ LOC-VPE (#18700), articles 10-11.

¹⁰ LOC-VPE (#18700), Article 6.

However, incumbents who are not nominated by their parties might find it easier to run as independents.¹¹ Because of their high name recognition, they can easily collect enough signatures to get 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.¹² Because of the high thresholds to secure the first seat, independents always have more incentives to try to get their names placed on a coalition ballot, so that they can pool their votes together with those of their coalition partners to secure the first seat in every district.

The incentives to form coalitions that exist in Chile create additional pressures on candidates to remain as *party loyalists*. Because parties negotiate with other coalition members for the coalition slate of candidates, those local aspiring candidates that have made careers as *constituent servants*, *group delegates* or *entrepreneurs* can be easily punished by their parties. Individual parties can readily give up their hopes to nominate their candidates in their coalitions' slate in any given district in exchange for other districts where *party loyalists* are the aspirants for their coalition's nomination. On the same token, independents who have built a support base as constituent servants or entrepreneurs will have a hard time getting enough votes to pass the high threshold to secure the first seat. Thus, even independently minded constituent servants have incentives to associate with existing political parties to get their names on the coalition slate.

¹¹ A similar point is tangentially made by Carey and Siavelis, 2003.

¹² For example, Samuel Venegas was elected as a DC deputy in district 15 (San Antonio) in 1993. In 1997, when the PDC nominated a different candidate, Venegas successfully ran as independent. 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.

3) Re-Election Restrictions

No re-election restrictions exist for incumbent legislators. As Table 3 shows, a high number of deputies seek re-election. Between 1993 (the first election with incumbents) 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, though there are no re-election restrictions, the turnover ratio in the Chamber of Deputies is rather high (Carey, 2002). Although the moderately high re-election levels could give way to the emergence of *constituent servants*, *group delegates* and *entrepreneur candidates*, their fact that parties control the nomination process means that incumbent deputies who conform to one of those other three types still have to get their party to consent to nominate them and thus must also conform to the *party loyalist* type.

Table 3. Deputies Seeking and Loosing 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%
	264	73.3%	47	17.8%

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

4) Residency Requirements

Although formally there are stringent residency requirements, they are laxly enforced. Constitutional articles 44 and 45 establish that candidates have to reside in those districts for at least two years before the election. However, as 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.¹³ 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.

Naturally, this provision makes it easy for the national party to send its *party loyalists* as candidates to particular districts. Whereas more stringent residency requirements would make it easier for *constituent servants* and *entrepreneurs* to emerge as candidates in their party slates, the lax residency requirements makes it easier for the national party to reward *party loyalists* and punish those aspirants who have not shown due party discipline.

Party Variables

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. Thus, because parties end up negotiating within their coalitions, strong candidates who are not *party loyalists* can be easily prevented from running by their party elites simply by ceding those districts to candidates from other parties.

¹³ The best know case, but certainly not the only one, was that of socialist leader Salvador Allende. Allende was first elected deputy in 1937 in Valparaíso (6th district), then Senator in 1945 (9th senatorial district), 1953 (1st senatorial district) 1961 (3rd senatorial district) and 1969 (10th senatorial district).

As Table 4 shows, the parties that comprise the two coalitions have experienced different success rates (elected/nominated yield) in getting their candidates elected to 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 2001 election, the PPD did remarkably well, by having 21 of its 24 candidates elected. The UDI also did fairly well, with 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
Concertación 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>

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. 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 senatorial districts). In 1993, with 9 senatorial districts electing 18 senators, the PDC also did fairly well, with 4 of its six candidates elected. The best PDC performance was 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 usually a 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 tend to present strong aspirants 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 district, three of those in 1989 and 1 in 1997. Thus, *Concertación* parties understand that 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 increase. In 2001, 7 of the 9 (77.8%) incumbent *Concertación* Senators ran for re-election, and 6 (85.7%) won. 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 deterred challengers from other *Concertación* parties. 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 treated with different strategies by the two largest parties. In 1989, RN had 15 senatorial candidates. The UDI had only 3 and the other 20 candidates were conservative independents. The strong presence of independents continued in 1993, when 8 out of the 18 *Alianza* senatorial candidates were independent. But that year, their success rate was dismal, only 1 out of the 8 independent conservative candidates won a seat. RN got 5 of its 6 candidates elected. In 1993, like in 1989, the UDI only got 2 senatorial candidates elected. Because that party was initially focused on 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 elected out of 5 senatorial candidates. 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 strategy in the 2001 parliamentary elections. Given that it

was most likely that 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.

Both in the *Concertación* and the *Alianza*, parties are structured in such a way as to punish non-party loyalists and reward those who are loyal. Even in cases where aspirants emerge cultivating a profile of *constituent servants*, *entrepreneurs* or *group delegates*, party loyalty is still required by political parties to nominate those candidates and defend their bid before the multi-party coalitions. Because parties have structured their nomination process in such a way as to negotiate their individual slates of candidates with other coalition partners, party elites can always punish candidates who are not party loyalists by ceding those districts to other parties in the intra-coalition bargaining.

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

	1989		1993		1997		2001	
	# candidates	% elected	# candidates	% elected	# candidates	% elected	# 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>

Candidate Selection in the *Concertación*

Because the *Concertación* is a coalition of existing parties and because the electoral system makes it difficult for coalitions to get more than 1 seat in every district, the party elites that carry out the negotiations with other coalition partners have a lot of power to determine what aspirants actually make it into the coalition slate of candidates. The challenge for parties is to 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.¹⁴ 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.

¹⁴ 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 he looked primarily at the 1993 and 1997 elections, Siavelis tended to treat the PS and PPD interchangeably as one party. Post-1997 political developments have made led the PS and PPD to acquire distinct identities. They 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 Tables 4 and 5 show, the overall number of candidate slots 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. 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 (since PRSD candidates must be accommodated), the sub-pacts have to negotiate which districts each sub-pact will keep and which districts will go to the PRSD. In the most recent election (2001), the PDC secured 54 districts, but in additional districts the independent candidates that ran on the PDC sub-pact were PDC militants who were not formally registered with the party.¹⁵ Thus, there were 56 districts with PDC candidates in 2001 (93%). This was the highest number of PDC candidates since 1989. Logically, 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 *Concertación* slots. From a high of 75 available slots (those not taken by PDC candidates) in 1989 to a low of 62 in 2001, the other *Concertación* parties have to identify districts where they stand a good chance of getting their candidates to get more votes than the PDC candidates. Although that strategizing was constrained by the close links that existed between the PPD and PS in 1989 and 1993, much of it occurred within the PS and PPD as the two parties negotiated over which districts each party would keep for its candidates in 1997 and 2001.

Because this is a dynamic process, there are some considerations to be taken into account. First, all *Concertación* deputies who seek re-election are almost automatically guaranteed to keep their districts for their parties (Siavelis 2002.) Only rarely in the coalition negotiations has a party lost a district where the incumbent deputy seeks re-election. Whenever that was the case, the deputy lost the seat because the party elite chose not to

¹⁵ This was the case of Jorge Canals in District 26 and Alejandra Sepúlveda in District 34.

exercise its *holder's keeper* right. Thus, 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.¹⁶

A second consideration has to do with the potential running mates that PS-PPD candidates will have in the *Concertación* ticket. Parties often avoid having challengers 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.¹⁷ Also, because incumbents have a moderately high re-election rate (more than 80% 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. 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.

Surely, the *Concertación* occasionally manages to win the two seats in some districts. Yet, it is not evident ahead of time which those districts will be. 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 one third of the vote, that coalition can clinch a seat. Thus, the *Alianza* can spend more resources there than in districts where it has already secured enough votes for the first seat. In most districts where the *Concertación* has won both seats, the success results from a high concentration of votes for one candidate. The running mate benefits primarily

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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.

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 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.

It is in this intricate bargaining process between party leaderships when each party can exert its power to punish aspirants who are not *party loyalists*. Because all parties will have more candidates in more districts than what they will end up getting in the coalition bargaining, party leaders can easily punish aspirants who are not party loyalists even when those aspirants have a good chance of getting elected. Because party leaders have to give up districts to other coalition partners, they end up giving up districts where aspirants have not expressed a strong party loyalty. True, in order to become strong candidates, aspirants often need to build their bid as *constituent servants*. They are more likely to be nominated by their party if they can show that they are strong candidates in their districts—and they often build personal strength by serving their constituents, usually from government-appointed positions. But if being a constituent servant helps to win a party nomination and to keep support in the district, the party loyalty is what ultimately determines whether the parties will defend that nomination before their coalition partners when bargaining over the *Concertación* slate of candidates. 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 19th 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, PDC's Patricio Aylwin, 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 presidential candidate prevented tensions from arising within the *Concertación*. 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 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.¹⁸ 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 candidates has increased over the years, that situation is now rare. However, in 1993 and 1997 the PDC did abstain from presenting candidates in some districts to make room for candidates from 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 with respect to 1989. 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

¹⁸ For example, that was the case in District 10, where Ignacio Walker won a closed PDC primary in 1997.

challengers. In others, open primaries were held with different results. In Senatorial District 15, incumbent Senator Jorge Lavandero easily defeated a challenger, Deputy Francisco Huenchumilla. 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 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 growing 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 in an interview, 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 recognized and thus could not formally have 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 concurrently with 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.¹⁹

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 legislative elections, 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 the PS, under the leadership of Deputy and party president Camilo Escalona, offered to trade 5 districts initially assigned to the PS in the Chamber of Deputies for the PPD senatorial district in Santiago. 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 lost 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.

¹⁹ I thank Jorge Arrate, former PS General Secretary, for explaining to me this point.

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.²⁰

Although the party has made efforts to introduce more elements of internal democracy in its 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 bosses, 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

²⁰ I thank former Chamber of Deputies candidate Álvaro Elizalde for clarifying this point.

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.²¹

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 has also convinced some incumbents to switch districts and use their name recognition to successfully run in a new district. That happened in 2001 in Districts 32 and 14, where the incumbent PPD deputies switched districts and won. 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

²¹ I thank former PPD Secretary General René Jofré for clarifying this point.

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 some deputies elected. On the other, the party needs to get enough votes to pass the 5% minimum national vote threshold to maintain its status as a legally registered political party. Thus, the PRSD is willing to accept districts where it stands few chances of winning seats, but where it can collect large number of votes. In addition to pressuring to keep districts for its incumbents, the PRSD also seeks 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. 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.

Candidate Selection in the *Alianza*

There has been less continuity on candidate selection mechanisms in the *Alianza* coalition. Whereas RN has lost districts since 1989, UDI has gained districts over the years. In part this is a result of the fact that *Alianza* had several independents elected in 1989. Most of

those districts are now held by UDI deputies. 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 intra-coalition conflicts. The UDI could initially grow by competing against non-RN incumbents and by having strong candidates in open districts.

Yet, because it has been much less likely for the *Alianza* than for the *Concertación* to get the two seats (the *Alianza* has done that three times, always in district 23), once there is an *Alianza* legislator seeking re-election, it is highly unlikely that another *Alianza* candidate can run successfully. Thus, the overall increase simply reflects the conservative parties' ability to successfully identify districts where they have a good possibility of winning a seat. Table 4 above also shows how the UDI evolved from having candidates in only half of the districts in 1989 to having well-established national presence in 2001, with candidates in 54 of the nation's 60 districts.²²

That dynamic has allowed for the emergence of some non-party loyalists as candidates among *Alianza* parties. Because the *Alianza* has usually allowed for intra-coalition competition in Chamber of Deputies elections, RN has sometimes allowed entrepreneurial and constituent servant aspirants to try to unseat an incumbent UDI deputy. But because RN has also sought to prevent an overtly open confrontation with UDI in all 60 Chamber of Deputies districts, the number of *entrepreneur* and *constituent servant* candidates that actually makes it to the ballot has remained low. Moreover, if an entrepreneur candidate does win, she has strong incentives to become a party loyalist in the Chamber so that her party will seek to protect her district from open competition from the other coalition partner in the next election.

Overall, the candidate selection process in the *Alianza* has become simplified over the years. As the UDI has grown and consolidated, independent candidates only run in districts where neither the UDI nor RN are present. There are very few districts where

²² For more on the UDI see Joignant and Navia 2003.

there is not at least one RN or UDI candidate. We can 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. 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:

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.²³ With that strategy, the UDI has gone from a low of 30 districts in 1989 to a high of 54 districts in 2001. In 2001, 57% of UDI candidates won a seat in the Chamber of Deputies.

²³ I am grateful to Juan Antonio Coloma, UDI's general secretary, for clarifying this point.

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.

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) ratifies all 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 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.²⁴

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 are much dynamic concerns and strategizing that go on within parties and within coalitions. But at the end of the day, because party leaders bargain with other coalition partners, *party loyalists* are privileged over other candidate types. In fact, other types of candidates are often punished by the parties in the negotiations with other coalition partners.

To be sure, 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

²⁴ I thank a RN party leader who preferred to remain anonymous for his interview.

chances of nominating candidates that are electable rather than nominating candidates who can win control of the local party apparatus. Naturally, when open primaries are the mechanism used to select candidates, the presence of party loyalists diminishes, since it is voters that select the candidates, not party leaders. Yet, for as long as Chilean parties remain members of a coalition, the existence of a party primary does not guarantee that the winner in that district will have a slot in the *Concertación* slate, since the four *Concertación* parties have to bargain over which districts each party will get for its candidates.

Thus, 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 primaries by a party might not produce positive results for that 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. If primaries are eventually held at the coalition level, then the presence of party loyalists will be significantly hindered, since voters—rather than party elites—will make the decision as to who actually makes it to the ballot.

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. Once again, party loyalist is the primary type of candidates in both the *Concertación* and *Alianza*. But being a *constituent servant* can definitely help to secure the party nomination since constituent servants are more likely to build the kind of electoral support that will increase the chances of being elected. Thus, while aspirants will work as *constituent servants* to secure the nomination in their district, their ability to be considered party loyalists is what ultimately will determine their chances of making it to the coalition ballot.

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

Candidate Type	1989	1993	1997	2001
Party Loyalists	Conc/Alianza	Conc/Alianza	Conc/Alianza	Conc/Alianza
Constituents	Few, Conc/Alianz*	Few, Conc/Alianz*	Few, Conc/Alianz*	Few, Conc/Alianz*
Delegates	-----	-----	-----	-----
Entrepreneurs	Few, Alianza	Few, Alianza	Few, Alianza	Few, Alianza

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

Although some aspirants build up support in their districts as entrepreneurs and constituent servants—including some incumbents—the ultimate choice as to who can run in the coalition tickets are made by party leaders. Thus, party loyalty, more than any other variable, influences decisively the likelihood of an aspirant to actually become a candidate. Though, the aspirant’s ability to cultivate personal support in the district might have a significant influence in getting that candidate to defeat his/her coalition partner for the only seat that coalition is likely to get in every district.

IV. 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. Still, 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). Yet, 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. However, one should not overemphasize the role of the legislature. The Chilean congress is not an irrelevant actor, but it is certainly much less powerful than the executive. If anything, the legislature ability to position itself as a veto player that can successfully block and delay the executive's legislative initiatives is what induces the president to use some restraint in exercising the enormous constitutional attributions granted to the Chilean executive.

Legal Variables

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. The president cannot credibly threaten the legislature to use his or her popularity to significantly influence the future composition of either chamber. Because it is highly likely that a large majority of seats will be equally split between the two large coalitions, the president's popularity will not represent a credible threat to opposition and government coalition legislators. Instead, the loyalty of coalition legislators to a large extent depends on the intra-coalition party discipline that exists in the government 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 occasionally 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.

Formally, the legal arrangement in the legislature is such that individual legislators are free to vote as they please on any legislative initiative. Yet, some institutional arrangements do promote certain level of discipline within each chamber. Committee appointments are made by party leaders in each chamber and negotiated with other party leaders. Thus, independents have strong incentives to join existing political party *bancadas* (delegations) to improve their chances of getting into their desired committees. Thus, the formal rules of committee appointment encourage party discipline and make it easy for party leaders to punish free-wheeling legislators.

Party Variables

Because the legislature is primarily comprised of *party loyalists*, there are high levels of party discipline in the voting record of legislators (Alemán and Saiegh, 2005). In fact, rather than negotiating directly with legislators, presidents are compelled to negotiate their legislative initiatives directly with national party leaders. When the executive reaches an agreement with the national party leader, the concurrence of most of that party's legislative delegation is almost certainly assured. Although there have been occasions where the party legislators have rebelled against the agreements between their party leaders and the executive, the fact that those events have resulted in political crises and internal bickering that often ends up with the resignation of the party's leadership evidences that party loyalty is a valued asset in Chilean politics. When party leaders are incapable of enforcing party discipline, they are often forced to resign.

Some of the most important legislative initiatives that have been introduced by the three democratically elected presidents since 1990 have been previously negotiated with the opposition parties' leaders. They have been sent to the Congress after an agreement has been reached—and often signed with much fanfare—with opposition parties' leaders. Most recently, a much celebrated accord to reform and modernize the state bureaucracy and adopt a comprehensive campaign finance reform was first negotiated between the government and the main opposition party, the UDI. Once President Lagos's government and the UDI agreed on a package of reforms, the executive sent the legislation to congress where it was swiftly passed (Navia 2004). True, some other pieces of legislation are not agreed upon with the opposition and are sent directly to the legislature, where they are often modified, blocked or significantly altered. Yet, the three *Concertación* administrations have continuously sought to negotiate their most important legislative initiatives with opposition party leaders before sending them to the legislature. To some extent, something similar has happened between the executive and *Concertación* parties. Although *Concertación* presidents have enjoyed considerable legislative support for their initiatives, they cannot automatically count on the support of their coalition allies. Instead, presidents have had to lobby for the support of their coalition partners. In some instances, the initiatives are handled directly with the legislative delegations from the different parties, but whenever symbolic legislative initiatives are discussed, Chilean presidents have opted to negotiate directly with party leaders, both from their own coalitions and those from the opposition.

Logically, this high level of party discipline in the behavior of legislators often undermines a central role of the legislature. Because the core components of most legislative initiatives are agreed upon outside the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, legislators have few incentives to spend time in studying legislative initiatives. Because the ability to legislate is not a central determinant in one's chances to win re-election, legislators often overlook their role as lawmakers. Moreover, because party leaders often negotiate with the executive the terms of legislative initiatives sent by the president, *party loyalists* will pay a heavy price if they opt to resist their party's political agreements. Yet, on the other hand, the fact that party discipline is a central component of the candidate

selection process, party leaders can credibly commit their legislative delegations' support. Naturally, party leaders cannot automatically force their party legislators to go along with any agreement they reach with the executive. They must take into account the views of their legislative delegations. Thus, in that sense, party loyalty is both an asset and a liability. Party leaders can punish legislators who are not party loyalists, but party leaders will lose their leadership positions if they alienate their legislative benches.

Party discipline has been a central component of the Chilean democratic experience after 1989. The Chilean legislature has been characterized by a strong display of party discipline. Both the *Alianza* opposition parties and the *Concertación* parties have shown a strong sense of party discipline. Coalition discipline has also been strong, although differences within coalition members have often led individual parties to break ranks with their coalition partners on specific issues. That has traditionally been the case among the two *Alianza* parties, RN and UDI. However, *Concertación* parties have also ended up on opposite ends of specific issues. Yet, within-party discipline has remained markedly strong.

Because Chilean political parties form electoral coalitions, the nomination process often represents a major challenge for coalition unity. Because it is an indivisible good, the nomination for the coalition presidential candidate raises tensions within the *Concertación* and the *Alianza* coalitions. The *Concertación* has moved over time towards open primaries for the nomination of its presidential candidate. In 1993, semi-open primaries were conducted. The PDC candidate Eduardo Frei easily defeated the PS-PPD candidate Ricardo Lagos. In 1999, in the first fully open presidential primaries—where all registered voters not formally affiliated with opposition parties could cast ballots—the PS-PPD candidate Ricardo Lagos handily defeated the PDC candidate Andrés Zaldívar. In 2005, the *Concertación* was scheduled to hold primaries in July. The PDC candidate Soledad Alvear and PS-PPD candidate Michelle Bachelet would face each other off in the second consecutive open presidential primary in the *Concertación*. The *Alianza* has continued to trust upon party leaders the negotiations over the coalition's presidential candidate. Although some voices have asked for open primaries within the *Alianza*, that

coalition has yet to follow the *Concertación* in granting its adherents the power to choose its presidential candidate.

Primaries have not been widely adopted to select legislative candidates. Yet, if the trend set by the *Concertación* for presidential elections is expanded to include legislative nominations, the strong presence of party loyalists will undoubtedly diminish.

Consequently, the strength of national parties and the solid level of party discipline that we observe in Chile today might also weaken. Thus, while open primaries might in fact be a desirable step towards more participation, transparency and democracy, it might have unintended consequences in diminishing the strength and cohesion of political parties as many legislators will no longer be *party loyalists*. Although presidential candidates have remained loyal to the parties that nominate them, the diversity of outcomes in legislative election primaries will make it more difficult for party loyalty to remain as strong as it is today.

VI. Conclusion

The candidate selection process in Chile reflects and reinforces the strength of existing political parties in that country. When analyzed as a dependent variable, the candidate selection process for legislative elections signals how the combination of legal arrangements, such as electoral rules, and the power of existing political parties makes it difficult for aspirants other than party loyalists to successfully become successful candidates for the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. Because parties have actively used the incentives provided by the existing electoral rules, aspirants who are not party loyalists are often prevented from becoming candidates and incumbents who do not behave as party loyalists are easily punished when they seek to win re-election.

When analyzed as an independent variable, the candidate selection mechanism has facilitated the consolidation of political parties as the central legislative actors in negotiating with the executive. Because legislators are primarily party loyalists, party

leaders can credibly negotiate on behalf of their legislative delegations with the executive. That has facilitated discipline within the government coalition and it has also made it easier for the executive to broker agreements with the opposition. However, because party leaders can directly negotiate with the executive, the role of the legislature as a lawmaking body has been somewhat undermined. Because legislative candidates in Chile are primarily *party loyalists*, the strength of political parties continues to be a central component in Chile's democracy. As parties can successfully punish disloyalty and reward loyalty, legislative candidates remain committed party loyalists, thus further strengthening already strong Chilean political parties.

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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)