
STUDY

**THE HIDDEN LOGIC OF CANDIDATE SELECTION
FOR CHILEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS*¹**

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How has the double-member district electoral system imposed by the Pinochet regime affected parliamentary candidate selection in Chile? Rather than parties and coalitions choosing candidates to maximize district vote, this article argues that a more complex constellation of variables influences candidate selection and placement on coalition lists. The attempt to realize discrete objectives related to sub-pact alliances, national coalitions, and presidential candidacies, often leads to the selection of candidates who may not maximize the total individual or list vote. Indeed, individual parties may actually sacrifice candidacies (and potentially seats) to meet these goals. The article establishes generally applicable rules that govern how coalitions select candidates and

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provides a schematic diagram for understanding these rules. It concludes suggesting the importance of analyzing the effect of electoral systems, and particularly strategically complex systems, on candidate selection processes across Latin America.

The political consequences of Chile's two-member district (*binominal*)² electoral system for parliamentary elections have been the subject of much academic and political debate. Most analyses of the electoral formula have focused on its consequences for the country's party system.³ Nonetheless, little has been written on how the system affects parliamentary candidate selection and electoral list composition in Chile.

The process of candidate selection is little understood by Chileans and students of Chilean politics alike. First, there is very little written on internal party processes in Chile, or in Latin America generally. Second, there is little agreement concerning what to measure and how to measure it when one addresses the selection process. Most agree that two central questions include the degree of centralization and the extent of popular participation.⁴ The difficulty in measuring these variables and unmasking what are often informal processes make locating the real locus of control quite difficult. Third, most of the literature on the subject focuses on

² Two-member districts are uncommon, though they exist at the state level in the US. Their mechanical effects are discussed by Rein Taagepera, "The Effect of District Magnitude And Properties Of Two Seat Districts," in Arend Lijphart and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Choosing an electoral system* (New York: Praeger, 1984), pp. 1-102; and Gary Cox, "Electoral Equilibrium In Double Member Districts," *Public Choice*, 44 (1984), 443-451.

³ The party integrative and stabilizing tendencies of the electoral system are underscored by, among others, Eugenio Guzmán, "Reflexiones sobre el sistema binominal," *Estudios Públicos*, 51 (winter 1993), 303-325; and Rhoda Rabkin, "Redemocratization, Electoral Engineering, and Party Strategies in Chile, 1989-1995," *Comparative Political Studies*, 29 (June 1996), 335-356. Those who are not convinced that the electoral system possesses these qualities include Peter Siavelis and Arturo Valenzuela, "Electoral Engineering and Democratic Stability: The Legacy of Authoritarian Rule in Chile," in Arend Lijphart and Carlos Waisman, eds., *Institutional Design in New Democracies: Eastern Europe and Latin America*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 77-100; J. Samuel Valenzuela and Timothy Scully, "Electoral Choices and the Party System in Chile: Continuities and Changes at the Recovery of Democracy," *Comparative Politics*, (July 1997) 29, 511-527; and Peter Siavelis, "Continuity and Change in the Chilean Party System: On the Transformational Effects of Electoral Reform", *Comparative Political Studies*, 30 (December 1997), 651-674.

⁴ Michael Gallagher, "Introduction," in Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh, *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective* (London: Sage, 1988), p. 4.

European parliamentary governments or the United States, and is less relevant to Latin America's predominantly multiparty, presidential systems.

Despite these important limitations, this article makes some preliminary generalizations concerning the process of parliamentary candidate selection in Chile. It begins by setting out the context of electoral reform and its connection to candidate selection, and goes on to suggest some of the impediments to understanding the process in Chile. The article then explores the actual mechanisms of candidate selection for legislative elections on three interrelated, yet analytically distinct, levels. First, it suggests what makes candidates attractive to political parties, and analyzes how parties choose candidates. Second, the article explores the rationale of party elites in forming pacts and sub-pacts, and discusses the most important variables that determine which of the sub-pacts' constituent parties are awarded candidacies in which districts. The third section analyzes the incentives that shape candidate selection within major coalitions, and how these coalitions determine the composition of national lists. It establishes generally applicable rules that govern candidate selection within coalitions and provides a schematic diagram of these rules. The final section provides evidence for these rules through empirical discussion of the candidate selection process, underscoring some of the paradoxes in candidate choice produced by this unique electoral system.

The point of departure for most election analyses is that parties attempt to maximize votes. The real goal of parties and coalitions is, of course, to maximize the total number of seats they win in parliament, and usually the maximization of votes and the maximization of seats are one and the same thing. However, within strategically complex election systems like Chile's, these seemingly self-evident assumptions no longer function, and the desire to maximize total seats creates a much more complex constellation of variables that influence where and with which coalition partners candidates run. What is more, leaders attempt to achieve a series of discrete objectives, many of which are contradictory, and some of which are not particularly well thought out in terms of their political consequences. Maximizing the number of seats, of course, is the desired end for parties, but often politicians must settle for less in order to take care of other goals related to sub-pact alliances, national coalitions, and presidential candidacies. Indeed, parties may sacrifice candidate slates (and, thus, potential seats) to much less popular candidates in order to maintain the integrity of the coalition. Parties may also agree to refrain from competing in districts where they might win or have a better candidate in the interests of coalition unity, or in order to obtain candidacies in other more competitive

districts. The sum interaction of different sets of groups, subgroups and individual leaders in simultaneously dealing with challenges emerging on all of these levels is what determines who runs where, and under what circumstances, in Chilean parliamentary elections.

Democratization and Electoral Engineering in Chile

For most of its democratic history Chile employed a permissive, multi-member district proportional representation (PR) system for House of Deputies and Senate elections. Following an almost seventeen-year interregnum of authoritarian rule led by General Augusto Pinochet, military authorities imposed a series of constitutional and electoral changes. These reforms were aimed at party system transformation, in an effort to remedy what military authorities perceived as the unhealthy nature of polarized and ideological party competition during the country's long experience with democracy. The most important of these reforms was the adoption of an electoral formula with two-member districts, or a binominal system. The electoral formula was designed to both temper the negative consequences of the often fractious and ideological party system, and to provide an advantage for the parties of the right.⁵ Along the way, reformers hoped the system would eradicate the left by marginalizing it from electoral politics.

Military reformers assumed that a reduction in district magnitude would lead to party system integration and a reduction in the number of parties. Relying on assumptions in the theoretical literature concerning the reductive effect of small magnitude systems, they hoped the electoral formula would at least lead to the consolidation of moderate multi-partism, and at best, to the formation of a two-party system.⁶

The binominal electoral law provides that each party or electoral alliance in the country can present two candidates for election to the Chamber of Deputies in each of the country's sixty electoral districts. The binominal system is also employed for elections to the Senate, within each of the 19 senatorial districts (*circunscripciones*). Voters opt for a single

⁵ See Siavelis and Valenzuela.

⁶ Reformers relied on Downs' median voter hypothesis as the logic that would produce centripetal and bipolar party competition in Chile. However, as Magar, et al. demonstrate, Downs based his analysis on single member districts, and the bipolar dynamic produced by magnitudes of two differs from that explored by Downs and may even encourage centrifugal competition. See, Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1957); and Eric Magar, Marc Rosenblum and David Samuels, "On the Absence of Centripetal Incentives in Double Member Districts: The Case of Chile," *Comparative Political Studies*, 31 (December 1998), 714-739.

candidate from a series of two-candidate open lists. The individual garnering a plurality wins the first seat in each district, but, in practice, that individual's coalition is unlikely to win the second seat. Given the operational characteristics of the D'Hondt proportional representation system in two-member districts, in order for a party or coalition to win both seats, it must double the vote of its nearest competing list. To avoid any doubt about this operational dynamic, the constitutional organic law that regulates elections actually states that one list must double the vote of its nearest competitor to win two seats.

A concrete example clarifies this description of the system, and points to some of its counterintuitive results. The 1989 electoral returns from congressional district 19 appear in Table I. It shows that though both Concertación candidates individually received more votes and a higher percentage of votes than any of the Democracia y Progreso coalition (now the Alianza) candidates, the rules of the electoral system provided that the winners of this race were Mario Hamuy and Cristián Leay. This is the case, because the Concertación list did not double the total list vote of the Democracia y Progreso list.

Thus, the electoral system establishes certain thresholds. In each district, to obtain one seat, a party or coalition must have at least 33.4% of

TABLE I: ELECTION RESULTS FROM DISTRICT 19—RECOLETA, METROPOLITAN REGION OF SANTIAGO

Coalition	Votes	Percent*
<i>Concertación:</i>		
Maria Hamuy (PDC)	41,876	34.0
Oscar Santilices (PPD)	39,549	32.1
Total	81,425	66.1
<i>Democracia y Progreso:</i>		
Cristián Leay (UDI)	34,137	27.7
Mauricio Smok (RN)	7,647	6.2
Total	41,784	33.9

Source: Ministerio del Interior.

* This figure represents the percentage of the vote of the two largest coalitions. There were, of course, other small parties and lists, but the data is presented this way to make clear the significance of thresholds for the two largest parties.

the votes, and to win both seats it must win 66.7% of said vote. While many have pointed to this effective threshold of 66.7% and 33.4% for winning two and one seat respectively in each district, the ability to win seats, of course, also depends on the distribution of votes and the number of lists competing across districts. In essence, the threshold of representation in each district is a sliding function of the number of lists that present candidates and their relative levels of support. For example, with many lists competing, if the first polling list receives a plurality of 22% of the vote it will win one seat, and the next highest polling list need only receive 11% plus one vote in order to win the second seat.

Nonetheless, reformers were aware of the probable physiognomy of post-authoritarian party competition, and designed the system with a two-list format in mind. The process by which the binominal system was chosen is complex. Many contend that it was a direct outgrowth of the results of the plebiscite, and that military reformers designed it knowing that the center left opposition would have difficulty mustering the 66.7% of the vote across districts nationally necessary to win more than one seat in each of the districts in post-authoritarian elections. Others argue that the trajectory of the binominal system is much longer and the decision to adopt it more complex, and that immediate political calculation did not play as large a role as some suggest. They go on to argue that the early debates concerning the desirability of the binomial system were informed more by Chile's historical pattern of party competition, and specifically, the right's traditionally lackluster performance. As Pastor shows, there were discussions concerning the adoption of a two-member district system as early as 1984.⁷ However, the truth is that the details and formula of the binominal system, and particularly the requirement that one list double the total vote of the second list was promulgated as Article 109 bis. of Organic Law 18,700, over a year after Pinochet's defeat in the plebiscite. Therefore, while it may be an overstatement to say that the entire design of the system was a panicked response to defeat in the plebiscite, it is undeniable that the results of the plebiscite in some measure shaped the final design of the system. Therefore, military reformers could use information from public opinion data and the returns from the 1988 plebiscite, and did know that the right would likely garner 35-40% of the vote. The electoral formula would, thus, enable the right to win one of the two seats in each district (or 50% of the seats), with a little over 33% of the vote.

⁷ Daniel Pastor, "Origins of the Chilean Binominal Electoral System," *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 24:1 (2004), 38-57.

The reality of such strong electoral thresholds also creates some interesting dynamics in terms of the incentives shaping both the parliamentary list formation process and electoral competition that are explored in depth below. However, briefly stated, given the high threshold to win two seats, sharing a list with a relatively stronger candidate in a district where the coalition can be expected to win under 66.7% of the vote is a recipe for defeat. Thus, candidates have incentives to seek pairings with weaker coalition partners (in order to allow them to reach the 33.4% threshold but still be able to beat their list partner), or extremely strong partners in order to allow the electoral list to *doblar* (or win *both* seats in the district by crossing the 66.7% threshold). The thresholds of the system also affect the strategic decisions of the minority coalition. The majority coalition engages in a strategy to attempt to double in as many districts as possible, while the minority coalition acts to *prevent* the majority coalition from doubling.

What effect has the electoral system had on the party system? Has party competition been fundamentally transformed? Since the return of democracy, party politics have been dominated by two multi-party coalitions: the center-left Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (the Concertación) and the center-right Alianza por Chile.⁸ This pattern of bipolar coalitional competition is unprecedented in terms of the durability and strength of the coalitions. While proponents of the binomial system argue that it has encouraged centripetal competition, negotiation and party system integration⁹, they perhaps overstate the case. Party leaders have employed strategies to counteract the party reductive characteristics of the electoral formula, and the party system bears some striking resemblances to its pre-authoritarian multiparty counterpart. Most evidence suggests that despite the existence of two broad coalitions, just as in the pre-authoritarian period there are currently four or five significant political parties and none can claim majority status.¹⁰

Thus, the continued existence of an ingrained multi-party system is at odds with the majoritarian characteristics of the electoral system. Only two candidates can be presented in each district from either major coalition (and coalitions must be formed in order for a party to be successful). At the same time 4 or 5 major parties and several minor parties continue to exist. Party leaders are forced to engage in elaborate and time-consuming

⁸ This alliance has also been known as “Democracia y Progreso,” “Unión por el Progreso de Chile,” and the “Unión por Chile”. See Figure 1.

⁹ Guzman, Rabkin.

¹⁰ Siavelis and Valenzuela; Valenzuela and Scully; Siavelis.

negotiations to assemble two-candidate parliamentary lists. The candidate selection process does represent a process of consensus decision-making, coalition building and negotiation. However, it is a forced and inflexible one given the limited number of rewards for coalition participation and the limited number of incentives (seats) with which to negotiate. That these negotiations have succeeded in the last four parliamentary elections (1989, 1993, 1997, and 2001) is a testament to both the tenacity of the country's party system and the negotiating ability of Chilean party leaders. How have candidate selection and coalition formation procedures been transformed in order to accommodate the existing party system within the framework of electoral majoritarianism?

Impediments to Understanding Parliamentary Candidate Selection in Chile

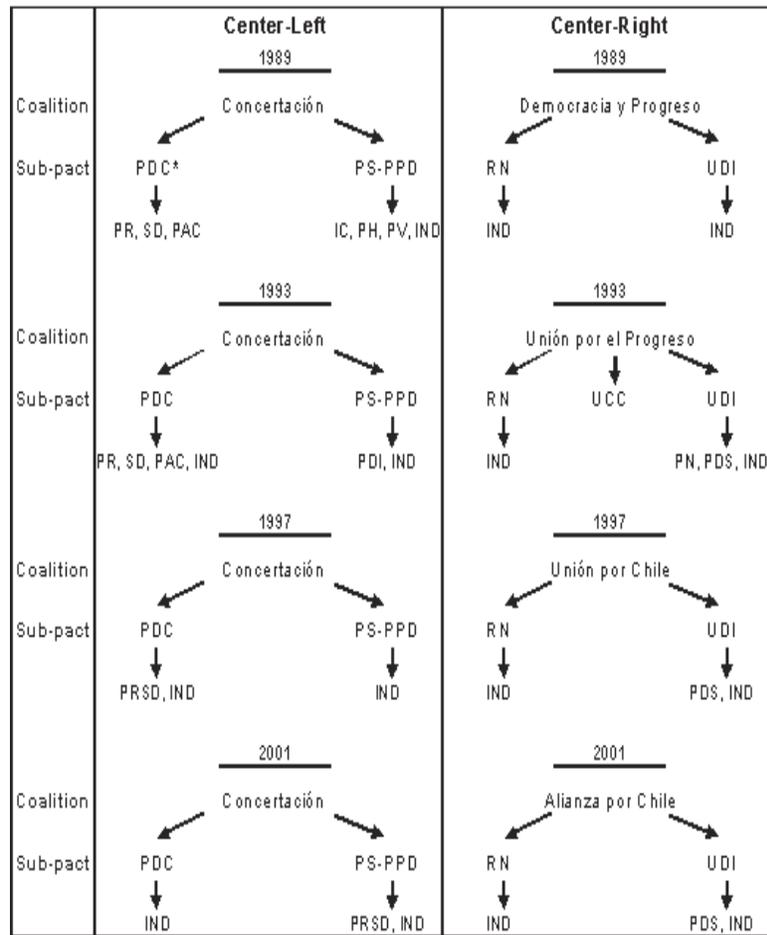
Before discussing the actual process and incentives behind candidate selection in Chile it is important to set out some of the impediments to understanding the process of list composition. First, during the last four parliamentary elections, the continuity of several important political parties and a number of smaller parties has complicated the process of candidate designation in numerical terms. Though parties have coalesced into two major coalitions, there are also a number of "sub-pacts" within each representing different ideological tendencies. The sub-pacts are clustered around major "anchor" parties, and their composition is discussed below.

These sub-pacts place demands on their coalitions. Thus, when assembling national candidate slates, parties must negotiate to ensure equity in the distribution of seats not only within the two major coalitions, but also among the various parties and sub-pacts within the coalition. Figure I provides a breakdown of the composition of coalitions, sub-pacts, and their parties for the 1989, 1993, 1997, and 2001 elections, and a key to party labels that is useful to understand the discussion that follows:

Each of these individual parties has its own candidate designation process. While each party may have a complete set of 120 candidates, given that each national alliance is limited to this number, there is long and arduous road between being supported by one's party and actually seeing one's name on the ballot.

Second, the process of candidate selection has changed in each of the four parliamentary elections since the return of democracy. In many

Figure 1: Coalitions, Sub-pacts and Parties in Chilean Parliamentary Elections, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001



*ANCHOR PARTIES IN BOLD

PARTY KEY: IC-- Izquierda Cristiana (Christian Left), IND--Independents Associated with Sub-pacts, PAC--Partido Alianza de Centro (Center Alliance Party), PDC--Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party), PDI--Partido Democrático de Izquierda (Democratic Party of the Left), PH--Partido Humanista (Humanist Party), PSD--Partido del Sur (Party of the South), PN--Partido Nacional, PR--Partido Radical (Radical Party), PV--Partido Verde (Green Party), SD--Social Democracia (Social Democracy), RN--Renovación Nacional (National Renewal), PRSD--Partido Radical Socialdemócrata, UCC--Unión de Centro Centro (Center Center Union), UD--Unión Demócrata Independiente (Independent Democratic Union)

parties the process has tended toward opening and democratization, with the introduction of some type of primary in certain of the parties. However, as will be noted in the conclusion, the complexity of the process of coalition formation militates against such an opening, and candidate selection is still primarily an elite affair.

Finally, election slate composition has been shaped profoundly by the transition process, and is itself in transition. Given the predominance of party elites in choosing candidates in the pre-authoritarian era, the question of the democratization of internal party structures returned with democratic politics. More than sixteen years of authoritarian rule also meant that in the lead-up to the first election, few recent and concrete measures of the actual level of support for parties existed. Parties had little hard data to employ as leverage in the negotiation process. With access to more information in recent elections, the mechanisms for candidate designation have become more formalized.

These realities make it difficult to nail down concrete rules, because they have yet to be formulated. The Chilean expression, “en el camino se arregla la carga¹¹,” perhaps best describes changes in the processes regulating both candidate selection and the composition of electoral lists. When met with challenges and pressures for increased democratization, or when threats to coalition maintenance have emerged, parties have adjusted candidate selection processes.

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to analyze in general terms the challenges faced by each of Chile’s two coalitions in reconciling the demands of their member parties in order to cobble together two candidate lists in sixty districts every four years.¹²

The Composition of Electoral Lists

In the most simplistic terms, the goal of any candidate in an election is to maximize votes. It follows that coalitions should seek to choose the two candidates capable of garnering the highest total number of votes in a particular district. Nonetheless, pacts and sub-pacts also have goals distinct from those of individual candidates, and in particular the maximization of total seats in parliament. Important decision-makers also seek to maximize votes of their sub-pacts and coalitions, and to strengthen the coalition for presidential elections and future races. Each of these

¹¹ “You readjust your load as you proceed down the road.”

¹² While other electoral lists present candidates these two have together garnered over 80% of the vote for all post-authoritarian legislative elections.

realities may lead—and as careful empirical analysis shows—has led to situations in which leaders do not always choose, or have the capacity to place on a list, the candidate that they believe capable of garnering the highest number of votes in a particular district.

There are three levels on which the most important decisions determining candidate choice are made. First, there is the difficult process of internal decision-making within individual parties. Second, negotiations take place within each of the sub-pacts to determine the number of candidates that each will have on larger coalition lists. Third, each national coalition must engage in internal bargaining to determine which candidates from which sub-pacts and parties will run in each district. As will become evident, these processes are very much connected and often occur simultaneously. They are separated here only for analytical purposes.

Candidate Selection by Individual Parties. Despite the paucity of academic literature on candidate selection, that which exists suggests there are two extremes when it comes to the locus of control.¹³ On one extreme is the simple selection of candidates by the party leader alone, and on the other, the selection of candidates by registered party members or even party supporters. In most cases, power lies at a point between these extremes, involving some pattern of party constituency consultation. Chile is no exception to this generalization, though individual parties differ in the extent of constituent and party activist participation.

In pre-authoritarian Chile candidate selection was controlled almost entirely by party elites, though its large magnitude open list system did provide the voter more control over ultimate candidate selection. Post-authoritarian legal norms continue to permit elite-centered candidate selection processes. Article 19, No. 15 of the Chilean Constitution states that political party “by-laws must provide for norms ensuring effective internal democracy within political parties,” though nothing is said concerning candidate selection per se. Expanding on the guidelines set out in the Constitution, however, the Ley Orgánica de Partidos Políticos, (Constitutional Organic Law of Political Parties-Law 18603) sets down guidelines for the selection of individual candidates. The law states, “The statutes of political parties will contain guidelines stating that the designation of and support for Deputy and Senate candidates will be made by the National Party Council (Consejo General¹⁴), as proposed by the

¹³ Gallagher, p. 4.

¹⁴ National Councils are composed of senators, deputies, and a number of representatives elected by each Regional Party Council.

Regional Council (Consejo Regional).” How do parties act within these general legal guidelines for candidate selection? How decentralized and how much to base level activists and citizens participate in the process? What variables determine who ultimately appears on the ballot?

Table II summarizes the candidate selection mechanisms used by the major anchor parties in Chile for each of the elections since the return of democracy, and shows that parties vary in the extent of participation of base-level party activists in candidate selection. However, in most parties, elites still exercise de facto control. This is the case for several reasons. Chilean parties are more similar in structure to their European counterparts, where candidates are not chosen in primaries as they are in the United States. Thus, there is not a strong tradition of internal democracy in Chilean parties when it comes to candidate selection. Even in the parties where some form of primary has been introduced, elites still exercise de facto control, because the candidate put forth in the primary is often proposed by party elites. Finally, and as will be stressed throughout this analysis, the exigencies of coalition formation make the introduction of primaries difficult, because ultimately coalition elites must place candidates with an eye to overall coalition victory. This means that decisions of individual parties and their militants must sometimes be overridden in the interests of coalition unity.

TABLE II: CANDIDATE SELECTION MECHANISM BY PARTY, 1989-2001

Alliance	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

Source: Patricio Navia. “Legislative Candidate Selection in Chile.” Paper presented at the conference “Pathways to Power: Political Recruitment and Democracy in Latin America,” Graylyn International Conference Center Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC. April 3 and 4, 2004.

As Table II suggests, popular participation was almost non-existent for the 1989 elections, when parties had little time, information or bargaining leverage to provide formalized structures for candidate selection. Party elites simply decided who would run where and against whom. The process of candidate selection has become more open and democratic in the PDC and in the PS (with the introduction of open and limited closed primaries respectively), however for the most part it is still party elites that control the process. While the democratization of candidate selection would appear an attractive platform for a party, the complexity of coalition formation makes it quite difficult for parties to surrender power over the selection of candidates.

Nonetheless, the process of candidate selection functions differently based on whether choice is centralized, or if primaries are used. For centralized parties, in the initial stages of candidate choice parties attempt to put forth the candidate with the best “packaging” who can simultaneously appeal to party bases, and the Regional and National Councils. In the major parties, elites (called variously, Central Committees, National Boards, or National Councils) meet with large lists of potential candidates paired with their districts. Each candidate is discussed in turn until a final list of between 60 and 120 candidates is determined, taking into account the recommendations of regional councils. The size of the list is determined by the party’s estimation of its overall strength, negotiating strategy, and the number of slates the party expects. By this time parties are usually aware of the approximate number and location of districts in which they will run (the process of determining this number is discussed below). Candidates are also ranked in terms of how willing the party is to cede their slates in negotiations with other parties (this is, of course, confidential). In minor parties, a smaller list of candidates is assembled, and leaders discuss negotiating strategies to best place their candidates on major lists.

In parties where primaries are used (PS—closed, and PDC—open) the process is different. This is not to suggest that candidate selection processes are in the hands of party militants, even where there has been limited democratization. First, the tradition of centralization is hard to overcome. Where party militants fail to elect the candidate favored by party leaders in competitive primaries, local activists usually have the final word, though in some cases party National Councils have overturned the results of party primaries. Second, parties often decide to cede a slate to another party later in negotiations in the interests of coalition unity, meaning the decision of militants is overridden. This is a common occurrence, often leading to disgruntled candidates who feel like sacrificial lambs on the altar

of coalition unity. Finally, in most cases when there are incumbents, they run unopposed, making primaries unnecessary. Therefore, even where primaries are used we cannot speak of real internal democracy. What is more, Navia notes that for the PDC (the only party where open primaries have been employed), the introduction of primaries has coincided with deterioration in the success rate of the party in electing candidates. Meanwhile, the party with the most centralized candidate selection procedures, the UDI, has had constant and increasing success in electing candidates, suggesting that primaries may not be the best method to choose electable candidates¹⁵ Therefore, a trend toward increasing internal party democracy or the use of primaries in the designation of candidates is unlikely.

What are some of the variables that enhance the attractiveness of candidate? Months before elections, party activists begin posturing to present themselves as potential parliamentary candidates. The perceived strength of candidates determines their success throughout each of the levels of the selection process. For example, the ability of a particular candidate to more successfully compete with a strong opposition candidate slated in a particular district may be a decisive factor that leads to the former's selection as the party nominee. A stronger candidate can demand a better district and provide his or her party more negotiating capacity within the alliance as a whole. Thus, when the negotiating process gets underway, parties attempt to find the strongest candidates and place them in the "best" districts.

However, what determines candidate strength? As is the case in most well institutionalized party systems, there is some degree of regularity in party representation in Congress.¹⁶ Thus, as one would expect, incumbent status is strong predictor of whether or not a candidate is re-nominated. Between 1993 and 2001 the re-nomination rates for deputies averaged 73.3% (re-nominated either in the district they were serving, another district, or in the Senate). Of those re-nominated, 82.3% were reelected.¹⁷ Interviews with leaders across the party spectrum confirmed that incumbents are understood to have the right to re-nomination, barring extreme lack of party discipline.

¹⁵ Patricio Navia. "Legislative Candidate Selection in Chile." Paper presented at the conference "Pathways to Power: Political Recruitment and Democracy in Latin America," Graylyn International Conference Center Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC. April 3 and 4, 2004.

¹⁶ Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, "Introduction," in Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*. (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1985), p.6.

¹⁷ Patricio Navia. "Legislative Candidate Selection in Chile."

In addition, nationally known candidates are attractive both to National Party Councils and Regional Councils. An ex-minister or a prominent party leader is more influential in parliament, a perceived benefit to Regional Party Councils who are interested in the ability of Deputies to provide pork. This was very clearly the case in the 5th Senatorial District (Cordillera), where ex-Minister of Economy Carlos Ominami easily obtained the nomination of the Socialist Party (beating Isabel Allende—the former president’s daughter) in a competitive internal election, and went on to win a Senate seat in 1993.

Finally, as the above reference suggests (despite the Allende’s loss), family name has proven to be extremely important in Chile in terms of the attractiveness of candidates. Having the right “apellido” (surname) can help significantly in the quest for a parliamentary candidacy. The Senate (for the 1993-1997 period) contained an Alessandri, two Frei’s, a Letelier, and two Zaldívar’s, all traditionally important names in Chilean politics. Similarly, one Allende, two Alessandri’s, and two Letelier’s counted among the membership of the House of Deputies for the 1997-2001 period.

Once each party determines a preliminary slate of candidates, it must be reconciled with the overall agreement worked out by sub-pacts, and national coalitions. This process is usually completed by the time internal party decision-making processes are concluded

Sub-pact Negotiation. The entire process of candidate selection becomes much more complicated once it ceases to be a single party affair. This is especially true for those parties that have minority status within broader coalitions and sub-pacts.

Parties with an ideological bond, yet with programmatic differences have joined in Chile to form party “sub-pacts” (return to Figure I for a breakdown). For example, the parties of the left within the Concertación have formed a sub-pact composed of the PS and the PPD. Both parties have similar roots within the traditional Chilean Socialist Party. Nonetheless, continued programmatic, ideological and personal divisions prevented their fusion during the transition process. They have, however, “sub-pacted” in an effort to provide a unified party voice on the left. Similar conflicts on the right have led to the creation of two sub-pacts within the center-right Unión por el Progreso alliance, anchored by each of the two major parties (RN and UDI), and joined by a number of “independent” and small party candidates.

There is a great deal of evidence that the binominal system has not succeeded in reducing the number of small, but historically and politically

significant parties.¹⁸ However, rather than simply fusing with larger parties, these parties have also joined one of the sub-pacts with which they have some ideological affinity. The Radical Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, and others have each joined one of the two sub-pacts within the Concertación in order to maintain influence in the coalition. Because of the exclusionary characteristics of the electoral system, small parties know that the only way to win legislative seats is to negotiate to join a larger coalition.

What incentives do larger parties have to allow smaller parties on board? Given the importance of the system's electoral thresholds, large parties are willing to share in the allocation of a small number of electoral slates in some districts in exchange for the extra anticipated votes that can help electoral alliances cross one of the crucial thresholds in other districts. Equally important, allowing a small party into the coalitional fold helps to avoid additional small party presidential candidacies that can erode support for major coalition presidential candidates. The importance of unified presidential candidacies was driven home by the razor-thin plurality received by Socialist President Ricardo Lagos in the 1999 first-round presidential election, where the distance separating the top two polling candidates was one-half of one percent. While one could argue that Chile's provision for a presidential run-off lowers the stakes for striking a coalition for the presidency, parties do prefer to avoid a run-off if possible.

Equally important, coalitions seek to include smaller parties in order to prevent them from joining another alliance or sub-pact. Losing a small party to a rival coalition, or indeed, a rival sub-pact potentially can be quite dangerous in terms of national levels of support. Small parties know this and attempt to use it as leverage to extract as many seats as possible from sub-pact anchor parties. In the lead-up to the 1993 elections the UCC flirted with parties across the spectrum in order to extract the maximum number of candidacies possible from potential coalition partners.¹⁹ The right sacrificed a good number of candidacies out of the fear that the UCC would ally with the Concertación. A similar dynamic takes place even between parties in the same coalition. In preparation for the 1997 elections, the small PRSD effectively declared its free agency, informing both the PPD-PS and the Christian Democratic sub-pacts that it would join with the one that offered it the best deal in terms of candidacies. Indeed for the 2001 elections, the PRSD abandoned the PDC sub-pact, and joined the PS-PPD. Smaller parties

¹⁸ Siavelis, Valenzuela and Scully.

¹⁹ "Consejo General de RN Rechaza Pacto con UCC," *El Mercurio* May, 23 1993.

can, thus, use their leverage (often quite well —especially in the case of the PRSD²⁰) to create bidding wars among larger parties that lead sub-pacts. Nonetheless, this is a dangerous game, given that bidding will only go so high before the costs of acceding to the seat demands of a particular party exceed the electoral benefits it can provide.

After sub-pacts are constituted, each one must decide how many candidates will be allocated to each party before going into negotiations for the national coalition list. The behavioral dynamic of each party in sub-pact negotiations varies according to size. For example, given that the sub-pact of the left within the Concertación includes two major parties (the PS and PPD) with about an equal level of national support, each begins with the assumption that it should have one-half of the sub-pact's allocation of seats. The parties then use public opinion data and the returns from municipal elections to attempt to up their ante of influence and to win more election slates, before entering into negotiations with sub-pact of the center to form Concertación's electoral lists.

Coalition List Formulation. While each of the individual parties chooses candidates, and sub-pacts hammer out preliminary list proposals, a third, and simultaneous process is taking place. Representatives from each sub-pact determine the number of party slates that they will receive on national coalition lists. This process is characterized by elite negotiations carried on both within and outside of formal party, and alliance structures.²¹ While many aspects of the Concertación alliance are highly structured, the process of candidate selection between the major parties is not, nor is the process any more structured on the center-right. Across the party spectrum it is high-level party activists and their electoral experts who participate in the negotiations, though final agreements must be approved by each of the parties' National Councils.

At this phase of the candidate selection process, the most complex and pressing questions for the coalitions are the following: How will seats be divided between the major sub-pacts in each coalition? How many seats

²⁰ The PRSD (at the time only called the Radical Party before its merger with the Social Democratic party after the 1993 elections) secured a number of candidacies in excess of what its national level of support suggests that it should have received. In 1993 it received 11 of the 120 Concertación slates (almost ten percent), while only garnering about three percent of the vote nationally, in 1997 it garnered 8, and by switching to the PS-PPD sub-pact it succeeded in garnering 14. However, the additional reality that the PRSD also sought to reach the 5% minimum threshold to remain a political party, led it to accept many seats where it had no reasonable chance of winning.

²¹ "Las corrientes ocultas tras las negociaciones," *La Segunda* February, 19, 1993, p. 13.

will be ceded to smaller sub-pact partners? How will candidacies be distributed in individual districts? How will candidates be paired?

The Rules of Intra-coalitional Candidate Negotiation. —The answer to the above questions is fundamentally conditioned by the existence of the electoral thresholds already discussed. All parties and sub-pacts realize that it is very difficult for coalitions to gain a two-seat victory in a particular district. To do so within the Concertación usually entails garnering a total list vote of over 66%. Thus, it is likely that at least one of the two candidates on a coalition slate will lose. The key to victory then, is for sub-pacts and parties to place their candidates on the same list either with an extremely strong candidate (that will help achieve the unlikely 66% two seat victory) or a weak candidate (that will help pass the 33% threshold, but not outpoll their candidate). This basic reality conditions both the alliance formation process, and how candidates are placed in each district. Interviews with leaders charged with candidate selection in every major political party in 1999 and 2000 and empirical examples suggest a consistent logic in the types of candidates other candidates seek to be paired with, and the types of pairings that sub-pacts prefer.

However, empirical evidence which follows also suggests an additional crucial variable that affects the rules of intra-coalitional bargaining: the relative strength of major sub-pacts and parties within them. For example, anchor parties in sub-pacts act differently depending on whether or not the sub-pact they lead enjoys a similar level of support to other major sub-pacts. Again, because of the electoral system's thresholds, two sub-pacts will be willing to equally divide seats in a situation where they enjoy relatively the same level of support throughout the country. However, if a sub-pact consistently trails another nationwide, it will be loathe to simply divide districts with a strong sub-pact, as this is a recipe for defeat across districts nationally. The strategic preference ordering of parties is, thus, also affected by the relative strength of their sub-pact. What is more, small parties face a different dilemma within the binominal system, and thus, also have to adopt a distinct strategy to maximize their influence and to win seats. Figures 2 and 3 systematize these rules and rank orders the optimal choices for both large and small parties. The figures also show variations in the preference ordering of parties depending on the relative strength of their sub-pact. Figure 2 represents these choices in intra-coalitional bargaining where the two major sub-pacts have relative parity in terms of support, while Figure 3 demonstrates the incentives of the system where there is disparity in the level of support for the two sub-pacts

in a coalition. Numbers within the figures represent the rank order of preferences for parties.

For the purposes of the below discussion, the term “rank” refers to national levels of support based on public opinion data and support in previous elections. An “anchor” party refers to the largest parties around which the sub-pact coalesces (the PDC, PPD and PS²² in the Concertación and the RN and UDI in Unión por Chile), and a minor party is any other smaller sub-pact partner.

Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate that when sub-pacts find themselves with differential levels of support, the preference ordering of parties within sub-pacts changes, and the nature of intra-coalitional bargaining is likely to be different. Fundamentally, where sub-pacts are equal in levels of support within a coalition, their strategies to maximize seats are identical. They seek to divide candidacies, and only cede a small number of seats to minor parties to keep the coalition together. However, when second-ranked sub-pacts trail the first sub-pact nationally, they must find some way to either avoid pairings with candidates of the stronger sub-pact and seek a weaker partner, or, be paired with a very strong partner from the first-ranked sub-pact that will carry them over the top of the second threshold.

The Rules of Intra-coalitional Candidate Negotiation in Practice. An analysis of the candidate selection process in the first three post-authoritarian elections sheds light on how these rules function on the ground. For the first post-authoritarian democratic election in 1989, the candidate selection process was complicated by an essentially blind negotiation, given the lack of any recent public opinion polls or electoral returns on which parties could base their projections of support. Each, of course, professed to be the leader in its particular ideological sector. At the same time, the stakes were extremely high, because the distribution of candidacies would in part determine how much national support a party would receive in the elections, and thus, would influence both the relative power of parties and candidate choices made in future races. Parties quickly realized the absurd competitive dynamic of the system, and understood that two-seat victories were unlikely. Nonetheless, running separate lists on the center and the left would have both handed the right a victory, and diminished the probability of a Concertación president. The urgency of the situation and the overall goal of defeating candidates tied to the previous

²² The PS and PPD are treated as a single anchor party for the purposes of this discussion (as would other parties who reach an agreement on the overall number of candidacies for each party before coalition-level negotiations).

Figure 2—Rules of Intra-coalition Negotiation in a Situation of **Subject Parity** (First and Second Ranked Sub-pacts Roughly Equal in Support).

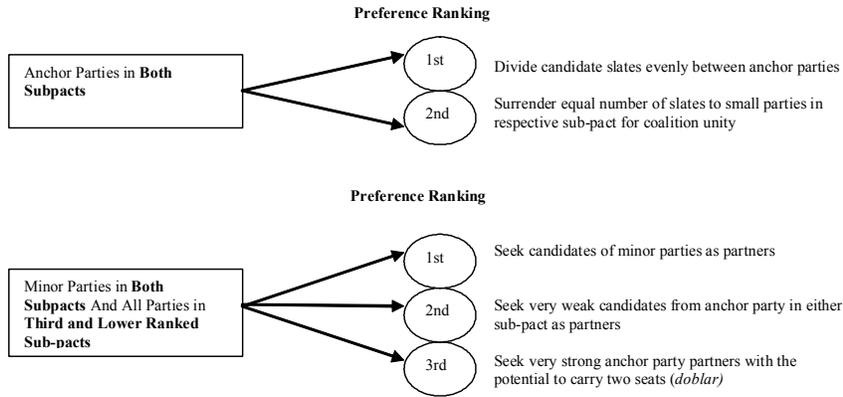
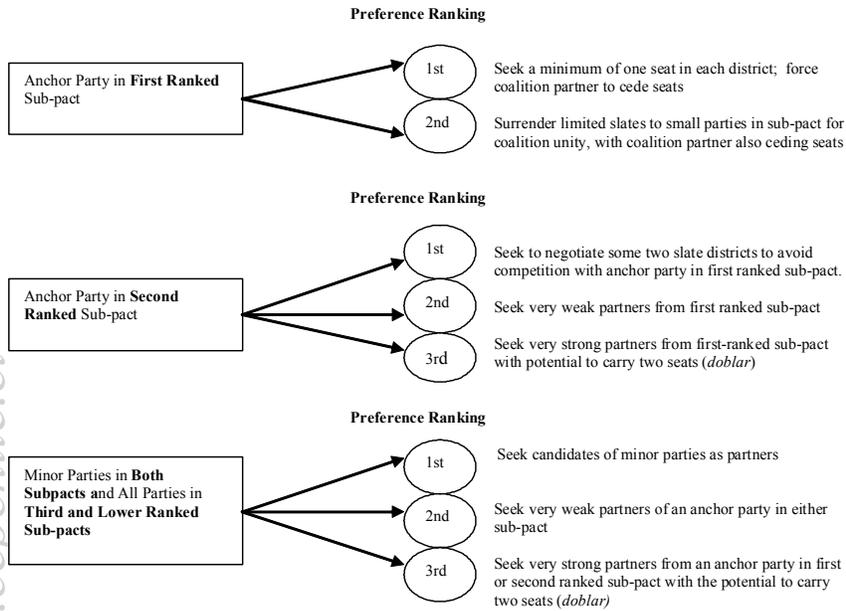


Figure 3—Rules of Intra-coalition Negotiation in a Situation of **Subject Disparity** (First and Second Ranked Parties with Differential Levels of Support).



government produced a spirit of give and take that would not be present in the following three parliamentary elections.

This is not to suggest that the process of list formation was completely without conflict in the Concertación. As the negotiating process began, the parties of the left (PS-PPD) were in a strong position to extract concessions from the Christian Democrats and their Coalición Chica sub-pact (PDC-PAC-PR-PSDP). Nonetheless, the emergence of a parallel list on the Left (PAIS—Partido Amplio de la Izquierda Socialista) composed of parties that refused to participate in the Concertación (including the Communists and dissident Socialists) complicated the bargaining situation. On the one hand, the splintering of the left provided the PDC ammunition to contend that the sector had indeed divided, and should, thus, be entitled to fewer seats on the Concertación list. On the other hand, the PDC had to hold out the promise of providing the left with sufficient seats to stem the possibility of a complete breakdown of the Concertación, with the moderate left jumping the coalitional ship to join the PAIS list. In the worst possible of cases, this would have meant a separate presidential candidacy on the left. At the same time, the parties of the left, banking on the possibility of inheriting support from the historically strong communist party, had to overcome the potential difficulties of alienating an important sector of the electorate through their alliance with the Concertación, and their rejection of a separate list on the left.²³

Ultimately the parties of the Concertación agreed that districts would be shared equally between the sub-pacts of the left and center, with some minor adjustments on the basis of each sub-pact's willingness to accommodate smaller parties. There was also a tacit agreement between the PS-PPD sub-pact, the PDC sub-pact and the PAIS. The Concertación would divide candidacies evenly between its two sub-pacts except where the PAIS was fielding a list. In those districts, two candidates of the center would be fielded in order to avoid dividing support on the left. What is more, the PAIS list agreed to support Concertación candidates where it had no list competing. The PDC, as the sub-pact anchor party, took advantage of getting two seats in some districts by distributing these to their minor party partners, in the process satisfying them, while maintaining an upper hand. Even so, the PDC knew that its higher level of national support would likely guarantee victory in the districts where its candidates were matched with small parties of the sub-pact.

²³ For a discussion of this dynamic see *El Mercurio* June 11, 1989, p. D4, *La Epoca* June 22, 1989.

With the passage of time and elections, the candidate selection process has become less harmonious and more complex. The forced consensus produced by the transition process within both coalitions has all but evaporated.

In light of this change, the negotiation process for the 1993 election was different. The leaders of the Concertación had information from two elections on which to base negotiations. The returns from the 1989 congressional and 1992 municipal elections became important sources of leverage for negotiating candidacies. Results of municipal elections have historically served as indicators of government approval and party strength.²⁴ The successful performance of the PDC in these elections gave the party additional negotiating weight.

Ultimately in 1993 the Concertación agreed upon an arrangement similar to that of 1989 elections. The PS-PPD and Christian Democratic sub-pacts agreed to again split the list, but like in 1989, to make a few minor adjustments to it. The PDC pointed to its successful performance in government and elections as rationale for an increased number of parliamentary candidacies. The PS-PPD sub-pact agreed to cede five districts to the Christian Democratic sub-pact, if the party would agree to use these five seats, and an additional five seats of its own to field minor party candidates. Thus, the Christian Democrats would run 55 candidates, their smaller sub-pact list partners (the PR, SD and PAC) would run 10, and the PS-PPD, 55, for a total of 120.²⁵ After determining the overall number of seats for allocation to the sub-pacts, each undertook a series of adjustments, which ultimately transferred a few more seats to minor parties.²⁶

The process of negotiation on the center-right was not so smooth. The then relatively newly formed UCC (Unión del Centro Centro), had received roughly 7 percent in the 1992 municipal elections, and was perceived to have the capacity to play a spoiler role on the right by stealing votes from the center-right coalition, and pulling it below the 33% electoral threshold. There was also an incipient UCC presidential candidacy that would undermine the right's performance in the presidential election. The

²⁴ *El Mercurio* February, 17 1993 p. c5.

²⁵ For a complete breakdown of all the parties participating in the Concertación (there were other very minor parties in addition to the 11 listed in Table II), see *El Mercurio* May, 21 1989, p. C5.

²⁶ Of the 65 candidates within the PDC sub-pact, the PDC ran 48, the PR 11, the SD 4, in addition to two associated independents. Within the PS-PPD sub-pact, candidacies broke down in the following way: 28 for the PS, 25 for the PPD, and two independent candidacies. Data provided the Ministry of the Interior, 1993.

major question in 1993 was whether to include the UCC within the center-right coalition, and if so, how to pass out slates to each of the three parties on the right. The UCC was awarded a number of candidacies well above what its national level of support would suggest that it should receive, principally to avoid splitting the vote on the right for the presidency, which would have occurred had the UCC presented its own candidate. The Unión por el Progreso alliance obtained this benefit at a very low cost. Despite its elevated number of candidacies, the UCC only succeeded in electing two of its own deputies, one of whom resigned from the UCC and promptly joined Renovación Nacional.²⁷

The final important variable factored into list composition is the combination of candidates on each list. As noted, the thresholds established by the electoral system make it difficult to field a slate of candidates capable of garnering the 66% of the vote necessary for a two-seat victory (or to “doblar”) in a particular district. Thus, it is clear that in most districts one candidate will win and one candidate will lose, both on the center-right and the center-left. (In the last four elections —1989, 1993, 1997, 2001— the Concertación garnered two-seat victories in 11, 11, 9, and 4 districts, respectively, and the parties of the center-right doubled only twice, once in 1993, and once in 2001).

This reality has led to suggestions in the press and in popular discussions of the electoral system that coalitions would be well advised to pursue a “weak-strong” strategy. That is to say, to run a candidate capable of garnering enough votes to pass the first electoral threshold, and to match this candidate with a weaker one whose votes will simply ensure that the first candidate passes the threshold, but who has little possibility of winning a seat. While logical, and sometimes clearly used, there is little evidence that this strategy is employed on as widespread a basis as some suggest. Fundamentally, the desirability of a weak-strong strategy depends on number of variables.

If single parties were putting together individual lists, there might be more of an incentive to pair weak candidates with strong ones, especially in districts in which parties cannot expect to garner a percentage of votes approaching 66%. However, in a system that creates high demand for seats and low supply, and where there are numerous parties, there is a plentiful supply of candidates on the list, and parties will be resistant to allow their candidates to be the weak member of the strong-weak list. There are of course exceptions. For example the PRSD has been willing to accept the

²⁷ José Auth, “Elecciones presidenciales y parlamentarias de 1993,” *Estudios Públicos*, 54 (fall 1994) pp. 339-362.

weak side of candidate pairings, because the party must also worry about maintaining the five percent of the vote necessary to remain a legally constituted party. There is also a grain of truth to this suggested logic, in that alliances may avoid running two extremely popular candidates in the same districts to avoid wasting votes.²⁸ However, more than a simple calculation of which candidate is weak and which is strong, the pairing of candidates depends on the importance of the district to the party (two very strong candidates may be paired in Santiago, Valparaíso or Concepción for example), the expected vote in the district, any regional ties candidates might have to the constituency, and as has been suggested here, the logic of coalition negotiation itself. Thus, in many cases two strong candidates will be placed, even where parties know that one will lose.

Party leaders also seek to pair candidates that will not engage in internecine conflict. In situations where the vote expected by two members of a coalition is relatively close, there is an incentive to engage in intra-list competition. Scholars recognize that this seldom happens, and that candidates “prefer” cooperation to confrontation in campaigning.²⁹ However, cannibalistic competition does happen, and did occur quite obviously in the 1989 elections in one important Santiago district, where RN candidate Sebastián Piñera was often publicly at odds with the UDI’s Hermógenes Pérez de Arce of the UDI, his presumed list “partner.”

The emergence of intra-list competition is not simply a matter of preference, but rather, depends on a few variables that help determine whether or not it occurs. If candidates go into the election relatively close in public opinion polls, intra-list competition is more likely. This is especially the case when it appears that only one of the candidates from the list will be elected. Even when there appear to be sufficient votes to elect two candidates in a particular district, receiving the “primera mayoría” (first majority) enhances a candidate’s attractiveness and bargaining power for future elections. Nonetheless, candidates often engage in a different game of veiled electoral cannibalism by suggesting their partner has sufficient votes, and that voters should attempt to provide the entire coalition ticket a “balanced victory.”

The combination of candidates on each list is also important in other ways. In the 1993 elections, the Unión por el Progreso coalition performed best in districts where it ran a candidate from each of the anchor parties of its two major sub-pacts (RN-UDI), rather than running two candidates from the same party or a representative of one party matched with an

²⁸ See, “Piñera al Borde del Si”.

²⁹ Rabkin, p. 346.

independent. In the districts where candidates of the two anchor parties ran (which number 16), they received 43.4% of the overall vote (6.8% higher than they received nationally, and 7.9% higher than the presidential candidates of the right received in these districts). Similarly, on the center-left in districts where members of the Social Democrats (SD) and Radical Parties (PR) were paired with the PPD-PS candidates, the smaller parties were unsuccessful in winning seats. In the 11 districts in which this combination existed there was an average of 18.7% separating the vote garnered by the SD-PR candidates from that garnered by the PPD-PS candidates.³⁰ Thus, it appears that lists composed of major anchor parties are more successful than those in which a smaller minor party is a member.³¹ Nonetheless, small parties still make it onto national coalition lists, even though lists made up of only major anchor party candidates would better maximize total list vote in individual districts. In essence, large parties pay the price of lower national vote totals for the benefit of coalition maintenance and unified presidential candidacies.

Sub-pact size and the Dynamics of Selection and Competition. Perhaps more important than the variables discussed above, the binominal system also produces a particular logic of negotiation depending on the relative size of the sub-pact (with size understood as national levels of support). This logic affects both negotiations and the nature of trade-offs between different goals. If the two sub-pacts in the same coalition are about the same size, seat negotiations are much less conflictual. If both can expect to obtain about 50% of the vote, coalitions will seek to place one candidate from a major party in each sub-pact in every district, and simply allow voters to decide. However, if one major sub-pact is at or about 60% and the other can count on about 40% of the coalition vote, the latter could expect to lose in every district. The name of the game for second place sub-pacts in these situations is to get candidates from popular parties of the largest sub-pact off their lists. That is to say to be paired on coalition lists along with a weaker party. Thus, small parties not only negotiate to seek candidatures on major lists, they also seek to run on lists with other smaller as opposed to major parties.

This logic is clear in the evolution of party competition on the right across elections.³² In 1989, the two major sub-pacts of the right, led by RN

³⁰ Auth, pp. 353-355

³¹ An alternative explanation is that larger parties with more negotiating power reserved these districts for themselves.

³² I am indebted to Andrés Allamand for his insights on the evolution of competition on the right.

and UDI, at first agreed in principle to simply divide lists and present one candidate from each sub-pact. However, the UDI's relative youth and lack of established structures for political recruitment meant that it actually had difficulty in identifying candidates to fill a slot on every electoral list, and only succeeded in placing 30 candidates (though a number of the 23 independent candidates that were presented on the Alianza's list were really associated with the UDI). In contrast, given the more established nature of RN, it was able to place 66 candidates; effectively more than the one-half share it was due. Following the 1989 election it became clear that RN had achieved predominance on the right. In the elections for the Chamber RN garnered 18.3% of the vote to the UDI's 9.8 percent.³³ This gave RN the upper hand going into negotiations for the following election.

Nonetheless, in the lead up to the 1993 election, matters were complicated by the entry of a new player on the right. As noted, the UCC's (Union del Centro Centro)³⁴ performance in the 1992 municipal elections established it as a potential player on the right. Both major parties of the right recognized the need to enhance the coalition's overall list totals to pass crucial thresholds nationally. Thus, the UCC began to market itself as forceful option that could add significantly to the national vote totals of parliamentary lists on the right.

Because of RN's predominance on the right, leaders of the party contended that an appropriate method to distribute parliamentary seats would be to award one slate to the RN sub-pact in each district, and let the UCC and UDI sub-pacts negotiate to split the rest of the seats between themselves. Both parties objected. Given RN's electoral dominance, both of the other parties' candidates would lose if paired with RN candidates. Nonetheless, RN also knew that without the UDI and UCC that its chances of consistently passing electoral thresholds would be substantially undermined with a divided right. The UCC thus focused its energies on getting Renovación candidates *off* of particular lists in order to permit competition between the UCC and the UDI. Francisco Javier Errázuriz, president of the UCC contacted leaders of Renovación Nacional directly to engage in negotiations. Errázuriz contended that the UCC should be "paid" for the 7% it was contributing to the overall strength of the right, and requested that the party be given 11 districts in which UCC candidates would compete only against each other. Leaders of Renovación Nacional agreed that Errázuriz was, perhaps entitled to this number of slates, but certainly not paired together in the combination he requested. Summing up

³³ Ministerio del Interior: "Elecciones históricas", <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>.

³⁴ Now the Unión del Centro Centro Progresista.

the logic that prevails for small parties paired with larger ones, Errázuriz replied, “Don’t give me slates I am asking for seats.”³⁵ Indeed, Errázuriz was correct. Ultimately the UCC garnered 21 slates. However, UCC leaders convinced the RN and UDI sub-pacts to cede them *both* slates in only 3 districts. The two seats that the UCC ultimately won were from these districts. The other 19 of the party’s candidates went down to defeat.

Clearly then, the relative size and support for parties determines how important the list partner is. Focusing on the right after the 1993 elections makes this even clearer. The UCC’s dismal showing of 3.2% and victory in only 2 districts in that election made the party much less of a player in 1997. However, the UDI sub-pact increased its share of the vote to 12.1% in the 1993 elections (despite the fact that the candidate selection process worked against it). At the same time the RN sub-pact’s share of the vote dropped to 16.1%, changing the dynamic of negotiations completely and making them much less complex. The shifting of a significant percentage of the vote to UDI from RN and the reality that the two parties were neck and neck in the polls led them to simply split the seats fifty-fifty between their two sub-pacts in 1997. This was possible because the leverage each had in negotiations was equalized by their balanced level of national support.

The process of candidate selection became much more simple and straightforward by 2001. The spectacular growth in popularity of the UDI transformed the dynamic of negotiations and the party assumed an equal role in the Alianza, with as much as a claim on candidacies as RN. What is more, partly derived from the negative experience with the UCC in 1989 and 1993, the two parties agreed not to negotiate with smaller conservative parties in the 1997 and 2001 elections. The norm for the parties increasingly has become to divide slates equally between them, adjusting for issues of incumbency and competitiveness with the Concertación.

These dynamics are not limited to the right. A similar equilibration of support between the left and center sub-pacts has taken place within the Concertación, making negotiations for the 1997 elections much less complex. While the Christian Democrats far outdistanced the left in the first elections following authoritarian rule, the gap between the two sectors as gradually closed, with the combined left ultimately garnering 23.7 % and the Christian Democrats garnering 22.3% in 1993. Negotiations in 1997 were facilitated by the proximity in the level of support for the two sub-pacts, and an agreement in general terms to divide candidacies was reached. For the designation in candidates in 2001, the left and center sub-pact were only separated by 1.5% of the vote coming out of the 1997 elections, and this

³⁵ Interview with Andrés Allamand, July 13, 1998, Washington, DC.

proximity in levels of support led to what amounted to a simple division of the seats between the sub-pacts. This was facilitated by the PRSD joining the left sub-pact, making the placement of its candidates now a concern of the leftist sub-pact rather than the coalition as a whole, who previously had to negotiate the placement of the PRSD candidates. The Christian Democrats no longer felt a need to surrender any seats to the PRSD, and the placement of the parties candidates more or less boiled down to a struggle between the PS and the PPD to determine who would cede seats to make room for the sub-pact's new coalition partner. Navia is correct to note that with the 2001 elections that the axis of negotiations within the Concertación increasingly shifted from one revolving around negotiations between the PCD and the PS-PPD, to one characterized by negotiations between the PS and PPD.³⁶

Conclusions and Perspectives on Candidate Selection in Latin America

This article has shown that the binominal electoral system helps to produce a process of candidate selection based on a several sets of overlapping, complex and often contradictory incentives. Party elites attempt to simultaneously underwrite the electoral success of their parties while guaranteeing the cohesion of the coalitions that the binominal system obliges, and that is also essential to the success of individual parties.

The article also raises certain paradoxes of competition and provides theoretical insights on the connection between electoral systems and candidate selection processes. At the level of individual competition, the most obvious paradox is that candidates with the potential to receive the highest number of votes are often not placed on electoral lists, because they are sometimes displaced by a smaller party candidate in the interests of coalition unity. Even more paradoxically, by ceding candidacies (and, therefore, ultimately seats) to pay other coalition maintenance costs, a strong candidate may be left by the wayside to be replaced by a weaker minor party candidate (though parties may certainly decide to run stronger candidates somewhere else). Also paradoxical is the fact that candidates have such potentially different desired outcomes in terms of their coalition list partner. They either want to run in a district with a very strong candidate or a very weak one. Obviously choosing the two strongest candidates would maximize coalition vote. However, individual candidates

³⁶ Navia, p. 18.

and sub-pacts sometimes have a strong incentive to push for a weak list partner.

At the coalition level there are also realities that lead to the selection of candidates that are not the highest potential vote-getters. As has been shown, larger parties may be willing to cede seats in particular districts (where the larger party might have a guaranteed win) in order to provide smaller parties the incentive to join and remain in the coalition. Therefore, at times a coalition may also end up receiving fewer votes in particular district than it might with a different set of candidates (say, two candidates from major anchor parties). A party capable of garnering 7% of the national vote may seem attractive as a coalition partner in terms of maximizing the overall list vote across districts nationally. However, candidates from parties with this level of support are unlikely to be spectacularly popular, and will do little to attract additional votes in an *individual* district. Nonetheless, a coalition may sacrifice the slate and give it to the small party candidate in order to have an additional element of national support that can put them over the threshold in *other* districts. This is the case because major parties also hope to obtain the votes of small party supporters in districts where the small party does not have a candidate running. This may increase list vote totals incrementally across districts individually, potentially resulting in a higher number of victories for the coalition. For example, the Radical Party (and later the PRSD), has only received 4% of the vote in legislative elections. The Concertación ceded seats to it, to insure that Radical Party voters would vote for non-Radical Concertación candidates in *other* districts where the Radical Party had no candidates running. In effect, the Concertación bought an additional 4% of national support by ceding a few candidacies to the Radicals. In turn, when multiplied across districts, this additional national support may have contributed to the ability of the Concertación to pass the *individual* thresholds in each *individual* district. At the same time, the Concertación prevented the emergence of a separate Radical list across the whole country, which might have cost it races, or prevented its candidates from doubling in some districts.

What is more, given the rules outlined above, very often two minor parties of a coalition are placed on the same list to compete with each other given that both resist competition with a major anchor party. Minor parties, or lower polling parties will demand two-candidate lists of their own parties or a pairing with a minor party as the requisite price for joining a coalition. Thus, in these districts the overall list vote is likely to be much lower than it might be if two candidates from major parties were running together. However, once again, this is the price the coalition is willing to pay for unity.

From a theoretical perspective, this article holds potential insights for understanding the dynamics of competition and the incentives affecting candidate selection given different types of electoral systems. While the adoption of a binominal system in other countries is unlikely, the Chilean case provides wider theoretical insights into how strategically complex electoral systems affect processes of candidate selection and elections. The analysis provides support for a normative argument against strategically complex electoral systems in terms of representative capacity.

First, it shows that strategically complex electoral systems may produce potentially negative, counterintuitive results. Party elites often have incentives to put together electoral lists that may not contain the most popular candidates. In turn voters, face an unpredictable system, uncertain whether their vote will contribute to the election of their preferred candidate or his or her list partner. In essence, the complexity of the system increases the odds of strategic errors in list composition and in voting, with potentially frustrating consequences for party leaders, candidates, and voters.

Second, this case shows that strategically complex systems may militate against the democratization of candidate selection processes through the use of primaries or through the introduction of methods to insure that distinct sectors of the party and activists make their voices heard. The imperative to balance so delicately the interests of voters and parties against the overarching coalitional goal of seat maximization makes it difficult to introduce these types of democratizing changes.

Third, this case suggests that strategically complex electoral systems rely on informality to make them function. It is questionable how sustainable informal processes are, potentially resulting in very undesirable outcomes if they fail.³⁷

Finally, these three realities combined, create a fourth unintended consequence. Rather than providing transparency and openness, the unpredictability of strategically complex systems, and the elite driven candidate selection processes they can produce, reduces the legitimacy of the electoral system, and democratic politics in general. Voters perceive that the ultimate victory in elections comes about as a result of the strategic machinations of party elites, rather than an expression of the will of the people.

Electoral reform is proceeding apace across Latin America. While scholars have analyzed the consequences of electoral reform for party

³⁷ On the unpredictability and potential instability of the system see Siavelis and Valenzuela.

systems, few have addressed how electoral reform has the potential to transform candidate selection processes. From the broadest perspective this article has shown that electoral reform is likely to transform traditional forms of candidate selection in ways that have a direct bearing on the representative capacity of democracy. Thus, the democratization of Latin America's political systems depends not only on the structure of party systems as conditioned by different election methods, but also the incentives for candidate selection that they help to produce.

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