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**THE ORIGINS AND TRANSFORMATIONS
OF THE CHILEAN PARTY SYSTEM**

J. Samuel Valenzuela

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J. Samuel Valenzuela is a Fellow of the Kellogg Institute and Professor of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of *Democratización vía reforma: La expansión del sufragio en Chile* (IDES, 1985) and editor of a forthcoming volume on *Labor Movements in Transitions to Democracy*. He contributed to the third edition (1994) of the Library of Congress's *Chile: A Country Study* and coedited and contributed to *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (Kellogg Series with Notre Dame Press, 1992), *Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorships and Oppositions* (Johns Hopkins, 1986), and *Chile: Politics and Society* (Transaction Books, 1976). His articles on comparative labor, development theory, and political change have appeared in English, Spanish, Italian, and French publications.

Abstract

This paper analyzes the Chilean party system from its inception to the present. It presents three polarities as basic to the constitution of the Chilean parties: in addition to the state/church conflicts and the divisions over socioeconomic programs, it shows that for long periods of its history the party system contained parties devoted to supporting specific political leaders or their legacies. The coalitional behavior of the Chilean parties during many decades cannot be explained without taking this polarizing (or unifying) factor into account. It was in evidence between 1856 and 1874 given the impact of the *montt-varistas*, between 1894 and 1925 due to the *balmacedistas*, between 1936 and the mid-1950s given *ibañismo*, and since 1985 as a result of the military government and its effects on the formation of a new party of the Right. The argument also reveals the extent to which the Chilean party system has nineteenth-century origins and emphasizes the importance of electoral rules in molding its transformations. The paper concludes by pointing to the fact that the Chilean electorate has considerable loyalty to party tendencies but less loyalty to specific party labels.

Resumen

Este ensayo analiza el sistema partidario chileno desde sus orígenes hasta el presente. Señala que se ha constituído en torno a tres polaridades: además de los conflictos cleri-cales/anticlericales y de derecha/izquierda, el trabajo indica que por largos períodos el sistema ha generado además partidos dedicados a apoyar y a líderes políticos específicos o sus legados. Los patrones de formación de las coaliciones partidarias no se pueden entender durante muchas décadas sin tomar en cuenta el efecto polarizante (o aglutinante) de estos últimos partidos. Ello ocurrió entre 1856 y 1874 por efecto de los montt-varistas, entre 1894 y 1925 por cuenta de los balmacedistas, entre 1936 y mediados de los cincuenta con el ibañismo, y desde 1985 como resultado del gobierno militar y su impacto en la formación de un nuevo partido de derecha. El artículo también revela hasta qué punto el sistema partidario chileno tiene orígenes decimonónicos, y enfatiza la importancia de las reglas electorales en moldear sus transformaciones. Concluye notando que el electorado chileno tiene una lealtad considerable por la tendencias partidarias, pero menos lealtad por las etiquetas partidarias.

Political parties have long been key institutions in the development and operation of Chile's democracy. Their centrality and strength as vehicles for the organization of policy debates, the structuring of electoral choices, the articulation of interests, the recruitment and advancement of the nation's political leaders, the formation of governments, and the passage of legislation have corresponded to textbook definitions of the functions of parties in democracies. The parties were displaced for the first time ever from the circles of power during the almost seventeen years of strict military rule that followed the breakdown of Chilean democracy in 1973. However, party leaders and militants kept—or in some cases recreated—the basic organizational networks that permitted the parties to become a vehicle for support or for opposition to the authoritarian regime as well as to stage a very rapid resurgence as the transition to democracy began.[1] This quick recovery of the parties has been an advantage for the process of democratization or, more properly speaking, redemocratization in Chile.

The Chilean party system has had greater similarities historically with those of France, Italy, or Spain than with those of the Americas. Since the late nineteenth century, Chile has had a multi-party system, with about five or six major parties and many more (up to about twenty-five) smaller ones. No major Chilean party, in contrast to experiences in Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina, was created under state auspices, although several have emerged following the initiative of politicians to support specific governments or strong leaders and/or their political legacies after they have concluded their terms in office. The party system has been partly structured, along with other factors to be noted later, around polarities that reflect cleavages in the society. In the nineteenth century the main party-generating conflict revolved around the place and role of the Catholic Church in the state and in societal institutions, and the multifaceted issues that this conflict entailed created clerical and anticlerical parties, social groups, and subcultures, each with easily identifiable intellectual and ideological referents. While the clerical/anticlerical divisions by no means disappeared in the twentieth century, the principal fault line, especially after the separation

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[1] The Chilean parties and party system under the authoritarian regime of General Augusto Pinochet are analyzed in Arturo Valenzuela and J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Party Oppositions under the Chilean Authoritarian Regime" in J.S. Valenzuela and A. Valenzuela, eds., *Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorship and Oppositions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), chapter 6; Norbert Lechner, "El sistema de partidos en Chile: Una continuidad problemática" in Lorenzo Meyer and José Luis Reyna, eds., *Los sistemas políticos en América Latina* (Mexico, DF: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1989); and in Manuel Antonio Garretón, "La oposición política partidaria en el régimen militar chileno. Un proceso de aprendizaje para la transición" in Marcelo Cavarozzi and Garretón, eds., *Muerte y resurrección: Los partidos políticos en el autoritarismo y las transiciones en el Cono Sur* (Santiago: FLACSO, 1989).

For an examination of the current composition of the Chilean party system, the electoral strength of its component parties, and the continuities and discontinuities in electoral support for its various tendencies, see Timothy R. Scully, csc, and J. Samuel Valenzuela, "De la democracia a la democracia: Continuidad y variaciones en las preferencias del electorado y en el sistema de partidos en Chile," *Estudios Públicos*, no. 51 (invierno 1993), pp. 195–228.

of Church and state in 1925, became class differences as viewed primarily by intellectuals, party leaders, and leaders of employer and worker organizations. As a result, Chile developed another axis of differentiation among parties, social groups, and subcultures with new ideological referents that nonetheless overlapped partially with the previous ones.[2] For reasons that will be discussed later, these divisions created a party system with major parties that covered the full range of the Left to Right ideological spectrum: Communists and Socialists on the Left, Radicals and Christian Democrats in the Center, and Liberals and Conservatives on the Right. The many minor parties that have emerged can also usually be located according to their positions along the polarities created by these fundamental societal differences. Proximate views regarding the issues associated with the basic polarities explain to a considerable extent the parties' coalitional behavior, although this was greatly complicated, as will be noted later, by party fractionalization and by the vagaries of supporting individual x or y in presidential election campaigns. Given its configuration, the Chilean party system of the postwar years has been considered by Giovanni Sartori as a prime example (together with those of the Weimar Republic, The French Fourth Republic, and Italy) of extreme and polarized pluralism.[3]

An overwhelming majority of Chilean legislators and government leaders have been members of parties or have been closely associated with them. The parties have expected their members to share certain doctrinal principles, and to abide by party discipline. Legislators have been subjected to party positions when voting on bills in Congress; breaking party ranks on such occasions has carried the tangible threat of excluding wayward legislators from congressional party groups and therefore their time allocations in the debates, in the congressional legislative committees, and from party candidacy lists in the subsequent election. Forming a new party or running as an independent, an alternative open to such wayward politicians, has been a somewhat risky strategy given the identification of a considerable portion of the electorate with the major party labels. Nonetheless, the use of this strategy to escape party discipline has been quite frequent, and this explains in part why there have been so many small parties. And as the identification of the electorate with political tendencies, i.e., with positions and symbols related to the issue polarities, has been stronger than its loyalty to party labels, such new parties may displace the older ones if they succeed in convincing their segment of the electorate that they are better exponents of the respective tendency.

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[2] For an analysis of party-generative social cleavages in creating the Chilean party system, see J. Samuel Valenzuela, *Democratización vía reforma: La expansión del sufragio en Chile* (Buenos Aires: IDES, 1985), and Timothy Scully, *Rethinking the Center: Party Politics in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Chile* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

[3] Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 131 et passim.

Party competition has been extensive beginning in the 1890s, as all major parties have presented candidates (unless their electoral pacts dictated otherwise) in elections in most districts throughout the country.[4] Moreover, local units of major parties have competed for leadership positions in elections within important social organizations, such as labor unions, professional associations, university and even secondary school federations, and neighborhood councils. Given the extensiveness of the presence of parties in national life and their importance as links between the state and a broad variety of social groups, Manuel Antonio Garretón has referred to them as the 'backbone' of Chilean society.[5] While this image exaggerates the role of parties in the society, it would certainly be correct to say that party networks have provided an important channel through which leaders and activists in social organizations have developed links among each other and to the centers of power.

This essay examines the origins and subsequent changes of the Chilean party system beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. While 'parties' first emerged from legislative debates and political clubs from the 1820s to the 1850s, it was only beginning in the 1890s that the Chilean party system came of age. That decade saw the beginning of an electoral system free from government interference such that the parties were able to maximize their power capabilities (or were forced to do so) by mobilizing voters rather than relying on contacts with the Ministry of the Interior to place their candidates on officially favored lists. This meant that the parties had to strengthen their national organizational network and give greater prominence within it to local leaders and militants who took on a more important role in party affairs than was previously the case. The same changes in electoral practices permitted the development of parties linked to the emerging labor movement, and as a result the party system then began to reflect the class dimension that became so much a part of its basic morphology in the twentieth century. The Chilean party system has had several important transformations since the turn of the century with the creation of new parties and patterns of party alliances. However, the continuities, when viewed from the perspective of electoral choices for the major political tendencies, have been remarkable since 1925.

A discussion of the origins and transformations of the Chilean party system calls forth the underlying generic question of how party systems are created. It is not possible to examine it here in depth, but the subsequent analysis of the chronological development of the Chilean party

[4] This theme is developed empirically in Arturo Valenzuela, *Political Brokers in Chile: Local Government in a Centralized Polity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977), chapter 1. See also his "The Scope of the Chilean Party System," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 4, no. 1 (Jan. 1972), pp. 179–99. The evidence refers to the 1960s, but intense party competition began much before then.

[5] Manuel Antonio Garretón, *Reconstruir la política: Transición y consolidación democrática en Chile* (Santiago: Editorial Andante, 1987), p. 64. See also by the same author *El proceso político chileno* (Santiago: FLACSO, 1983).

system will be facilitated by a brief note which follows below, providing some basic conceptual pointers. Subsequently, this essay will analyze the five basic configurations the Chilean party system has assumed from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. The first one (1828–91) created three of Chile's most 'historic' parties, namely, Conservatives, Radicals, and Liberals. The second (1891–1925) corresponds to the parliamentarist interpretation of the 1833 Constitution and saw the emergence of a new Liberal Party as well as working-class parties. The third (1925–58) contains the party system after the return to a fully presidentialist system with the complexities of the emergence of programmatic divisions over socioeconomic policies as the newly salient factor of party differentiations. The fourth (1958–73) examines the rise of Christian Democracy and the changes this produced. And the fifth (1989 to the present) looks at the party system after the return to democracy out of military rule.

A Brief Note on Party System Formation

The formation of party systems depends on interactions among four levels. The first is societal, and refers—following Lipset and Rokkan's pioneering analysis based on European history—to the already mentioned fundamental cleavages dividing national societies into segments that assume opposing positions or have conflicting interests.[6] Lipset and Rokkan note that most of these social ruptures—such as the Reformation and the split between Protestant and Catholic lands—occurred long before the formation of democratic regimes and party systems, but such conflicts still affected the creation of parties in so far as they had a lasting impact on the creation of all kinds of organizations, social institutions, collective identities and subcultures. Lipset and Rokkan identify four dichotomies as being common to the European experience, but there is considerable variation in the way these divisive issues were experienced and especially in the intensity with which the same issues affected national societies, such that what were similar conflicts acquired more importance in some countries than in others. For these reasons, certain party systems may seem much more grounded in societal segmentations than others. Even if the original issues related to the conflicts may have receded to the point that they no longer seem significant, if they were experienced intensely in the first instance it is very likely that a web of social institutions and subcultures will have been built upon the earlier differences, thereby reproducing the divisions and enhancing the chances that the various identity-communities will see differently regarding new manifestations of the original issue as well as any new important issues that may appear. Historical social cleavages create general attitudes,

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6 Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction" in Lipset and Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), chapter 1.

positions, or tendencies around important political issues in addition to specific parties; in some cases there may be considerable change in party labels and organizations, but the tendencies, especially where the cleavages were intensely experienced, are much more invariant.   When Lipset and Rokkan noted that the European party systems of the 1960s had been 'frozen' into place by 1920, their comment is more appropriately understood as a freezing of tendencies rather than of specific party organizations.[7]

The second level refers to the human and material resources to build party organizations. Whatever specific form the organizations take—and Duverger's is the classic description of them—all parties need leaders, activists, supporters, headquarters, and funding.[8] The creation of new parties is facilitated by being able to draw such human and material resources from sociabilities of one type or another. For this reason societal cleavages and their segmental identities are much more readily transferred into new parties when they are also linked to dense sociabilities, be they in the form of strong organizations formed horizontally by people sharing the same conditions in life, as is the case among workers in unions or mutual aid societies, or by social bonds that have a strong vertical component, as is the case with religious communities, with rural societies or regions under the influence of local notables, and so on. Thus, in many national societies labor unions may not have been the basis for the formation of the strongest collective identities, and yet they were the kind of on-going organization with clear leaderships, political interests, resources, and mass memberships—i.e., a dense sociability—that was well suited to support party formation. The same thing may be said of Churches, although it is only in some national societies that they had a political interest in creating parties. In addition, national societies that are, for whatever reasons, generally more organized than others will also tend to create stronger party organizations.

The third level is that of the political regime. Parties are the product of the development of mass politics beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century. They serve as a means to organize and mobilize support for—and opposition to—political leaderships both within the population at large and within governmental institutions. Parties reach their most characteristic expression under liberal democracies, given the freedoms such regimes grant for political organization, the regular recourse to electoral contests as a means to determine who will govern, and the necessity of organizing government supporters and opponents in the daily workings of legislatures. Countries that had democratic constitutional designs as mass politics first developed also tended to generate stronger party organizations and identities.

As is well known, a major institutional component affecting party formation in democratic regimes is the electoral laws and procedures, including the rules for fielding candidates, the way in

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[7]   Lipset and Rokkan, p. 54.
[8]   Maurice Duverger, *Les partis politiques* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1951).

which electoral districts are drawn, and the manner in which the votes are counted to determine who wins and who loses. Such rules can have many variations beyond the simple distinction between majority and proportional systems, and in each case they must be examined carefully for their consequences. In addition, legislation directed at regulating parties, if it exists at all, can have a significant effect on their formation and development. And yet in many countries the dawn of mass politics occurred under authoritarian regimes. In such cases, party organizations may be orchestrated by the authorities, and opposition parties may emerge linked generally to the emergence of unions and other popular sector organizations and in some instances with Churches. However, while parties may exist under these conditions, a party system cannot develop fully until there is a transition to democracy and perhaps several decades of normal democratic politics. It is only in democracies that a full set of party alternatives and regular patterns of interaction among the parties may emerge.

The fourth level refers to what may be called incidental party-generating divisions (as opposed to the prior societal ones). Parties can be formed, fused, or disappear as a result of issues that have nothing to do with societal cleavages. This may occur as a result of domineering political personalities who create or divide parties, disagreements regarding specific issues including institutional and constitutional questions, crises in party organizations that demoralize and disperse their militants, and so on. Despite originating from issues that pertain more to the realm of daily politics than to societal segmentations, the parties that are created for these reasons can be classed following the positions they assume, the targeting of their electoral appeals, the coalitions they form with other parties, and/or the social organizations to which they relate or whose support they seek, within the given tendencies. This is especially the case in national societies whose historical segmentations were strong, creating clear-cut tendencies in the party system.

Although major Chilean parties had firm roots in societal segments, there were many parties that emerged out of these 'incidental' divisions. Let us turn, then, to the historical beginnings of the Chilean party system.

The Emergence of the Chilean Party System, 1828–91

After independence from Spain, the Chilean political and military leaders divided into a complex set of groups espousing different positions over the constitutional and economic issues of the day.[9] By the end of the 1820s, two main groups, the so-called *pipiolos* and *pelucones,* had emerged. The first, forerunners of a segment of what would later be known as the Liberals,

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[9] See Simon Collier's excellent treatment of these positions in *Ideas and Politics in Chilean Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

supported the 1828 Constitution which created a relatively decentralized blueprint for national state authority.   The second advocated a more centralist model, one that was to become enshrined in the 1833 Constitution which was approved after the Liberal supporters of the previous charter were defeated in a civil war (1829–30).

While the civil war created deep animosities and the 1828 Constitution would be revered by intellectual figures in the Liberal mold for several decades, this division did not become the only, nor the most important, basis for the formation of durable party-like political organizations. Under President Manuel Bulnes (1841–51), a general who had become a unifying symbol because of his military successes in the war against the Peru-Bolivia confederation (1837–38), all prominent former political and civil war enemies found a place in the circles of power.   This diminished the salience of the prior conflicts. However, as the Bulnes government neared the end of its second five-year term in office, a new group of Liberals, called the *filopolitas*, clustered around one of Bulnes's ministers and, for a time at least, heir apparent. The minister, who was accused by his opponents of nepotism, lost presidential favor after he was less than completely successful in electing the official slates of candidates in the 1849 legislative elections.   The beneficiaries of his fall from grace were Manuel Montt and his close collaborator Antonio Varas, two representatives of *pelucón* opinion, who successfully challenged the government's official list of candidates in four districts. Montt succeeded Bulnes in the presidency (1851–61).

It was under Montt's government that the basis was durably laid for the formation of the first Chilean party system. It resulted from a Church versus state conflict. From the colonial past, Chile inherited a Church that was intimately tied to the workings of the state. The King in far-away Spain was entitled to exercise the so-called *patronato*, by which he was in practice the administrative head of the Church in his dominions. This meant that he submitted all ecclesiastical appointments to what amounted to a cursory approval of the Vatican, that all secular priests were on the payroll of the state, and that the tithe (a tax on agricultural production) was collected and administered by the state. Despite its apparent subordination to civil authorities, the Church exercised an important directive influence over the society. It ran all educational institutions, canonical law was the basis for all civil law in matters related to marriages and family life, and baptisms, marriages, and funerals served as the only official register of the population. Territorial subdivisions for administrative purposes coincided with Church parishes.

The wars of independence were as much a civil war as one against the imperial center. During this conflict, despite the visible participation in the patriotic cause of important priests such as the publicist Camilo Henríquez, most of the Church hierarchy remained—quite understandably—loyalist. Hence, relations between the new state authorities and the hierarchy were in the beginning rather strained. The new government leaders inherited the powers of appointment of the Church hierarchy from the crown, and given loyalty to the new Republic as a

condition for such appointments, within a decade or so monarchical sentiments in the Church were a thing of the past. Church leaders generally found more in common with the *pelucones* than with the *pipiolos*, since the latter showed a greater disposition to permit the new British, German, and other Protestant immigrants who arrived in Chile at the time to celebrate their religious services and establish their own schools. However, national Church leaders were much less tolerant of the interference of state authorities in Church internal governance than the colonial Church had been with the Crown and were wary of the support that the development of new state-run educational institutions at secondary and university levels found among all leading segments of opinion.

The events that galvanized the creation of a political party dedicated first and foremost to advocating the positions of the Church in national affairs as well as its prerogatives and interests as a component of the state occurred in 1856. A seemingly minor problem in Santiago's cathedral, the dismissal of an assistant sacristan by the chief sacristan, became an affair of state as the latter became embroiled in a dispute with the Church's canons over his right to dismiss. When the Church hierarchy supported the chief sacristan, two canons, though priests themselves, decided to appeal this ruling to the supreme court. Although this was permissible following the terms of the *patronato*, Archbishop Rafael Valentín Valdivieso, who was a fervent ultramontanist (i.e., both an opponent of the supremacy of civil authorities over the Church and a firm defender of the rights of the Church to have a directive influence over national institutions), made it clear that he would oppose any interference of the court in the internal governance of the Church. President Manuel Montt, who was a firm regalist (i.e., a supporter of the *patronato*), took the opposite view, and the resulting clash between the Archbishop and the *pelucón* President became a serious political issue. Church supporters, both clerical and lay, men and women, organized demonstrations of support for the Archbishop as he was preparing to go into exile instead of capitulating to the government's position. Only the withdrawal of the canons' appeal to the court, ultimately arranged by Montt's most prominent minister, Antonio Varas, defused the problem.[10] However, the Archbishop took advantage of the movement of organized support he received to galvanize new life into *pelucón* circles by committing them to an advocacy of ultramontanist Church positions and a defense of its prerogatives. The *pelucones* were already called Conservatives as well, and after their split as a result of Montt's regalism this name remained durably attached to the group that aligned itself with the Church. The Conservatives also began to emphasize the importance of

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[10] The affair is discussed extensively in histories of Chile. The first treatment appears in *Cuadro histórico de la administración Montt, escrito según sus propios documentos* (Valparaíso: Imprenta y Librería del Mercurio de Santos Tornero, 1861), pp. 530–35. This book was written by Diego Barros Arana, José Victorino Lastarria, Domingo Santa María, and Marcial González, according to a handwritten indication on Yale University's copy. All were opponents of Montt. See also Crescente Errázuriz, *Algo de lo que he visto. Memorias de don Crescente Errázuriz* (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1934), pp. 109–17.

respecting civil and political liberties. In reaction, the supporters of the President, who continued to stress the necessity of having a strong central state authority—including over the Church—became known as the Nationals or *montt-varistas.* Similarly, the Liberal opponents of Montt and Varas, both the former *filopolitas* as well as those who still preferred the 1828 Constitution, assumed the Liberal Party label. A Radical group characterized primarily for taking stronger anticlerical positions as well as a more rigorous defense of civic liberties would also take shape, detaching itself from Liberal circles.

Having emerged from a state/Church conflict, the main oppositions in the resulting system composed of four main parties were those between the Conservative Party, whose *raison d'être* was the defense of clerical autonomy and prerogatives, and the regalist as well as anticlerical questioning or rejection of those prerogatives. The issues of the time, whether it was drawing the jurisdictions of Church and state judicial authorities, making ecclesiastical appointments, drafting the civil code, creating state-run or Church-run schools, allowing religious dissidents to hold services in visible places of worship open to the public, permitting private groups of dissidents such as masons or Protestants to open schools, establishing a civil registry and civil marriages, secularizing the cemeteries, and so on, generated much controversy and mobilized supporters and detractors, including women, of every measure. Church supporters in particular followed congressional discussions of the issues in the balconies of the legislative chambers, organized public demonstrations, and either wrote heated articles in the proclerical press or created new newspapers to express their views, a common practice at the time. One of the most interesting examples of the latter was the *Eco de las señoras de Santiago*, a weekly with newspaper format published by women in 1865.[11] It was created to support the Church's position on the issue of religious freedom as the Congress debated a new law interpreting more liberally the constitutional provision that established the Catholic Church as the official state religion. The political controversies involved a much broader section of the population than those who voted, and the firm advocacy of the Conservative Party by the Church only heightened this larger politicization as its positions were expounded from the pulpit. The nation's political divisions were not simply a matter of overly excited politicians. The Church was also active in creating Catholic Union groups among workers and women, including unions and mutual aid societies after 1880, thereby generating leaders and militants of ongoing social organizations who were broadly committed to its principles—and further stimulating similar efforts by anticlerical groups. The early politicization of society through such a powerful social agency as the Church, both in support of

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[11] Erika Maza Valenzuela, "Catholicism, Anticlericalism, and the Quest for Women's Suffrage in Chile," Kellogg Institute Working Paper # 214 (1995), discusses the content of this periodical. Her article reveals the extent to which women were involved in political events in nineteenth-century Chile.

and in reaction to it, was a significant factor in the subsequent crystallization of relatively strong party identities and party organizations in Chile. The usual labels found in Chilean historiography regarding the 'oligarchic' and even 'aristocratic' nature of politics in the nineteenth century are highly misleading. Parties had already cast an imprint in Chilean society by the late 1880s, and the strength of the Chilean party system cannot be understood without a reference to these nineteenth-century origins.

Although the clerical/anticlerical dimension was the main axis of the party system, the fact that there were four main parties and not just two indicates that the system was more complex than it would appear at first glance. The anticlerical camp contained differences between those who preferred to separate Church and state, a position taken first by the Radicals, and those who, like the Nationals and most Liberals until the early 1880s, supported the official Church albeit advocating a continuation of state supremacy over it and greater religious tolerance. Other differences reflected the lineages of the various parties in earlier disputes. The most 'advanced' Liberals drew their pedigree from the *pipiolo* forces that were defeated in the 1829–30 civil war, and they tried to reform the 1833 Constitution so that it would approach the one dictated in 1828. A good number of such Liberals subsequently became Radicals. The Liberal Party also contained those who came out of the *filopolita* group who, despite favoring the 1833 Constitution, were opposed to Manuel Montt's presidential candidacy since he displaced their leader in 1849. During Montt's presidency, as he ran into the confrontation with the Church, he alienated the bulk of his original *pelucón* supporters who went over to the newly formed Conservative Party. But the prior conflicts of the *pelucones* with both strands of Liberals made it impossible for Montt's remaining supporters to join with the Liberals against the Conservatives. Hence, those who remained loyal to Montt, and his alter ego Antonio Varas, formed a different nucleus, the Nationals. However, as the earlier conflicts receded from memory by the 1870s and 1880s, Nationals and Liberals were practically indistinguishable. All of these specifically political differences (as opposed to societal ones, i.e, reflected in religious, educational, and social organizations) created the four-party and not simply bipartisan nature of the emerging party system.

The electoral system of this period favored the formation of coalitions between those who were in and those who were out of power.[12] Hence, despite their differences, the parties' coalitional behavior was often dictated by tactical rather than programmatic alliances. A majority of the all-male electorate was under the strong influence of the government, as a result of enrollment in the civic militia or employment in public services. The Ministries of the Interior composed official lists of candidates, and with the winner-take-all system of elections for municipalities, the Lower

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[12]   What follows is based on J. S. Valenzuela, *Democratización vía reforma*, chapter 2.

House of Congress, and electors of senators and presidents, most of those who were elected came out of the official lists. Although the governments of the time often included some of their critics in the official lists, opposition groups had strong incentives to pool their resources in order to chip a dent electorally into the government's machine. They focused their efforts on winning the support of the artisans, shopkeepers, and small proprietors who formed the bulk of the civic militia. The emergence of political clubs (the *Sociedad Caupolicán* of 1845 and the *Sociedad de la Igualdad* of 1850, among others) focusing on the grievances of artisans was largely a result of this opposition attempt to recruit members of the militia to their views.[13] Conservatives and Liberals can be found among the opposition agitators in 1850. Their common rejection of Montt led to an alliance between them that even succeeded as an uneasy government coalition between 1861 and 1873. It finally broke given differences over educational policies and other matters of concern to the Church.

The legislative opposition also tried to reform the electoral system and to limit the power of the Executive by affirming civil liberties and strengthening the role of Congress. Important electoral reforms in 1874 were enacted by an oppositional legislative coalition of Conservatives, Radicals, and 'loose Liberals,' and were designed to limit the government's control over the electorate. By asserting in the new law that all who knew how to read and write had the necessary means to vote, the legislators got around the constitutional provisions stipulating income and property requirements to vote and—especially given the low levels set for such requirements—the obligation of voters to prove they had such income or properties when they registered. As a result, the numbers of voters in congressional elections increased from 25,981 in 1873 to 80,346 in 1876, and to 104,041 in 1879.[14] The 1874 law also changed the electoral regime to ensure a one-third minority representation in municipal governments and to facilitate it in

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13   This point is noted by Domingo Amunátegui Solar, *Historia social de Chile* (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1932), p. 93, in connection with the *Sociedad Caupolicán*. See also Alberto J. Varona, *Francisco Bilbao: Revolucionario de América* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Excelsior, 1973), chapter 4.
        Although they are less well known, political clubs of artisans in support of the government and its candidates also emerged. These probably had official favor. One such club was the *Sociedad del Orden Compuesta por los Artesanos de Valparaíso*, or the *Sociedad del Orden* for short, that emerged to support Bulnes's reelection. See *El Cívico de Valparaíso. Periódico popular dedicado a los artesanos,* Valparaíso, no. 3 (22 March 1846), p. 1. Bulnes was also supported by a periodical aimed at artisans when he was first elected. See *El artesano*, Santiago, 17 June 1841.

14   See J. S. Valenzuela, *Democratización vía reforma*, p. 150. The numbers of registered voters were 49,047 in 1873, 106,194 in 1876, and 148,737 in 1879. The total population at the time was about 2,100,000, of whom about half were under voting age. About a third of the roughly half a million adult men were literate. The 1876 elections included groups of women who registered and presumably voted given the fact that the law extended the right to 'all Chileans' without specifying gender. See Erika Maza Valenzuela, "Catholicism, Anticlericalism, and the Quest for Women's Suffrage," pp. 15–18.

Lower House elections, and it completely reorganized the control and organization of the electoral process itself in an attempt to wrest it from direct government control.

The 1874 electoral reforms did not have the effects the opposition, especially the Conservatives, had hoped for. The Radical Party joined the Liberals in a government alliance, and in 1876 it employed high-handed measures in order to defeat key leaders of the Conservative Party and to continue producing large majorities for its joint official candidate lists. The Conservatives decided in the early 1880s to abstain from participating in the elections, leading to a drop in the numbers of voters. This gave the Liberal-Radical alliance free rein to enact a series of anticlerical laws. At the end of the presidency of José Manuel Balmaceda (1886–91) the country became engulfed in a civil war as a serious conflict emerged over the powers of the executive. Balmaceda was an uncompromising figure and during his period in office the Radicals, most Liberals, and most Nationals had joined the Conservatives in opposing his government. When the Congress refused to approve Balmaceda's budget for 1891, a favorite tool of the legislatures over the previous decades to extract concessions from the executives, the President responded by enacting the previous year's budget by decree. This led to armed conflict, and the victory of the forces under congressional leadership produced significant changes in the nation's political institutions.

The Party System under the 'Parliamentary Republic,' 1891–1925

Chilean historiography generally assigns the 'parliamentary republic' label to the period between 1891 and 1925, given the implementation of a new interpretation of the 1833 Constitution that required cabinets to have congressional majorities. However, the resulting regime was at best semipresidential, as presidents continued to be elected for five-year nonrenewable terms of office. Moreover, although the Minister of the Interior was the leading figure in the cabinet, who was charged by the president to form the cabinet, there was no prime ministerial office as such at the head of the government.

The party system was affected by other changes introduced in 1891. In the wake of the widespread rejection of Balmaceda's efforts to name an official candidate to the presidency to succeed him, there was finally a strong commitment among all the major parties to create an electoral system that would be independent of governmental intervention. To this end, the autonomy of municipal government authorities who were in charge of organizing the electoral processes was enhanced. The civic militias, previously such an important asset for governments as a source of votes for the official candidacies, were finally disbanded after having declined in importance as a result of the buildup of the army for the War of the Pacific (1879–83) between Chile and the Peruvian-Bolivian alliance. Hence, in 1896, after a transitional government,

Federico Errázuriz Echaurren became the first president (1896–1901) to be elected without having been an official candidate selected by his predecessor.[15] Through the votes they were able to muster, local party organizations became the key instruments for the election of all authorities from the municipal to the national levels.

This change not only solidified party organizations, it also placed them at the center of the Chilean political system. Elections became highly competitive, and parties had to develop local branches throughout the national territory in order to capture the vote.   While the traditional parties had already begun to create networks of middle and lower level adherents, the extension of electoral competition gave this process such a boost that party militancy, in a modern sense of the term, can be said to have originated in the 1890s. Parties began to organize national conventions to decide party programs and presidential candidacies. These were not small gatherings; Liberal conventions, for example, brought over a thousand delegates from all over the country. Presidential and congressional candidates had to pay close attention to the sensibilities and demands of local party leaders if they wanted to enlist their support to mobilize the necessary voters to win. Presidential elections continued to be indirect, with voters having to choose between about 260 and 350 electors from all over the country; such individuals were usually drawn from the ranks of local party leaders.

The historiography of the period has overlooked the significance of all these changes by focusing on the development of electoral practices such as vote buying or leading clients and dependents to the polls while attempting to ensure, through a variety of never foolproof means, that they actually voted as they were supposed to. But such accounts not only exaggerate the extent to which these practices 'vitiated' elections, they also miss the essential point. An electoral system run with official intervention is very different from one that becomes an electoral market in which party organizations compete for the vote. Such competition at the time led parties to offer voters what they would call a 'tip' (*gratificación*). Some voters may have been swayed in their electoral choice exclusively by the amounts being offered. But this was probably the case in fewer instances than the contemporary detractors of this practice and some present day historians suggest.[16] After all, rational voters of modest means intending to vote for a certain candidate anyway can be expected to demand their 'tip' from his headquarters if they know that it is being offered. Others may have been moved not to abstain from voting by the expected tip, but in this

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15   Errázuriz's predecessor, Admiral Jorge Montt, was chosen by the leaders of all the parties who joined forces to defeat Balmaceda. He was not elected.

16   For a discussion of this practice, see René Millar Carvacho, *La elección presidential de 1920. Tendencias y prácticas políticas en el Chile parlamentario* (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1981), p. 166. Millar analyzes other forms of electoral irregularity as well, pp. 162–79. Some are clearly fraudulent but all reflect the intensity of party competition nationwide. This point requires a longer treatment than is possible in this paper.

case they voted their preference anyway. It is misleading to simply assume that all voters who received tips were therefore voting out of obligation for a choice opposed to their views. Contemporary accounts indicate that spending more money to pay voters did not guarantee electoral success.[17] And even if parties gained votes they would not otherwise have had through this means, they still had to develop the organizational capacity to deliver such payments.

A new electoral regime established the cumulative vote in all elections.   It had been formerly used since 1874 in contests for the Lower House of Congress. This meant that voters were given as many choices as there were positions to be filled and that they could distribute their preferences as they wished, including applying all votes to one candidate. Winning candidates were those with the largest individual vote totals, regardless of the total votes received by party lists. Consequently, in plurinominal congressional districts, in municipal elections, and in the elections for the presidential electoral college, minority parties could elect one or more of their candidates as long as they instructed their voters to concentrate their preferences. This system forced parties to design their electoral strategies carefully in every locality. Party leaders had to guess quite exactly how many voters would go to the polls (registrations and voting were voluntary, and only about half to three-quarters of those eligible to register and vote did so) and how many votes they and their opponents would muster for their respective lists.   Such calculations were vital, because success depended on having an optimal match between the numbers of votes, the numbers of candidates on the list, and the distribution of votes among the candidates.   Too many candidates with no instructions to voters on how to concentrate preferences ran the risk of not giving any one candidate enough votes to win, despite a relatively large vote for the list. Too few candidates or an excessive concentration of votes on one or two of them ran the risk of electing fewer candidates than the list would have been capable of electing given its total vote. The system encouraged local party leaders to organize and instruct their voters as much as possible and to ensure that each one actually voted; the 'tips' to voters should also be seen in this context, because they gave party militants a crucial opportunity to convey their instructions—and a premarked ballot—to each voter. An additional complication was that parties could form electoral pacts, with the possibility of forming different pacts in different electoral districts. Such pacts increased the numbers of voters for specific candidates, altering the mathematical balances of electoral calculations and forcing opponents to change their strategies accordingly.

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[17] Ramón Subercaseaux, *Memorias de ochenta años. Recuerdos personales, críticas, reminiscencias históricas, viajes anécdotas* (Santiago: Editorial Nascimiento, 1936, 2nd ed.), Tomo II, p. 203. This book is essential reading for an insider's view of politics at the time, including electoral campaigns.

There were no significant legal barriers to organizing new party lists for the elections. It sufficed to print their ballots on paper and with ink that followed, lest they be declared inadmissible, the format and specifications of the electoral law. Voters could bring party ballots with them to the polling places, sometimes already marked and folded, or they could chose one from the stacks available in the secret chamber at polling places. Voters receiving 'tips' could conceivably bring more than one marked and folded ballot to the polls and deposit the one of their choice if they wanted to collect money and favor another candidacy.

Despite the lack of barriers to composing new party lists, few new parties emerged during this period. In fact, the electoral regime was not as favorable to the creation of new party lists as might be expected. The cumulative vote's proportional effects increased with the number of positions to be filled, but in senatorial elections only one senator was chosen per district (except in Santiago, where two were elected), which meant that the system became in these cases simply a majoritarian one. In the Lower House, of 31 districts only one (Santiago) chose 8 deputies, while half of them elected three, and a quarter chose two or, in one case, one. Hence the cumulative vote's proportional effects were moderate. In elections for presidential electors the system had little effect because the candidates of minority representatives in such cases simply lost in the electoral college anyway; they could not even tip the scale, and therefore bargain with the candidates for their votes, in close elections because these were sent to a joint session of Congress for a final decision. It was in municipal elections, in which at least five councilors were chosen per commune, that the change of voting system was felt the most. And yet, the obvious advantages of forming party pacts meant that most parties entered them before each election in this period, even for municipal elections. The pacts gave party leaders a formidable tool to use against party dissidents who were tempted to set up a new party label, because concentrating the votes of more than one party organization on the candidate or candidates of the pact meant that the wayward candidate or candidates stood little chance of being elected.

Nonetheless, the number of parties did increase from the original four through a division of the Liberals and the creation of new working-class parties. The Liberals split into two main groups, those who supported and those who opposed former President Balmaceda and his political legacy of strong presidentialist government. Balmaceda, dejected over his defeat in the civil war, committed suicide, but he rapidly became the object of veneration by an important segment of Liberal opinion grouped into what became known as the Liberal Democratic Party. Organized by a former Balmaceda minister beginning in 1891, the party scored a significant success as it elected six senators, twice the number of the main Liberal Party, in the congressional elections of 1894, the first ones in which it participated. Its initiator died in 1892, after which the party came under the leadership of Enrique Salvador Sanfuentes, who was also a former minister in Balmaceda's government. When he withdrew from politics at the end of the 1890s, his younger

brother, Juan Luis Sanfuentes, became the head of the party. A smaller Liberal splinter, the Doctrinaire Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal Doctrinario*), was also of significance during some electoral years. It grouped the heirs of the most dedicated elements in nineteenth-century Liberalism, following the wake left by supporters of the 1828 Constitution. The Doctrinaire Liberals opposed Balmaceda, for which they usually acted within the mainstream Liberal Party. However, when the latter made electoral alliances with the Conservatives, the Doctrinaire Liberals reactivated their separate identity and label and pacted with the Liberal Democrats and the Radicals.

For almost three decades after 1894 the split among the Liberals became a complicating factor to forming electoral and congressional alliances. Pacts for presidential elections (and generally for others as well) had four essential givens: first, that Conservatives and Radicals never agreed to support the same candidate. As such, they still constituted the 'extremes' of the party system.[18] Second, that no single party was able to win the presidential contest alone. Third, that the Conservative Party, despite having the same or greater electoral strength as each of the two main Liberal Parties (about 22% of the vote in Lower House elections between 1894 and 1924[19]), was nonetheless barred from having a winning presidential candidate from its own ranks: such a candidate would only foster the development of a stronger anticlerical combination that would win the presidency. The same was true for the Radical Party: a candidate from its ranks only opened the possibility for a Liberal to form a winning pact with the Conservatives. And fourth, that both (or all three in some elections) Liberal parties could not agree to support a single candidate, such was the animosity, and the personal ambitions, created by their division. This led the various Liberal leaders to seek pacts with either the Radicals or the Conservatives in order to form the basic block (to which other parties would adhere) of a winning electoral coalition. As a result, the Radicals or the Conservatives had considerable influence within the Liberal parties, for whichever Liberal leaders they agreed to support had the possibility of becoming the nominee of each party.[20]

Had it not been for the split among Liberals, one that corresponded to the 'incidental' type of party-generating divisions as noted above, the politics of the period would have been a lot simpler. Given the fact that all Liberal groups had an average of 36% of the vote between 1894 and 1924, an alliance of all Liberal segments with the Radicals, who had an average of 18% during

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[18]   This is the term used by Manuel Rivas Vicuña in his memoirs, *Historia política y parlamentaria de Chile* (Santiago: Ediciones de la Biblioteca Nacional, 1964), 3 vols.; see for example, vol. 1, p. 163. This book is essential reading for understanding politics in this period.

[19]   This figure is calculated from data in Germán Urzúa Valenzuela, *Historia política de Chile y su evolución electoral (desde 1810 a 1992)* (Santiago: Editorial Jurídica, 1992), pp. 342–47.

[20]   These 'rules' of the game in presidential elections are based on the acute observations of Rivas Vicuña. See especially vol. 1, pp. 163–64 and 167.

the same period, would have produced stable governments with comfortable parliamentary majorities.[21] After all, Liberals and Radicals continued to share mild to firm anticlerical positions. But this did not occur as both main Liberal groups, despite the fact that some of their factions converged occasionally (which then led to winning candidacies), generally were fierce electoral opponents. Of the six presidential contests in this period three were so very close in the electoral college that the final decision had to be taken by a vote of Congress; in two contests, when the Liberal Democratic, National, and Radical Parties and some mainstream Liberal factions agreed to support a single candidate, he won a clear majority; and in one case no single politician could assemble a clearly winning preelectoral coalition, for which all parties finally agreed to ask a 76-year-old, Ramón Barros Luco (1910–15), to accept the presidency as a compromise solution![22]

Under the elder Sanfuentes' leadership, the Liberal Democrats were clearly 'Balmacedist,' which meant that they opposed the parliamentarist interpretation of the 1833 Constitution that opponents of Balmaceda had championed and that they were also an anticlerical force. They therefore became, beginning in 1896, the main party in a pact known as Liberal Alliance (*Alianza Liberal*), although the Radicals, as well as a new group with links to the emerging labor movement, the Democratic Party, proved to be its most consistent members over the years. The mainstream Liberals normally pacted with the Conservatives and sometimes the Nationals in the so-called Coalition (*Coalición*) or National Union (*Unión Nacional*). The Coalition's constant feature in this period was the presence of the Conservatives, and the Liberals who became its presidential candidates had to be, somehow, acceptable to them. After the elder Sanfuentes's withdrawal from politics at the turn of the century, the Liberal Democrats became much less attached to their Balmacedist legacy, and the party seemed to be guided primarily by what best suited the younger Sanfuentes's own political ambitions. It was therefore open to pacts with not only the Radicals but also the Conservatives. Juan Luis Sanfuentes finally became president (1915–20) as he led the Liberal Democrats into the Coalition alliance with the Conservatives. The divisions and coalitional dynamics of the party system during the 'parliamentary republic' after 1900 had much to do, therefore, with the influence of powerful political figures jockeying for position.

Despite the end of governmental interference in elections, the main parties from the previous period—namely all Liberal factions, the Conservatives, and the Radicals—averaged about 76% of the total vote for Lower House elections between 1894 and 1924. The figure shows that these parties had already generated significant collective identities and/or a great capacity to mobilize or encapsulate the electorate by 1891. In fact, the predominance of these

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[21]   The total Liberal and Radical votes are calculated from data in Urzúa Valenzuela, pp. 351–56 and 361–66.

[22]   The list of elections and the electoral college (and, when appropriate, congressional) votes they received appear in Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 333.

parties was even greater in the 1894, 1897, 1900, and 1903 house of deputies elections, when they averaged 85% of the total, than in the subsequent ones. This is significant evidence that the electoral system prior to 1891 had already generated a strong basis for the Chilean party system. The Nationals, the fourth main party of the previous period, were reduced to a small proportion of the vote from 1894 to 1906. Their performance was much better between 1906 and 1912, when they obtained about 15% of the vote, but then they declined to about 3% in the early twenties, after which they disappeared.[23]

The main new entrants into the party system were the parties formed primarily on the basis of the rising importance of class conflicts in Chilean society. Mining, manufacturing, construction, and transport all developed strongly in the decades after the War of the Pacific. The changes in the labor force permitted the formation of unions, mutual aid societies, and other popular sector organizations, and as a result of their publications and activities, including strikes, the 'social question' became a matter of considerable public debate.

The first important party that emerged as an expression of working-class bases was the *Partido Demócrata* (Democratic Party). Founded in late 1887, its initial and best-known leader was Malaquías Concha, a lawyer who left the Radical Party taking with him a 'society' of workers (to use the term of the time) called 'Equality' (*La Igualdad*), which had some rather tenuous links to the party.[24]

The Democratic Party did not succeed, in the end, in becoming the left-wing pole of the Chilean party system. This failure goes a long way towards explaining why the party has not been given the attention it deserves from historians and social scientists. Following the lead of Ramírez Necochea, who dismissed the party as a tool of 'petty bourgeois' elements, leftist analysts have been especially biased in their treatment of it.[25] Even though it became a corresponding member of the Socialist International in 1903 and played a leading role in organizing demonstrations, unions, and strikes by workers, they fault it for not having had a coherent ideological profile—i.e., for not embracing Marxism.[26] The fact that Luis Emilio Recabarren, the typographical worker who is considered the founding figure of the Chilean labor movement and of the Communist Party, left the Democratic Party only confirms this negative image of it. Recabarren

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23   Urzúa Valenzuela, pp. 380–85.

24   The Democratic Party had its antecedents in the artisan clubs and societies of the 1840s, especially the Society for Equality. There was also a periodical called *El Demócrata*, published in Santiago in January 1843.

25   Hernán Ramírez Necochea, *Historia del movimiento obrero en Chile. Antecendentes, siglo XIX* (Santiago: Editorial Austral, 1956), pp. 202–10, for example.

26   The Democratic Party's first actions were to organize demonstrations against increases in public transit fares, which led to the arrest of its leaders. See Ramírez Necochea, pp. 286 and 292.

created the Socialist Workers' Party (*Partido Obrero Socialista*) in 1912 with a small group of labor militants and led it into the Third International in January 1922.

Malaquías Concha was not an important leader in the Radical Party, and 'Equality' was by no means a characteristic component of it. As a result, the Democratic Party should not be considered simply a splinter from the Radical trunk but rather the first completely new party created in Chile since the mid-nineteenth century. While the Democrats were also anticlerical to varying degrees, they disagreed with the Radicals' almost exclusive emphasis on Church/state issues. Most of its militants and leaders were drawn from workers' unions, cooperatives, cultural centers, and mutual aid societies. Women also figured among its leaders, and it had some organizations that grouped only women workers.[27] The party elected the first parliamentarians of working-class extraction in 1903 (a lawyer, Angel Guarello, became its first deputy in 1896). The Democrats consistently supported social, health, hygiene, and workplace legislation favoring workers. They published dozens of newspapers aimed at working-class readers, all of which contained articles of opinion that often lamented the sorry state of workers' living and working conditions and the greed and narrow-mindedness of the upper classes.

While the Democratic Party's best national electoral result in Lower House elections was around 8% in 1924,[28] this relatively minor percentage conceals the fact that its voters were concentrated in mining and urban working-class areas, with little presence in rural (especially Central) Chile. The party first ran candidates for Congress in 1897, obtaining 17% of the vote in Santiago. It scored its best results in Valparaíso, Concepción, and Santiago, where in some elections it won over 40% of the vote—with the help of electoral pacts.[29] The concentration of the Democratic vote made it an attractive partner for electoral pacts, and although it repeatedly joined them, they produced sharp discussions and dissensions within the party. The Democrats would exchange their support for other parties in districts where they were moderately strong for the latter's support for their candidates in the districts where its electorate was an important force. If pacts had been disallowed by the electoral law, the party would still have probably elected many of its congressmen and municipal councilors in the districts where it was strong, assuming that the

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[27] Osvaldo López, *Diccionario biográfico obrero de Chile* (Santiago: Imprenta y Cuadernación Bellavista, 1912), contains biographies of a good number of Democratic labor and political leaders, including women. For an example, see the biography of Rudecinda de Alarcón. A seamstress at age 14, she created a mutual aid society (the *Sociedad Unión y Ahorro de Señoritas*) for women employed in retail and as seamstresses. In 1906 she created the Woman's Union (*Combinación de Señoras*) of Tocopilla, which she recreated under a new name in 1907 after it was banned by the authorities. She also founded a trade school for girls that year. When her husband, a Democratic Party leader who became Congressman from Antofagasta, Taltal, and Tocopilla in 1909, was forced to flee Tocopilla on account of his political activities, she assumed the presidency of the local party organization. I thank Erika Maza Valenzuela for pointing these facts out to me.

[28] Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 369.

[29] Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 371.

party system remained as plural as it was. And yet, given the existence of the pacts, the Democrats could not generally expect to win without entering a pact with other parties. For presidential contests, given the fact that they were so closely fought, the Democratic votes, though relatively small, were considered at times 'decisive.'[30]

The Democratic Party, then in its infancy, had been supportive of Balmaceda's government until its demise, and this was an important source of affinity with the Liberal Democrats. After all, both groups fought on the same side in the bloody 1891 civil war and both suffered the persecution of Balmaceda supporters which continued for several years after the war concluded. Hence, many of the party's electoral pacts were made with the Liberal Democrats. Given the party's generally anticlerical positions, it is not surprising that Radicals were the other main party with which they made pacts. In Congress, the Democratic Party's representatives were occasionally decisive for winning or losing votes of censure against cabinets or specific ministers.

A key riddle is why the Democrats were unable to gain an even larger share of the vote given the increasing importance of issues related to class divisions and the possibility of using the rising labor movement organizations as a base of electoral support. Part of the answer lies in the fact that the Democratic Party was a late addition to a multiparty system within which many miners, artisans, and workers already had a long experience of electoral participation. The Chilean nineteenth-century electorate, small though it was, included a disproportionate percentage of lower-class urban groups even during the period before 1874 when citizenship was constitutionally limited to those who had a certain income, property, or occupation.[31] The prior mobilization of this electorate over a period of decades was bound to have generated habits and loyalties that would not disappear overnight. If the suffrage had excluded artisans and workers entirely before the 1890s, and if the Democratic Party had been in the position of leading the struggle for universal suffrage as occurred generally with European working-class parties, then the party would have had a greater chance of capturing a broader slice of the working-class vote. As it was, the Democrats had to compete with the Liberal Democrats, the Radicals, and even the Conservatives for this vote.[32] Aside from the capital, where all parties found support, the Democrats elected congressional representatives in Northern, Central, and Southern cities (i.e., Iquique, Antofagasta, Valparaíso, Concepción, Lota-Coronel, Angol, Temuco, and Valdivia), and

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[30] Rivas Vicuña uses the term to refer both the Radicals and Democrats; see vol. 1, p. 167.

[31] This point is extensively elaborated in J. S. Valenzuela, *Democratización vía reforma*, chapters 2 and 3.

[32] Millar Carvacho, pp. 148–51, illustrates this point with a description of the complete failure of Luis Emilio Recabarren's presidential campaign in 1920. He obtained virtually no votes in areas where the Socialist Worker's Party was well organized and where its unions had a considerable presence. Workers in its sphere of influence voted for Alessandri, the candidate of the Liberal Alliance.

these were also areas where Liberal Democrats and Radicals were strong.[33] In the end it was easier to make electoral pacts with these parties, but although this was politically expedient, it had the great disadvantage of once again focusing the electoral appeals to the working-class electorate—especially where the Democrats were bound to support the other parties—on the mainly anticlerical issues that cemented the alliances programmatically. Under those conditions, the Democrats could not focus as much as they would have liked on working-class demands. Moreover, since the party could not capture the lion's share of the workers' vote, neither could it obtain, as was the case, again, with Socialist and labor parties in Northern Europe at the time, the votes of intellectuals and other middle- and even some upper-class supporters who held socially progressive political views and supported unions. The Liberal Parties and, increasingly, the Radical Party captured larger portions of this vote as well. Finally, the Conservatives obtained the votes of committed Catholics, for which they were strongest in the central part of the country, North and South of Santiago, the area where the Church had its visible presence, given that it had been for almost three centuries the core of colonial Chile, and in Southern areas where Catholic Germans settled in the mid-nineteenth century.[34] Voters, even working-class ones, predisposed by their Catholicism to cast ballots for the Conservative Party throughout the country, in turn fueled the anticlerical vote, and as a result of this influence of religion on electoral behavior class-based voting was by no means as significant as the usual images of Chilean politics, with its Right to Left divisions, would have it. Again, this factor reduced the possibilities of any new party based primarily on appeals to working-class interests and on demands for social equity.

The relative electoral failure of the Democratic Party was not a result of the small size of the electorate, which was around 6% to 8% of the total population in the country. The 'parliamentary republic' has usually been described in Chilean historiography as a form of rule by the 'oligarchy.'[35] In this simplistic view, not even the 'middle classes' could participate effectively in politics. The fact that the law explicitly stipulated literacy as a condition for citizenship has led to the assumption that any party that sought to base its support on the popular sectors would have

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[33] See Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 357.

[34] See Millar Carvacho, p. 211, for a reference to the effects of German immigrants' Catholicism on votes for the Conservative candidate. And Ricardo Cruz Coke, *Geografía electoral de Chile* (Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico, 1952), pp. 99–101, for the first presentation of the link between the Conservative vote and Catholicism. However, both authors fail to mention religion when discussing the votes of rural workers and peasants. They only emphasize that such voters were coerced by landowners to vote for Conservatives or Liberals. It is surprising that religion is not seen as a factor in explaining rural lower-class electoral behavior.

[35] For only the latest addition to this long stream of sources using this characterization, see Urzúa Valenzuela, part 2.

been bound to fail, as these sectors were presumably grossly underrepresented in the electorate.

If the literacy requirement did seriously undermine the electoral potential of Chilean working-class parties, why did not the leaders of the Democratic Party, of other subsequently formed parties of the Left, and of the labor movement ever press for the elimination of the literacy requirement for voting rights? The answer is that they viewed the literacy requirement as an advantage, not an impediment, to their electoral fortunes, and they thought that the electorate was composed already of a working-class majority.[36] The early organizations of the labor movement and of the Left pressed for more primary education and made a considerable effort to organize adult education. Illiteracy among males over 15 years of age dropped very rapidly from about two-thirds to about a third between the 1880s and 1930, figures that represented such an improvement that they belie the usual images of 'immobilism' during this 'oligarchic' period. The Left and the labor movement's political messages were conveyed primarily through thousands of pages of newsprint and through handbills. They were part of a literate and militant culture, and they probably saw advancing literacy as working in their favor. Therefore, they even had reason to fear the effects of granting voting rights to illiterates who were beyond the reach of their printed messages. It was indeed very likely that expanding the suffrage to the illiterates would only have increased the numbers of electors who were under the influence of landowners, employers, and other local notables. Moreover, the cumulative voting mechanism was a complicated one, and voting itself was an act of partisanship in which many potential citizens simply chose not to participate. For example, for the presidential election of 1920 about 20–25% of eligible voters (adult literate men) had not bothered to register to vote; and of those who did, only about 50% showed up at the polls after a hard-fought campaign that gave the winning edge to Arturo Alessandri by the narrowest of margins.[37]

The clearest demonstration that the small number of voters was not the reason for the relative lack of electoral success of a party of the Left in the early twentieth century can be found in the results of the 1925 presidential elections. The candidate of a leftist coalition which included all its segments, José Santos Salas, obtained 28% of the vote against a candidate supported by all

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[36] In an article written 14 May 1920, Luis Emilio Recabarren, the head of the Chilean Labor Federation and leader of the soon to be Communist Party, estimated that 60% of the electorate was composed of either members of the Labor Federation or of men who were influenced in some way by it. As this revealing commentary shows, Recabarren did not think the size of the electorate was an impediment to the building of parties based on appeals to working-class interests. See Ximena Cruzat and Eduardo Deves, comps., *Recabarren, escritos de prensa,* vol. 4, *1919–1929.* (Santiago: Terranova Editores, 1987), p. 128.

[37] These figures are estimates based on the raw numbers in Millar Carvacho, appendix Table 1. The election of 1920 is very simple-mindedly viewed in Chilean historiography as one that manifested the 'rise of the middle classes' and would constitute, as such, a turning point from the previous politics dominated by the 'oligarchy.'

the traditional parties, from Conservative to Radical.[38] Moreover, a rare coalition of Democrats and Communists (then under a moderate leadership, before the 'bolshevization' of the party forced by the Communist International) obtained 22% of the national vote in the parliamentary elections of 1925. These proportions are roughly comparable to the Chilean Left's share of the vote during the decades between the late 1930s and the present. The numbers of actual voters in the 1925 contests (about 260,000) did not represent a larger proportion of the total population than was the case in elections since the mid-1890s. What had changed, however, was not only that the scope of the organized labor force had reached a peak but also that the Liberal Democrats had disappeared as a party and their former voters did not drift back into the mainstream and newly unified Liberal Party. This point will be developed later.

A second dimension of the Democratic Party's failure was its inability to endure as the main party of Chile's labor leaders. The party (or parties) of the Left in any country must have, if they are to be successful as such, strong links to the national labor leadership. If the Democrats had been able to continue building upon the links they had to mutual aid societies, unions, and other worker organizations at the turn of the century, they would have been better able to resist the growth of anarcho-syndicalism and of the Socialist Worker-Communist Party, and they could have used the resources of the labor movement to take greater advantage of the dissolution of the Liberal Democrats in the mid-1920s. However, declining from a position of strength in the early 1900s, the Democrats were a minority force in the unionism of the mid-1920s. When a Socialist Worker-Communist delegate proposed to a 1922 Congress of the main labor federation of the time, the *Federación Obrera de Chile*, that it cut all relations with the Democratic Party given the 'reformist' tendencies within it, the motion was approved by a vote of 77 to 33. The Democratic Party delegates walked out in protest over the decision and never returned to the *Federación*.[39]

The inability of the Democrats to become a hegemonic force in the labor movement before 1920 can be explained by examining the context in which labor organizations developed. It contained a peculiar disjuncture between social repression and political freedom.[40] Demands at the workplace by workers and their leaders were dealt with harshly, but at the same time, given the nation's competitive electoral politics and liberal-democratic constitutional framework, labor leaders had the necessary freedom to organize politically, enter electoral pacts, publish their newspapers and tracts, stage their political meetings, and demonstrate. This was, quite

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38 Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 430.

39 See Manuel Barría, *Los movimientos sociales en Chile desde 1910 hasta 1920 (aspecto político-social)* (Santiago: Universidad de Chile, Memoria de Prueba, 1960), p. 145.

40 This argument is developed extensively in J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Labor Movement Formation" (book ms.), chapter 7.

unintentionally, the best scenario for the development of radical labor leaders. They could use the political freedom to spread the notion that a capitalist system could never fulfill worker demands, an interpretation that had an aura of plausibility given the repression workers confronted when attempting to organize collective action to press their grievances. By contrast, more moderate leaders could neither secure effective labor leadership positions, given state-assisted employer opposition to plant-level unionism and collective bargaining, nor could they muster a cogent and simple interpretation for this intransigence. After a particularly bloody suppression of a 1907 nitrate industry strike in Iquique led by Democratic leaders as well as anarcho-syndicalists, there was a nation-wide wave of forcible closures of worker organizations affecting both groups. This decimated the labor movement. When labor organizations began to recover they rapidly drifted to more radical leadership than that of the Democrats. By 1920 labor leaders were committed mainly to the Socialist Workers' Party or to anarcho-syndicalism. When General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo took over the presidency irregularly in 1927 and began to repress Communist, anarcho-syndicalist, and Trotskyite labor organizers, the Democratic labor leaders made the fatal mistake of trying to take advantage of the vacuum by associating with the new regime. Ibáñez was forced out of office by an upsurge of demonstrations against his rule in 1931, and at that point the labor leaders who had linked their fortunes to his regime sank with him. The Democratic Party almost disappeared as a force with this label in labor movement organizing as the movement regrouped beginning in late 1931. Communists and Socialists would secure the majority of the labor leaders' allegiances.

With the diversity of groups and positions, by the end of the 'parliamentary republic' the party system was in flux. However, it clearly included a new leftist pole which was socially based in a quite extensive network of labor unions and other worker organizations (as well as among intellectuals and in the student movement), even if it was not clear which specific party or parties would emerge as dominant in it. The formation of the Communist Party gave part of the Left an international model, the Soviet Union, and an ideological anchor in Marxism. But the system changed more drastically and rapidly than would otherwise have been the case due to the collapse of the 'parliamentary republic' and given the constitutional and electoral changes that followed.

The Party System from the Ratification of the 1925 Constitution to the Presidential Elections of 1958

Military pressure forced President Arturo Alessandri to abandon the country in September 1924, but another military Junta, which took power in January 1925, asked the President to return. He came back with a proposal to write a new Constitution, which was ratified in

a plebiscite later that year after being written by a committee. Alessandri left power to an elected successor, Emiliano Figueroa, who was supported by all major parties except for the Democrats and the Communists; as noted above, they rallied around José Santos Salas, a well-known advocate of social legislation who obtained over a quarter of the vote.

What followed were years of political abnormality. Figueroa was forced to resign by the domineering presence of Colonel Carlos Ibáñez, who then had himself 'elected' President by running unopposed for the vacant office. Ibáñez's government was a dictatorial one; the parties of the Left and the labor movement (except for segments of the Democratic Party) were repressed and the rest had to submit their candidacies to Congress for Ibáñez's approval. Important political leaders of all the major parties were forced into exile. In the wake of massive demonstrations against his rule in July 1931, Ibáñez resigned and left the country. Juan Esteban Montero, the first member of the Radical Party to reach the presidency, was elected later that year. In the midst of multiple crises including an economic downturn of major proportions and a mutiny by leftist sailors, Montero's brief term in office was not a happy one. He was deposed on 4 June 1932 by a civil-military movement of the Left that proclaimed a 'Socialist Republic.' A coup organized by one of the original members of the movement twelve days later eliminated the leftist members of the government, including Marmaduke Grove, an air force officer who was its most visible leader. The new authorities relinquished power within three months, and the country returned to choosing a new president through elections. Arturo Alessandri won the contest, and with his inauguration Chile returned to regular constitutional government until the military coup of 11 September 1973.

This turbulent seven-year period probably delayed major changes in the composition and dynamics of the party system which had been in store since 1925. Two constitutional reforms were important in triggering these party system changes: the return to a fully presidentialist regime and the separation of Church and state. The first reform had a significant effect in producing the demise of the Liberal Democrats, for it was the main programmatic demand of the party since its inception. The Liberal Democrats were also affected by the facts that the Balmaceda government had become a receding memory and that Juan Luis Sanfuentes had already fulfilled his political ambitions. Hence, the time was ripe to forge the unity of all Liberals and what remained of the Nationals into one party, but this task, given the years of instability and dictatorship that led Liberal leaders to take different positions, was only accomplished in October 1933 after Arturo Alessandri's second election to the presidency and the return to normal constitutional government. The second reform, by removing many of the issues that fueled the clerical/anticlerical conflict, helped clear the way for differences over socioeconomic policies to become the most salient axis in the party system. With the rise of Communist and Socialist Parties on the Left and the continued prevalence of liberal capitalist notions on the Right, the

reformulated Chilean multiparty system ran the full length of the ideological spectrum along this axis of conflict. However, the clerical/anticlerical dimension did not disappear entirely as a defining characteristic of the parties and as a factor explaining their coalitional proclivities. The post-1920s party system cannot be understood without considering the continued impact of this dimension.

A third change, a new electoral regime, also affected the composition of the party system. The electoral college for presidential elections was abolished, leaving the choice of presidents directly in the hands of electorate. In case candidates received only pluralities, a joint session of Congress was supposed to choose between the first- and second-place winners; henceforth in all such situations a majority of legislators voted in favor of the best placed candidate. In senatorial, Lower House, and municipal elections, the cumulative vote was discarded in favor of a modified D'Hondt method of proportional representation, with revamped multimember electoral districts. These changes greatly increased the incentives for the formation of new parties and party splinters, against which the electoral law did not create any barriers. It sufficed to register either a party label with a list of candidates, or an independent list of candidates, at the National Electoral Directorate within the deadlines specified in the law.[41] Unions, professional associations, Mapuche Indians, pensioners, and women's groups also organized their labels and presented candidates, generally without much success. In congressional elections, between new formations and chips from preexisting parties, there were anywhere from around 10 to 25 different parties, as well as 'independent' lists which sometimes served as disguises for parties. This latter was a tactic used especially by the Communists in the 1930s, who also resorted to changing the party's label on the ballot. Parties could also form pacts, even separate ones by region, such that candidates of one party could appear under another's list in some electoral districts and vice versa in others. This was a strategy employed by parties seeking to expand their reach by placing visible candidates, either independents or of other parties or movements, under their list; by smaller parties who sought to enhance their vote in districts where they were relatively but not sufficiently strong; or by independent (real or not) candidates. As a result, the 10 to 25 party labels could yield a total of well over 100 lists of candidates throughout the country, including those of the well-known national parties, hybrid ones out of party pacts (national, regional, or local), lists presented by new groups hoping to form a successful party, and lists organized by unions, associations, and movements of various kinds. In the 1937 congressional elections, for example, there were a total of 143 lists of candidates, not all of which were, of course, competing in each district.[42] With the

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[41]   For a description of the D'Hondt system as applied in Chile as well as the procedures to register parties and candidates, see Federico Gil, *The Political System of Chile* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966), pp. 218–20. This book remains, almost thirty years after its publication, a valuable analytical description of Chilean politics and society.

[42]   See Chile, Dirección General de Estadística, *Estadística chilena*, vol. X, 12 (December 1937), p. 856.

D'Hondt system, the pacts favored party fractionalization, in contrast to what occurred with the cumulative vote. Barely literate voters and those who were ill informed before entering the secret chamber at the polling place—where the candidate lists, each on separate ballots, were supposed to be available—could easily be confused. Hence, voters often opted to go to the polls with the ballots of their preference in their pockets; this practice was not, therefore, only observable as a result of party agents 'forcing' their clienteles or subordinates to vote in a certain way, as analysts have noted with considerable exaggeration. Many of the party divisions and local pacts occurred as personal political ambitions took priority over party interests, as segments of parties disagreed on whether to support or oppose the government, as they discussed which parties should be approached to forge pacts with, or as they decided which presidential candidate to support. Nonetheless, the main parties (including as such the aggregation of the votes of their splinters) regularly obtained at least 75% of the total vote in congressional elections, as was the case in 1953, a low point for them.[43]

It is impossible to analyze all the party labels that competed in elections during this period. What follows discusses the main groups and some of their splinter parties.

The Main Parties

Having emerged as a result of Church/state issues, the by then historic Radical, Liberal, and Conservative Parties had to redefine themselves following the newly salient socioeconomic axis. This was a process that had already begun in the turn of the century years, but it was only after the disestablishment of the Church in 1925 that its full impact was felt, especially for the Conservatives and Liberals.

The Radicals were the quickest to add a social dimension to their programmatic positions and appeals. Their electoral alliances during the 'parliamentary' period with the Democratic and Socialist Workers' Parties associated them more closely with the rising tide of labor demands. A prescient Radical leader, Valentín Letelier, successfully urged the 1906 Radical Congress to adopt a social program and to abandon laissez faire liberalism. Pointing to the fate of Liberal parties at the time in Northern Europe, Letelier argued that "parties that do not take into account the social needs of the salaried work force" are bound to experience a "rapid decadence."[44] The Radicals' new rhetoric permitted them to gain adherents especially among the rapidly growing, and increasingly organized, categories of white-collar employees and nonreligious teachers, both

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[43]   See Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 565, for complete results of the 1953 Lower House elections. They were a low point for the main parties given the success that year of Ibáñez's appeals to the electorate to give him a majority in Congress. He had been elected president in 1952.

[44]   Quoted in Francisco Hinojosa Robles, *El libro de oro de los empleados particulares. Génesis de su movimiento gremial y de su legislación social* (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1966), p. 38.

in private and in public employment.[45] Many of them, especially the state-employed primary and secondary school teachers, were anticlerical as well. Although white-collar and teacher associations often collaborated with the broader labor movement, the professional qualifications of their members gave them a separate collective identity which facilitated their linkage to a different party from those, as was the case with Democrats and Socialist Workers, whose most characteristic members and many leaders were workers, miners, and artisans. The Radical vote in Lower House elections had increased from 12% in 1906 to around 20% beginning in 1912, which probably confirmed the electoral appeal of its renovated stance, and given the close ties the party developed with the white-collar associations, it acquired the image, which was to prove very enduring, of being a party of the 'middle class.' This was accompanied by the perception that the Radicals had become the main 'centrist' force in the newly salient axis of socioeconomic issues, as well as the principal anticlerical party. Nonetheless, contrary to the well-known simplistic reductions of Chilean party politics to class differences, the Radicals did not only draw votes from the middle class and middle-class voters were by no means all Radicals; the party's electoral base continued to include voters from all socioeconomic groups, with its largest votes drawn, following the pattern established earlier, from the North, the Center South (including rural areas), and the South. The average Radical vote in Lower House elections from 1932 to 1957 was 20.3%, a percentage of remarkable stability since 1912.[46] It made the party the largest vote-getter by a small margin in this period.

The new salience of socioeconomic issues in the party system was detrimental to the Liberals' electoral support. The total vote in Lower House elections for all Liberal Parties declined during the 'parliamentary' period from about 44% between 1894 and 1903 to 28% in 1924. In 1932 all Liberal Parties only obtained 18.6%, while the vote for the unified Liberal Party in the Lower House elections between 1937 and 1957 was an even lower 16.1%—less than half the average vote of all Liberal Parties in the 1894–1924 period.[47] The main drainage of votes came from the precipitous decline of support for the Liberal Democrats beginning in the mid-1920s; in 1932 the remnants of the party only scored 0.5% of the national vote.[48] The Liberal Democratic electorate, unlike its leaders, did not go over to support other Liberal Parties in the 1920s nor to the unified Liberal Party in the 1930s. The Liberal Democrats had captured much of their vote

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[45]   See, for example, Hinojosa Robles. He was a member of the Radical Party who initiated the associations of private-sector employees in Chile. The book consists of his memoirs.

[46]   These averages are calculated from figures in Urzúa Valenzuela, pp. 482 and 575–77.

[47]   The average vote between 1937 and 1957 is calculated from Dirección del Registro Electoral figures in Chile, Oficina de Informaciones, "Estadísticas electorales 1925–1967," *Boletín de información general*, no. 47 (December 1968). The figures for the total Liberal vote in earlier years come from Urzúa Valenzuela, pp. 351–56.

[48]   Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 482.

with populist and anticlerical appeals, and given the simultaneous rise in the vote for the Left in the mid-1920s, a likely explanation for the Liberal loss is that many of the popular sector and/or more anticlerical voters who formerly supported the Liberal Democrats opted for leftist parties.[49] Devoid of this segment of the Liberal denominated electorate, the Liberals went from being a center force in the clerical/anticlerical axis between Radicals and Conservatives to being the right-wing pole of the reformulated party system around the primacy of socioeconomic issues. Manuel Rivas Vicuña, the acute Liberal analyst of early-twentieth century Chilean politics, despaired at this transformation. He wrote in his diary on 27 May 1934 that at a lunch with friends "I criticize the extreme rightist profile that has been given to Liberalism, and I note that it has neither popular nor feminine elements, circumstances that make it lose its influence and its quality as a lubricant between the segments of the Left and Right."[50]

The Conservative Party was also affected by the restructuring of the party system around the socioeconomic issue dimension. While there is no doubt that the party was the 'Right' pole (i.e., conservative) of the clerical/anticlerical dimension, it is simplistic to place it automatically, as virtually all analysts of Chilean politics have done, as the far 'Right' pole along the socioeconomic axis.[51] As a Church-related party, its leaders, militants, and even its voters—as well as the social circles they associated with—were composed to a significant degree of committed Catholics. They had frequent contacts with the clergy and they educated their children mainly in Church-run institutions. Given these characteristics, the Conservatives formed a subculture as well as a political party, one that contained people at all socioeconomic levels despite the fact that, as a result of the combination of Catholicism with the colonial settlement of Chile, the subculture and the party leadership included members of some of the country's oldest and wealthiest families. The party obtained votes and elected Congressmen in all regions, but it received the largest proportions of the vote—as noted earlier—in the most heavily Catholic areas. Anticlerical and secular influences in the mainly agricultural provinces of the country reached primarily the cities rather than the countryside or the small towns, since these influences were primarily diffused through the development of public secondary education and public administration beginning in

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[49]   The loss of Liberal vote percentages cannot be explained by an increase in the numbers of voters. In 1912, when all Liberals scored 44% of the vote, there were 295,000 voters; in 1924, they obtained 28% of the vote out of fewer, i.e., 256,000 voters. In 1932, when they received 18.6%, the voting public had only increased to 327,000. The figures for the total number of voters appear in Ricardo Cruz Coke, *Geografía electoral*, p. 12.

[50]   Rivas Vicuña, vol. 3, p. 679. [Critico la situación de partido de extrema derecha que se ha dado al liberalismo y anoto que no tiene elementos populares ni femeninos, circunstancias todas que le llevan a perder su influencia y su carácter de lubricante entre los extremos de izquierda y derecha.] Naturally, his reference to Left and Right was primarily to the opposition between Radicals and Conservatives.

[51]   The Conservative Party's representatives continued to be seated at the far right of the congressional chambers, adding to its image as a rightist party.

the late nineteenth century. Hence, the anticlerical parties had much greater difficulty eroding Conservative support in the small towns and rural areas. Large land holders in the agricultural Central Valley usually built shrines, chapels, and even Churches which facilitated the reach of the clergy to the rural population. Such farms had patron saints, and they had an active set of festivals marking the religious calendar as well as the major points in the agricultural cycle—and the electoral contests.

As members of a Catholic party, Conservative militants could not help but be aware of the Church's social teachings. As noted by Erika Maza Valenzuela, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wealthy Catholics, including many women, dedicated their energy and their money to organizing and running many beneficence and educational institutions for the poor in association with religious orders.[52] In order to counter anticlerical influences, the Church and the Conservative Party made an effort to organize mutual aid societies and unions for men and women workers, especially after the publication of Leon XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, although such organizations (perhaps with some exceptions) do not appear to have engaged in militant industrial action. Some prominent Conservatives, notably women leaders such as Adela Edwards de Salas, were very forthright in condemning low wages and deplorable working conditions.[53] The party supported and even proposed social and labor legislation (including the creation of legal unions in 1919), although it clearly had a paternalistic view of labor relations and of the popular sectors in general.

Differences among Conservatives began to appear as the parties began to align themselves primarily on the basis of their socioeconomic views. By the early 1920s Conservatives who were more receptive to progressive interpretations of the Church's social doctrine already identified themselves as a Social Christian segment. Prominent among them was Emilio Tizzoni, a member of the Lower House of Congress. In the 1930s, inspired by Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno,* the writings of Jacques Maritain, and the teachings of several influential Chilean priests, especially Fernando Vives and Alberto Hurtado, a new generation of young Conservatives who sought to place the party at the forefront of social action emerged. This group, whose principal leader was Eduardo Frei, clashed with the party and even the Church, whose top hierarchy, beginning with Horacio Campillo, Archbishop of Santiago during the 1930s, emphasized loyalty to the Conservative Party and held more traditional views. In 1935 the Conservative youth

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[52] Erika Maza Valenzuela, "Catholicism, Anticlericalism, and the Quest for Women's Suffrage," pp. 8–10 and 20–25.

[53] Erika Maza Valenzuela, pp. 26–27, quotes from Edwards de Salas's little-known book, *Memoria de la Cruz Blanca. 1929. Sociedad con personería jurídica y cuya finalidad es proteger a la joven y remidir a la mujer por la mujer* (Santiago: Imprenta y Litografía "Casa Amarilla," 1929). Edwards de Salas was elected to Santiago's Municipal Council with the largest vote of any candidate in 1935, the first election in which women voted.

organized the Conservative Falange (*Falange Conservadora*), almost as a party within the party (a model that was also used by Adela Edwards in creating a woman's party associated with the broader party). The Falange refused to support the party's choice of backing the Liberal candidate Gustavo Ross, judging him too rightist, for the presidential elections of 1938. As a result, they left the party altogether, becoming the National Falange (*Falange Nacional*), a decision that displeased not only the Conservative Party but also the Church hierarchy. However, the Falangists continued to be dedicated Catholics and to view their programs as a means of implementing more appropriately the Church's teachings. The new party, led by youthful professionals, was not particularly successful electorally, regularly receiving until the mid-1950s only around 3% of the national vote.[54] It made every effort to have a presence in the labor movement, without much success in its early years.

The scission of the Falangists did not end the stirring of Social Christian views within the Conservative Party. In the mid-1940s, under the leadership of Eduardo Cruz Coke, a senator and social reformer, such views gained greater currency, becoming the predominant tendency among party leaders. The disagreements between the two sections came to a head over the question of supporting or rejecting a 1948 law banning the Communist Party. The law had been proposed at the beginning of the Cold War by Radical President Gabriel González Videla (1946–52), who had himself only recently broken his governmental alliance with the Communists, in part bowing to pressure from the United States. The Social Christians rejected the law as an infringement of political liberties, while the rest of the Conservatives supported it. This divided the party into two groups: the Social Christians kept the Conservative Party label after a polemical court decision on the matter, while their detractors became the Traditionalist Conservative Party (*Partido Conservador Tradicionalista*). In the Lower House elections of 1950 and 1953 the latter party obtained a larger share of the vote. The Conservative (Social Christian) Party did especially poorly in 1953, electing only 2 deputies compared to the Traditionalists' 16. This result was partly the consequence of a further division among Social Christians, as a group calling itself the National Christians (*Movimiento Nacional Cristiano*) ran on a platform supporting the then newly elected (and this time democratically so) President Carlos Ibáñez (1952–58). If the Falange's votes are added to the other two Social Christian groups, these segments from the old Conservative Party trunk obtained almost as many votes in the 1953 election (9.98% of the total) as the Traditionalists (10.05%). The lesson was not lost on the Social Christians. Over the next few years they began to gravitate together, even though a segment of the Conservative Party (Social Christian) led by the two deputies elected in 1953 fused back into the Traditionalist group. In July 1957 the Social Christian strands merged to create the Christian Democratic Party, a development to be discussed

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54   Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 581.

later. Through this long evolution, which had begun in the early decades of the twentieth century, the historically Catholic and proclerical segment of Chilean politics had generated a clearly centrist party on socioeconomic matters, leaving what remained as the Conservative Party (basically composed after the mid-1950s of the Traditionalists, although they dropped this qualifier from their label) with a clearly rightist profile.

As parties seeking to articulate and appeal to working-class interests, the parties of the Left were from their inception firmly placed on the socioeconomic axis of the party system, even if they were also anticlerical. The restructuring of the Chilean party system along the socioeconomic axis favored the Left by reducing (but not eliminating) the influence, which so affected the Democrats as mentioned above, of anticlerical themes in electoral appeals. Hence, it was only from the mid-1920s onwards that the (anticlerical) Chilean Left was able to reach its electoral potential (given residual, not preponderant, effects of the clerical/anticlerical conflict), namely the 20–30% of the vote that it has regularly obtained until the present.

There were major changes in the partisan composition of the Left from the early 1920s to the mid-1930s. The Communist Party which had emerged from the Socialist Workers' Party convention of January 1922 was a majority or close to a majority force in the labor movement. A relatively moderate Communist leadership after Recabarren's suicide in December 1924 was totally transformed by repression at the hands of the Ibáñez dictatorship's police and by the 'bolshevization' of the party under the orders of the Third International. The party even went so far as to posthumously expel Recabarren, whose own views did not in effect fit well into a Communist orthodoxy, from its ranks. A leftist tendency led by Manuel Hidalgo, who was elected to the Senate in 1926 only to be forced into exile by Ibáñez a year later, was also expelled, becoming the Chilean section of the Trotskyite movement. By the end of the Ibáñez government the Communist Party ranks had been decimated, its presence in the labor movement was greatly reduced as its labor federation could only reorganize about a fifth of its former councils throughout the country, and its politics were as intransigent and sectarian as could be found among Communist Parties anywhere in the world during the 'class against class' period of the International (1928–34).[55]

The most important innovation in the non-Communist Left was the founding of the Socialist Party in April 1933. It resulted from the fusion of four parties or movements—including some leading Free Masons, former anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, leftist nationalists, social democrats, and Hidalgo's Trotskyites—which identified, however loosely, with socialist ideals but rejected Soviet Communism. The galvanizing event that united them was the short-lived 'Socialist

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[55]   J. S. Valenzuela, "Labor Movement Formation," p. 567. For a discussion of the Communist International during this period, see Annie Kriegel, *Les Internationales ouvrières* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975, 4th edition), pp. 93–99.

Republic' of 4 to 14 June 1932, plus their support for Marmaduke Grove's presidential campaign against Arturo Alessandri later that year. Grove and other leaders of the 'Socialist Republic' figured prominently in founding the Socialist Party, and for its first decade-and-a-half it was mainly their instrument, although the party remained traversed by a variety of tendencies from Marxists to moderate reformers.

Although it was founded very late relative to the development of the Chilean labor movement, the Socialist Party was able to recruit a sizable segment of labor leaders to its ranks. This was a fortunate historical coincidence for the party, rooting it in a working-class social base that gave it greater legitimacy to dispute within the Left the Communist claim to be the sole true representative of working-class interests. This coincidence resulted from the fact that the party's creation occurred soon after the Ibáñez dictatorial regime had, on the one hand, decimated the labor movement and, on the other, fostered the growth of legal unionism under the provisions of 1924 labor legislation. It is likely that the legal union leaders included Democratic Party members, some former anarcho-syndicalists, and quite a number of new leaders who were nonpartisan. The Communist labor leaders had neither the interest nor probably the ability to include these unionists in their organizational network; in fact, they rejected them out of hand as collaborators with the hated dictatorship. Moreover, the anarcho-syndicalists who had been repressed by Ibáñez were unable to recreate their movement after his fall; many of them drifted into the Socialist Party as well. Thus, the Socialist Party was to inherit the non-Communist/Socialist Worker streams of political and union organizing that swelled from previous decades.

Meanwhile, the Democrats, though largely a spent force within organized labor, continued to have a significant electoral presence, especially among popular sectors, during the 1930s and 1940s. Their electoral potential was marred, however, by a division of the party that not only undermined it but, in the end, virtually destroyed it, especially as the main party leaders from the pre-1927 period passed away. After the fall of the Ibáñez dictatorship the party publicly recognized its 'error' in having supported it, and a segment of its leaders and militants tried to emphasize its 'leftist' orientation, seeking to form political alliances with the Communists and Socialists.[56] However, another group within the party was tempted to collaborate with the government of Arturo Alessandri in exchange for ministerial and other positions. The first, more leftist, group created what was called the Democratic Party (*Partido Democrático*) and the second the Democrat Party (*Partido Demócrata*). In the 1940s, after a brief fusion, the party divided once again, and its segments were not even able to agree to support a single presidential candidate. In

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[56]   A little-known book by Héctor de Petris Giesen, *Historia del Partido Democrático. Posición dentro de la evolución política nacional* (Santiago: Dirección General de Prisiones, 1942), has a detailed account of the Democratic and Democrat Parties during the 1930s.

1960 the remnants of the party fused with other splinter groups to form the Democratic National Party (*Partido Democrático Nacional*), with minor electoral support and generally leftist orientation.

A final important new party label that emerged during this period was the Agrarian-Labor Party (*Partido Agrario Laborista*). Created formally in 1945, it became the main party base used by Carlos Ibáñez to regain the presidency in 1952. From 1938 on Ibáñez was a regular presidential candidate, and his political influence was a constant thorn in the side of party strategists during the 1940s. After electing the largest single block of deputies in 1953 (26), the Agrarian-Labor Party dwindled to insignificance as the Ibáñez presidency faded. Despite having become a personalistic party, its party origins were more complex. Its first component was the Agrarian Party (*Partido Agrario*), formed by agricultural entrepreneurs in the Southern province of Cautín. In 1932 they elected 4 deputies and this success led them to try to expand their reach to all 'laboring' elements. The second element was the Liberating Popular Alliance (*Alianza Popular Liberadora*), which emerged through the fusion of groups supporting Ibáñez's unsuccessful 1938 presidential bid (from which he actually withdrew before the elections), including the Chilean National Socialist Party (*Partido Nacional Socialista*).

Party Alliances

Insofar as no single party received more than a quarter of the vote, party alliances continued to be dominated by the formation of coalitions for presidential elections. The winning presidential coalition would normally participate in the new president's first cabinets and compose the initial main nucleus of his legislative supporters. However, cabinet and legislative coalitions almost always changed during the course of the presidential term. The initial presidential coalitions never had a majority in both houses of Congress, and although there was usually a honeymoon period for each, which facilitated approval of legislation at the beginning, this effect did not last long; ultimately presidents were forced to seek viable legislative coalitions, which usually required changing the cabinet. Legislative elections did not coincide with presidential ones, which was also a complicating factor as the former could alter the party composition of Congress. Presidents who took office when the electoral calendar called for congressional instead of municipal elections soon after their own election were fortunate, as this tended to strengthen their legislative support. Elections during the honeymoon period, i.e., just months after the inauguration of a new president, began to occur during most presidencies after the death of Juan Antonio Ríos (1943–46) altered the timing of the presidential terms. The glow of the honeymoon considerably increased the vote for the party or parties supporting the new president. Thus, in the 1947 municipal election Radicals and Communists received 41.45%; in the 1953 congressional contest, pro-Ibáñez forces obtained 45.4%; in the 1965 congressional

elections, the Christian Democrats scored 43.6%; and in the 1971 municipal election, the Popular Unity coalition rose to 48.6%.[57]

As the presidential period came to a close, party coalitions were dictated more by the preparations for the new presidential campaign than by the needs of incumbents to have working congressional majorities. This could benefit sitting presidents, but it usually worked at cross purposes with their efforts to form such legislative majorities. While the reaffirmation of a fully presidential regime in 1925 was supposed to facilitate cabinet stability, the political vagaries of forming viable legislative support given the impact of the next rounds of elections—especially presidential ones—led to little decrease in ministerial changes.

The 1925 change to direct presidential elections gave an advantage in such contests to well-known public figures, such as former presidents, high-profile former ministers of government, scions of well-known political families, and former presidential candidates. The change made it easier for independents to emerge in presidential election politics, who could build a coalition combining parties, fractions of parties, movements, associations, unions, etc. Ibáñez, who never formally joined a party, was to take advantage of his highly visible persona to become a permanent factor in presidential election politics, beginning with the December 1938 contest. Devoid of any principles and armed with simplistic stock phrases generally targeting political parties and politicians, Ibáñez absorbed support that varied from election to election from groups or parties, ranging all the way from Nazis to Communists, that felt excluded or alienated for whatever reason. The new method of elections also led to an increase in the number of presidential candidates, as they no longer had to go through the complicated process of slating lists of electors.   Party leaders and independents (with the requisite number of signatures backing them to register formally as candidates) could decide to run, despite having little chance of winning, as a means to enhance the visibility of their parties, of themselves in preparation for a future presidential contest, and/or to detract votes from certain other candidates in an effort to influence the final result without appearing to support any other candidacy. With these considerations, the politics of presidential elections became more uncertain and complex.

Party-brokered coalitions which could generally count on aggregating their votes still had the greatest probability of producing winning presidential candidacies. But such coalitions in a multiparty system that had become more complex with the addition of a socioeconomic axis running the full range of the Left to Right spectrum were now more difficult to make. The system not only had three major tendencies along this axis (Left, Center, and Right), each with an

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[57]   Chile, Oficina de Informaciones, "Estadísticas electorales," various tables; Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 567; and A. Valenzuela, *Political Brokers in Chile*, p. 54. It should be noted that there were no elections four months after the inauguration of Jorge Alessandri in 1958.   The first one, a municipal contest, took place in 1960.

aggregate vote between a fifth and two-fifths, but there was also a division between a Catholic and a secular or anticlerical component in each tendency. The Catholic component was weakest on the Left, but through labor leader Clotario Blest it was of some significance in the public service associations and in the overall union movement. This component would develop considerably only in the 1960s.

The following were the implicit rules of party-based presidential candidacies and coalition building in this period. First, as was the case before 1925, no leader of the Conservative Party could become the head of a winning coalition because other parties would not accept such leadership.

Second, Radicals and Conservatives (of both tendencies) could not forge an electoral coalition based on a commonly agreed platform or together form part of a coalition led by a Liberal. Both the first and second limitations reflected the persistence of the clerical/anticlerical conflict over issues such as the legalization of divorce, the content of school curricula, religious education and subsidies for schools run by religious groups and, more generally, from the subcultural segmentations that conflicts along this axis had generated in Chilean society. However, Radicals and Traditionalist or rightist Conservatives could form part of legislative and governmental coalitions as long as their focus was on blocking the influence of the Left, as they did in banning the Communist Party in the wake of the start of the Cold War, and as they tried, but failed, to produce a winning common presidential candidacy for the 1964 elections. In addition, although the Falange was an expression of the Catholic subculture, it joined the Radicals, even in presidential elections, as part of its effort to forge a centrist identity. The Social Christian Conservatives did this as well in 1952, even if grudgingly and without a formal agreement. But both Social Christian groups preferred running on their own, as in 1946 and as they did after creating the Christian Democratic Party in 1958 and in 1964.

Third, the Radicals were the party best able to produce winning presidential coalitions. The Liberals, who had occupied this position in the previous period, could still do so given favorable circumstances—as in 1932 and 1958. The Radicals not only had a slightly larger percentage of the vote than the other major parties but also the new salience of the Left to Right axis favored them over the Liberals. The latter's placement on the Right limited them to either making an alliance with the Conservatives (and only with the Traditionalists after the Conservatives split) or with the Radicals, but they could not do so with both, as noted previously. By contrast, the Radicals could coalesce with the Liberals, with other parties of the Center including the Falange, and/or with the Left. By providing assurances that policies would not go to any extreme, the Radicals even had the ability to draw into the same coalition the Liberals and the Socialists and gain the Communists' electoral support as well, as occurred with the election of Juan Antonio Ríos in 1943.

Fourth, the presidential election coalitions had a central component to which its leaders tried to add peripheral ones. The central element united two major parties into a programmatic understanding and a mutual promise to share the key ministerial positions. It then served as the basis for building the peripheral aspect, if possible, which consisted of parties (as well as movements, unions, and associations) who joined forces with the coalition but did so with little expectation of gaining ministerial positions or having much influence over the future policies of the government if the coalition's candidate won. As such, the peripheral component could have quite disparate forces. Liberals and Socialists or Radicals and Social Christian Conservatives could form part of a broader coalition but not its central component. Sharp internal party conflict, leading sometimes to divisions which were facilitated by the electoral system, could occur over which strategy to pursue in forming the core coalition. The largest party-initiated coalitions (as opposed to Ibáñez's 'independent' candidacies), which garnered the biggest peripheral combination and produced victories by absolute majorities of the vote, had a Radical-Liberal core regardless of whether the candidate was a Radical (as with Juan Antonio Ríos in 1946) or a Liberal (as with Arturo Alessandri in 1932). When the Radical and Liberal Parties ran on their own or went into core agreements with other forces, namely, the Radicals with the Left or with portions of the Left and the Liberals with the Right or portions of the Right, the result was a closely contested election, sometimes even a virtual tie, which then sent the final decision to a joint session of Congress. (At that point a somewhat different governing coalition from the original electoral one could be forged, as happened in 1946 when the Liberals won an inclusion in the cabinet despite having lost the election.) These hotly contested elections occurred in 1938, when the Radicals formed a Popular Front coalition with all parties of the Left (although the central component was formed by Radicals and Socialists), winning barely against a Liberal-Conservative core agreement that supported a Liberal; in 1946, when the majority of the Radical Party formed an alliance with the Communists that had no official peripheral supporters (but a good number of Socialist voters) and won against candidates presented by the Liberals, the Social Christian Conservatives, and a narrow Socialist segment; and in 1958, when a Liberal-Conservative core won narrowly against a candidate of the Left, a Christian Democrat, a Radical, and a maverick leftist priest.

Finally, independent candidates could win as long as no two major parties formed a core coalition or if such a coalition supported the independent figure. The first situation occurred in 1952 and explains why Ibáñez was able to win then and not earlier. That year Ibáñez, with the support of his makeshift Agrarian Labor Party, a Socialist segment, and assorted other *ibañista* movements, drew voters from all parties (including the Communists, due to Ibáñez's pledge to abrogate the law banning them from public affairs), while the Liberals could only muster support from the Traditionalist segment of the Conservatives, the Radicals were unable to forge a core agreement with any other party, and a small Socialist splinter ran its own candidate. The second

situation occurred in 1958, when Liberals and Conservatives rallied behind Jorge Alessandri, son of the former president, who was a senator at the time. Alessandri prided himself in not having been a member of any party, although he was very close to the Liberals.

A complicating factor for the formation of alliances was that parties with proximate positions, or two splinters from a single party, were often engaged in fierce competition with each other as they tried to appeal to roughly similar universes of local militants and voters. For instance, after a period of relative collaboration under the Popular Front coalition (1936–42), Communists and Socialists became embroiled in a bitter struggle for influence in the labor movement and predominance in the leftist electorate. Similarly, Democrats and Democratics were unable to mend their differences for more than fleeting periods, and Conservative Traditionalists preferred the company of Liberals to that of the Social Christians or Christian Democrats.

This period was characterized by the fact that the Radicals were the main centrist party. That would soon change with the rise of Christian Democracy, a phase that also contained important changes in the electoral system.

From the Founding of the Christian Democratic Party to the Breakdown of Democracy in 1973

Given the rapid electoral successes of the Christian Democratic Party in the years following its founding in 1957, by the mid-1960s the party system appeared to have undergone significant changes. The figures were eloquent: from 13.2% of the vote received by the Falange and the Conservative Social Christians in the 1957 Lower House elections, the new party born from the fusion of both groups tripled its proportion of the vote by 1965 before dropping to a figure about double the original amount. This can be appreciated in Table 1, which also contains the percentages of the vote obtained by the other major Chilean parties in elections for the Lower House of Congress between 1957 and 1969.

Table 1

Vote for Major Chilean Parties, 1957–69
(Lower House Elections, in Percentages)

Party	1957	1961	1965	1969
Conservative*	13.8	14.8	5.3	—
Liberal	15.3	16.6	7.5	
National	—	—	—	20.0
Christian Democratic*	13.2	15.9	43.6	29.8
Democratic	5.0	6.9	—	—

Agrarian Labor	7.8	—	—	—
Radical	21.5	22.1	13.7	13.0
Socialist	10.7	11.1	10.6	12.2
Communist	—	11.8	12.7	15.9

Sources: Arturo Valenzuela, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 35; and Chile, Oficina de Informaciones, "Estadísticas electorales, 1925–1967," *Boletín de información general,* no. 47 (31 December 1968), pp. 10–12.

* The 1957 percentage for the Conservative Party corresponds to the United Conservative Party, i.e., the Traditionalist wing of the old Conservative Party, while the 1957 percentage for the Christian Democrats adds those obtained by both the Falange and the Conservative Social Christian Party. The latter two already acted together as the Social Christian Federation. A. Valenzuela's table has different figures in these cells because he added the Social Christian and Traditionalist Conservative votes into the Conservative column, an addition that runs counter to the alliances of the time.

From an analysis of the electoral results of the late 1950s and 1960s in Table 1, it is possible to conclude that Christian Democracy gained the largest share of the vote for any single party label in Chilean twentieth-century electoral history from three sources: from small Center-Left to Center-Right parties, including the remnants of the Democratic and Agrarian Labor Parties; from the Right, particularly from the Conservative Party; and from the Radicals, who ceased being the principal party of preference of the centrist electorate. The Left was the only segment that retained, and even increased slightly, its share of the vote during the years of Christian Democratic ascendancy. Socialists had 10.7% of the vote in 1957 and 12.2% in 1969, while Communists obtained 11.8% in 1961 (their first legislative elections after the law banning them was repealed in 1958) and 15.9% in 1969. Each of these sources must be examined more closely.

Small parties were affected by an important aspect of the electoral legislation changes that took place in 1958 and 1962, namely, a prohibition of the electoral pacts that had produced the ubiquitous hybrid lists of candidates. Federico Gil notes correctly that this dealt a mortal blow to 'fly-by-night' parties.[58] The pacts gave small parties a considerable advantage, because they permitted the election of some of their members in districts where they were moderately strong while, at the same time, their votes would be aggregated separately from the ephemeral list in which they ran by the Electoral Service to compile the national vote total of their own party label. In this manner, the party label could retain its legal existence because it could be counted as having more than the minimum support needed for this purpose, and at the same time the party obtained the necessary boost in votes to elect its candidates by sharing a slot on a list that was better able to draw enough votes to surpass the D'Hondt system's electoral quotient. After the prohibition of

[58]   Gil, *Political System of Chile*, p. 216.

pacts small parties could still field their candidates under their own label and hope to retain their legal registry as a party on the basis of their national vote total, but it was unlikely that they would have sufficient votes in any district to equal or surpass the electoral quotient. The only way to form pacts under the new rules was for parties to agree, while retaining in fact separate organizations and identities, to register a fictive national party label at the Electoral Service with hybrid lists of candidates. But small parties could hardly hope that the larger ones would accommodate them to such an extent that they would sacrifice their own party label. Consequently, the best avenue open to the militants of small parties was to join in with the party that seemed closest to them. Democrats, a small National Party, and Agrarian Laborites, the latter by the mid-1950s already most discouraged by the multiple failures of the Ibáñez government and seeking a new political venue, generally opted for Christian Democracy.[59] With the old legislation, it might have been possible for these groups to simply make electoral pacts with the Christian Democrats while keeping their own label. A small nucleus of party faithful kept the Democratic Party alive, but it obtained a mere 1% of the national vote in the municipal elections of 1963, a devastating result given the 6.9% it had received in 1961.[60]

Within the Right, the Liberals lost some, but not much, of their electorate to the Christian Democrats. The Liberals had 18% of the vote in 1949 and in the 1953 elections that took place in the Ibáñez honeymoon period they dropped to 10.9%. However, they rebounded quite well and by 1961 they had recovered to 16.6%, just 1.4% short of their 1949 result. They once again lost heavily in the 1965 elections that took place under the full glow of the newly inaugurated presidency of Eduardo Frei. It is impossible to tell how much the Liberals recovered after that, because in 1967 they merged with the Conservatives and a smaller right-wing group to form the National Party, resuscitating once again this often-used label. The new party obtained 20% of the vote in 1969, a percentage that the Right was to improve subsequently.

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[59] On the influx of the *ibañista* segment into Christian Democracy, see George Grayson, *El Partido Demócrata Cristiano chileno* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Francisco de Aguirre, 1968) pp. 333–37. The Agrarian Labor Party supported Eduardo Frei in the presidential election of 1958, the only other party to do so; see p. 319–21. Grayson does not mention the change in the electoral law to prohibit pacts. Rather, in explaining the rise of Christian Democracy he emphasizes the great ability of its leaders, the formation of a band-wagon effect of joining the winner in the late fifties and early sixties that drew in the *ibañistas* and new generations of university students, and the increase in the voting population, especially of women who, for religious reasons, were attracted to Christian Democracy. While there is no doubt about the party leaders' abilities, these explanations are not particularly convincing.

[60] In 1958 the remnants of the Democratic Party supported the candidacy of Salvador Allende for the presidency. In 1960 it fused with other small groups to form the National Democratic Party. In 1964 the party once again supported Allende for president, but in the process it lost most of the twelve deputies it had elected in 1961 because they preferred to support Frei. In 1965 the party elected three deputies, but it subsequently split and its remaining members went into other parties. See J. Fuentes, L. Cortés, F. Castillo, and A. Valdés, *Diccionario histórico de Chile* (Santiago: Zig-Zag, 1990, 11th edition), pp. 423–24.

As the original Catholic party that had already produced the centrist splinters forging the nucleus of Christian Democracy, the Conservative Party lost the most to the Christian Democrats by 1961. The vote for all Conservative tendencies was 22.7% in 1949. The *ibañista* upsurge of 1953 left the Traditionalist segment with 10.1%, the Social Christian group with 4.5%, and the National Christian (*ibañista*) group with 2.7%. The total for all three groups, 17.3%, indicates that a proportion of what was the Conservative vote level of 1949 also went elsewhere, most probably to the Agrarian Laborites, the main *ibañista* party. The National Christians soon dissolved and their leaders went into the Falange before the formation of the Christian Democratic Party. Thus, both Social Christian components that eventually went into Christian Democracy cost the Conservative Party about 6–8% of its former vote by 1961.

As was the case with the Liberals, it is very hard to estimate how much more the Conservatives may have lost during the 1960s to Christian Democracy. Certainly the 5.3% of the vote the party received in the 1965 elections was much less than its normal vote, given the Frei honeymoon effect on that contest. And yet, since the Conservative vote dropped by a factor of 2.8 while the Liberal one decreased by a factor of 2.2 from 1961 to 1965, the Conservatives lost, again, more than the Liberals on that occasion. In the absence of survey data showing how National Party voters in 1969 would have voted if the old labels had remained in place, it is impossible to tell if the recovery of the Right to 20% included as well a larger gain from what would have been Conservative rather than Liberal voters.

And yet, this is very unlikely, because the Conservatives lost much more than just votes to the rise of Christian Democracy. They lost the essential element of their historic identity, namely, their connection to the Catholic Church. The Falange and later the Social Christians most probably took a significant proportion of the most committed Catholic militants out of Conservatism into Christian Democracy. The Church could hardly ignore the new situation that had arisen by keeping its link to a Conservative Party then formed principally by its Traditionalist, i.e., its rightist component. Moreover, as noted by Brian Smith, the weight of international Catholicism shifted in a socially and politically more progressive direction in the late 1950s, bringing it much closer to the attitudes espoused by lay and clerical Social Christians in Chile for more than two decades. Smith points as well to the influence of a 'progressive' papal nuncio in Santiago during the late 1950s, who was responsible for recommending the appointment of many bishops since there happened to be a 50% turnover in the episcopate.[61] Of course, that such men were ready for these positions in the Chilean Church shows that this was a change that had indeed been brewing for several decades. The effect on Catholic voters of the shift of clerical opinion towards the new party cannot be measured, but it is certainly one that cannot be ignored. Created by the hierarchy

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[61] Brian Smith, *The Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 120–21.

in the 1850s to advance and defend Church positions, the Conservative Party had become an orphan child a century later. Its remnants grouped those who resisted a centrist political position, and as such from being a party of clerical defense the party became simply one of the Right. Its merger with the Liberals, adversaries while it was a clerical party, confirmed this shift, leading even to a new party label. Given that the Conservative Party that fused with the Liberals was already a different one, the fact that the National Party gained 20% of the vote in 1969, i.e., a loss of about 10–15% from what Liberals and Conservatives obtained in the thirties and forties, should be considered a normal result.

However, the connection between the Church and the Christian Democratic Party took a different shape from that which had existed with the Conservative Party. It could be described as a close affinity, given the Social Christian base of the new party's doctrines and the friendship of the party's leaders with the new, more progressive hierarchy, but by no means as an organic link of the kind that the Church had forged with the Conservative Party. The new relationship reflected both the fact that Falangists and Social Christians had developed independently from, and even at odds with, the previous hierarchy's volition, and a decision by the Church not to involve itself in politics by supporting a Catholic party. As a result, Christian Democrats did not feel obligated to implement decisions and choices made by the Archbishop. The party rejected identifying itself as a 'Catholic' party and noted explicitly that it was nonconfessional, although it drew inspiration from Christian (especially Catholic) doctrines and thinkers. As such, the growth of the party was not—or was much less—limited by its affinities with the Catholic Church than the Conservatives were by their links with it. The Christian Democrats were able to include leaders, militants, and voters who did not have strong feelings either for or against the Church, as well as Protestants, Jews, and agnostics. This would have been much more difficult for the Conservatives.

Thus, although Christian Democracy was able to draw on a Catholic identity to generate a base of electoral support given its doctrinal basis and its affinities with the Church, its fundamental definition became that of a Center party, offering a way between Right and Left that was open to anyone. This attitude was of great advantage when competing with the Radicals, who despite their centrist positioning since 1906 never shed their anticlericalism and their visible connections to the Masonic movement. As a result, the Radicals were unable to draw militants (and many voters) for whom a Catholic identity and respect for the clergy was important. This forced such voters to remain in the Conservative camp, thereby keeping the space for a Center party tied to a Catholic identity wide open much longer than would otherwise have been the case. Conversely, the Radicals also attracted many voters who were mildly Catholic and also anticlerical, as well as those Catholics who rejected the political views of the hierarchy as instrumentalized through the Conservative Party. In other words, much support for the Radicals depended on the presence of the Conservative Party as an instrument of the Church. When the Conservatives weakened, the

Church changed, and a new party emerged from within the Catholic segment with more progressive socioeconomic views and greater distance from the Church, the Radicals had difficulty in holding on to that support.

The Christian Democrats had, therefore, the best of situations: firstly, the political space for centrists with a Catholic identity was open to them. And secondly, the relative distance of Christian Democrats from the Church (as well their emergence at a time in which clerical/anticlerical conflicts had little or no salience) did not place a barrier, except to the most determined anticlericals, to the absorption of militants and voters, Catholic or non-Catholic, who had previously gravitated towards the Radicals given an anticlerical proclivity and a rejection of the rightist tendencies in the Conservative Party. Hence, after Christian Democracy had grown up to the early 1960s by absorbing a large proportion of the Catholic militants and voters who were previously within reach (given their closeness to the Church) of the Conservative Party, it continued to grow by drawing support away from the Radical Party (including from new voters whose normal inclination would have been to vote Radical). The Radicals had recovered very well from the 13.3% of the vote they received with the *ibañista* surge in 1953, scoring about 22%—their usual percentage of the previous four decades—in the elections of 1957 and 1961. But they were unable to recover from the Christian Democratic surge of 1965, when they obtained 13.7% of the vote: in the 1969 contest they even dropped a bit further to 13.0%. In the end the Radicals probably lost as many, if not more, votes (and potential votes from new voters) to the Christian Democrats as did the Conservatives, and this in itself further buttressed the nonconfessional character of Christian Democracy. Reduced to its most loyal electorate, the Radicals subsequently divided into rightist, leftist, and center-leftist segments as they decided, first, whom to support in the 1970 presidential elections and, second, whether they should remain in the leftist Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende (1970–73). These divisions further reduced their electoral support.

In sum, the rise of Christian Democracy produced a restructuring of the party system that affected the composition of the Right and the Center. These changes of the fifties and sixties occurred at the same time that there was an enormous expansion of the electorate. Women were finally enfranchised to vote in nonmunicipal elections in 1949, but the most dramatic increase in the numbers of voters resulted from reforms in 1962 that made both registration to vote as well as voting obligatory. The low numbers of voters in the previous decades had been primarily due to the large proportion of the eligible population who did not bother to register to vote and to the considerable number of those who failed to vote on election day. In fact, the eligible population who abstained from registering and voting even increased relative to the pre-1925 period. Presidential elections drew slightly larger numbers of voters, but in the 1946 contest, for example, of the eligible voting population of about 1.05 million literate men over 21 years of age only

631,257 (60.1%) registered and 479,310 actually voted (75.9% of those who registered, and 45.6% of those who were eligible).[62] By 1961, after a decade of women's suffrage, 1,385,676 men and women cast votes, a number that rose sharply to 2,353,123 in 1965, reflecting the impact of making voting obligatory.[63] The number of voters rose slightly further to 2,388,016 in 1969 (an increase limited by the fact that about 290,000 more voters abstained that year than in 1965), and rose sharply once again to 3,687,105 in 1973 as abstentions declined and as further electoral reforms reduced the voting age to 18 and enfranchised illiterates.[64] Analysts have seized upon these figures to explain a variety of political and party system changes during the decade.[65]

Could this increase in the size of the voting population account at least in part for the rise of Christian Democracy?[66] If the answer were affirmative, there should be positive correlations between increases in the numbers of voters and the (also rising) Christian Democratic vote and negative ones between the voter increases and, especially, the parties of the Right and the Radicals. But this is largely not the case, as can be appreciated in Table 2.

Despite the great expansion of the size of the electorate, the only correlation of any significance is that of .40 between the Communist vote and the increase in electoral turnout between 1957 and 1961. This result is to be expected given the return of many Communist voters to the polling booths after abstaining or being stricken from the electoral registry during the

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[62] Erika Maza Valenzuela calculated the eligible population from census figures by deducting the number of literate males between 8 and 21 years from the total number of literate males and adjusting this figure upwards to account for literate population growth between censuses; Table 1, Chapter 5, of "Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Chile, 1874–1953: Feminism, Catholicism, and Democracy," forthcoming D. Phil. thesis, St. Antony's College, Oxford University. The numbers for the eligible voting population in Ricardo Cruz Coke, *Historia electoral de Chile* (Santiago: Editorial Jurídica, 1984), p. 37, are unreliable. The figures for registered voters and actual voters in 1946 appear in Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 541.

Before 1962, voters had to register every ten years. The process itself was neither costly nor complicated, but it had to be done during the first eight days of every month until six months before elections, at which point the registers were closed in order to prepare the voter lists that were distributed to the polling places.

[63] These figures have been calculated from Chile, Oficina de Informaciones, Estadísticas electorales, p. 10, for the number of valid votes, and Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 622, for the numbers of null and valid ballots.

[64] Urzúa Valenzuela, pp. 621, and 671.

[65] Many analysts, especially of the Right, have argued that the rise of the Left was due to the expansion of the electorate. But the parties of the Left hardly increased their vote percentages in the 1960s (as seen in Table 1) and, as presidential candidate, Salvador Allende received less support in 1970 (36.2%) than he did when there were fewer voters in 1964 (38.6%). The thesis was made popular by Jaime Guzmán in "El camino político," *El Mercurio*, 26 December 1981, pp. C–4 and C–5. For a similar view but using broader sources of data, see Henry Landsberger and Timothy McDaniel, "Hypermobilization in Chile, 1970–73," *World Politics*, 28, 4 (July 1976).

[66] This argument has been made forcefully by Scully, pp. 106–7, who hopes to refute with it the notion developed in J. S. Valenzuela, *Democratización vía reforma*, pp. 41–49, that the Chilean party system was 'complete' before the 1950s.

period between 1949 and 1958 when the party was banned. A small correlation of .25 exists between the Christian Democratic vote and the increase in electoral turnout between 1961 and 1965, but given the dramatic rise of the party's votes and the almost doubling of the electorate in those years (with even larger increases in the vote of women who tended to favor the party more than others) this is indeed a very weak result. The correlates between the Christian Democratic vote and electoral turnout increases in 1957–61 (–.11), 1961–69 (–.12), 1961–73 (.06), and 1969–73 (–.09) are basically flat and, except for one, also even have a negative sign. The negative sign to the correlation between Christian Democratic votes and increases in voter turnout between 1961 and 1969 is especially interesting. It reveals that the slight .25 correlation detected between the variables from 1961 to 1965 resulted from the ephemeral surge of Christian Democratic votes in 1965 that had disappeared as voters returned to (or chose for the first time) parties with their more enduring allegiances. All other correlations between these variables and the Communist, Socialist, Radical, Conservative, Liberal, and National parties are remarkably flat. In other words, all parties gained support from new voters across the board, and the small size of the actual electorate in the previous decades did not reflect a systematic bias against any particular party.[67]

Table 2

Correlations between the Vote for Chilean Parties by Commune and the Increase in the Electoral Turnout, 1957–73.

	1957–61	1961–65	1961–69	1961–73	1969–73
Communist	.40	.08	.04	–.10	–.01
Socialist	.11	.04	.12	.13	.09
Radical	.08	–.13	–.17	–	–
Christian Democrat	–.11	.25	–.12	.06	–.09
Conservative	–.15	–.08	–	–	–
Liberal	–.08	–.16	–	–	–
National	–	–	.05	1.2	–.07

Source: Arturo Valenzuela and J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Party Opposition to the Military Regime" in J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorship and Oppositions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 196. No correlations were made with the Radical vote after 1969 given the party's divisions.

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[67]   This conclusion is also drawn in A. Valenzuela and J. S. Valenzuela, "Party Oppositions," p. 196.

An examination of the raw numbers of total votes received by different parties in these years yields a different—but misleading—impression. Certainly, if the electorate increases by one million between 1961 and 1969 and the Christian Democratic vote jumps during the same years from 213,559 to 716,547 while, say, the Radical vote only increases from 296,704 to 313,559, this means unquestionably that the Christian Democrats have captured larger numbers of new voters than the Radicals.[68] But given the fact that the correlations between increases in the size of the electorate by commune from 1961 to 1969 and the vote for those parties in 1969 are slightly negative, as can be seen in Table 2, this indicates that *it is not the 'new voter' variable that is explaining the growth in the vote*. The lack of correlation between these figures buttresses the alternative explanation, namely, that the greater rise in the Christian Democratic vote was created by a realignment of political support (and potential voter support) from preexisting parties to Christian Democracy. The creation of the Christian Democratic Party gave a new party label to the predefined political space combining moderately reformist socioeconomic views with a generally Catholic subculture, a space that had already been occupied incipiently by Social Christian segments that were uneasily present within the Conservative Party since at least as far back as the 1920s. The views and commitments of many Conservative Party leaders and militants—and key priests—in the early twentieth century did not correspond to those normally associated with the Right: they rejected liberal capitalism, and sought to create unions and other popular sector organizations.[69] But the rise of Christian Democracy also reflected a secularization of Chilean party politics, and in that context a party stressing anticlericalism, such as the Radicals, lost much of its *raison d'être*. Christian Democracy could gain supporters within that segment of the Chilean electorate where the Conservatives could never have obtained them.

Christian Democrats were also very successful in building a base within the urban labor movement, in the organizations of rural workers made possible by the enactment in 1967 of new legal provisions for their unionization, among the urban poor in neighborhood committees and social clubs, as well as among white-collar unions and in professional and student associations. In the first three they competed primarily with the parties of the Left, and they generally gained the largest block of leaders committed to any single party on all fronts by the mid– to late 1960s, although the Socialists *and* Communists together had greater strength. Among white-collar workers Christian Democrats displaced the Radicals as the party with the greatest number of

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[68] These figures are drawn from Urzúa Valenzuela, pp. 578 and 584–85. It should not be forgotten that given voter mortality and the entry of new age cohorts into the electorate the numbers of new Christian Democratic and Radical voters in 1969 are much larger than the difference between the vote totals indicate. I thank Eugenio Ortega Frei for observations on an earlier draft of this paper that led me to rewrite this section.

[69] On the efforts of the Church and of some Conservatives to create unions, see Homero Ponce Molina, *Historia del movimiento asociativo laboral chileno. Primer Tomo: Período 1838–1973* (Santiago: Editorial Alba, 1986).

adherents, and they scored significant though variable successes in the many professional and student associations. The Christian Democratic Party, therefore, not only became an electoral success, it managed to root itself in the social fabric in areas other than the Church as well.

Christian Democratic efforts to increase their presence in organized society as well as in the electoral arena unavoidably led the party to clash with all others. Frei had been elected with a majority of the vote as the parties of the Right gave him unconditional support rather than risk a victory of the Left, but he chose not to form ministerial coalitions with other parties despite lacking a majority in the Senate, thereby leading the first single-party government since the mid-nineteenth century. As a result of these circumstances, relations between Christian Democrats and other parties, already acrimonious with the Right, also became increasingly acrimonious with the Radicals and with the Left, segments that had been at various points in the past the Falange's allies. With the crystallization of a more rightist party on the Right, with unprecedented lack of cooperation and agreement among centrist parties, with the fall of the Christian Democratic vote to a more 'normal' level of support by 1969, with the development of leftist Christian segments that split off from Christian Democracy to join forces with the Left, and with the success of the most leftist and pro-Cuban revolution Socialist Party tendency in winning top leadership positions at the party's 1967 Congress, the party system became increasingly polarized by the end of the 1960s.[70] This polarization probably developed to a greater extent than ever before after 1958 given the fact that the socioeconomic axis had become by far the dominant dimension of party differentiation: not only had the clerical/anticlerical conflict receded, but also for the first time ever since the emergence of the party system in the 1850s more than a decade elapsed without the presence of a party organized to support a leading political figure or his legacy. Such parties, such as the Liberal Democrats, in the past had added a third dimension of differentiation, thereby mitigating polarization along the other two societally grounded ones and offering new coalitional possibilities as well as difficulties.

By the decade's end, a majority in the Radical Party was driven by its decline into making alliances with the Left for the presidential elections of 1970, while the Right opted to press for the candidacy of former President Jorge Alessandri without even considering the possibility of supporting a Christian Democrat once again. The result was the victory in a presidential race, for the first time ever, of a core coalition led by the Socialist and Communist Parties, joined by what remained of the Radical Party, Christian leftists, and other small groups as the peripheral elements.

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[70] See Arturo Valenzuela, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regines, Chile* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) for an analysis of the collapse of Chilean democracy based primarily on the effects of party system polarization.

Despite adopting a generally supportive attitude towards the Allende government at the beginning of its term in office, the Christian Democrats were soon led into making an electoral alliance with the Right in an attempt to prevent a drainage of opposition voters from their party given its soft attitude. These alliances were first developed for by-elections to fill vacant Lower House seats and were also established for the congressional elections of March 1973. For the first time since 1891 voters faced a choice between candidates organized into two 'parties' registered as such for electoral purposes, the Democratic Confederation (*Confederación Democrática*) on the Right and the Popular Unity (*Unidad Popular*) on the Left. Never before had the party system been so polarized, given that the nation's political issues were framed within the two blocks primarily by the extreme rather than the moderate forces. The objective of the opposition block was to obtain a two-thirds majority in order to impeach Allende. It fell far short of this goal as it obtained 54.6% of the vote.[71] In the months that followed a military conspiracy took shape that toppled the government and destroyed Chilean democracy.

The Chilean Party System after the Return to Democracy

Although the military government led for almost seventeen years by General Augusto Pinochet banned all party activities and elections, the parties and the party system underwent significant changes: new party labels emerged, the party coalitions became structured around support or rejection of military rule and its legacy, and a much broader consensus developed among party leaders and militants over economic and social policies and over the value of democracy. As a result of the latter change, the new Chilean party system has developed centripetal forces as parties seek to portray a centrist image and to focus on incremental change. It can no longer be described as one that fits Sartori's type of 'extreme polarization.'[72] And yet, an analysis of the electoral results during this latest period reveals a remarkable degree of continuity in voting trends for the various tendencies in the party system.

The New Party Labels

Two new important party labels emerged on the Right (as well as several very minor ones of extreme rightist groups). They have taken the place of the National Party as the main representatives of that tendency. They are National Renovation (*Renovación Nacional*) and the Independent Democratic Union (*Unión Demócrata Independiente*). Both emerged out of events in 1983 when a strong wave of protests began against the military regime. The Right realized that

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[71] Urzúa Valenzuela, p. 671.
[72] Sartori, loc. cit. (footnote 3).

the government's political project of generating a new 'mentality' in the country that would totally change the population's political allegiances was not going to prove to be a success, and it began to seek formulae to ease a transition from military rule. National Renovation grouped essentially the remnants of the previous National Party with a new generation of leaders seeking to create a 'Center-Right' party. Its basic notion was that the military regime should be open to a constructive dialogue with the opposition to forge agreements that would facilitate a return to democracy. The Independent Union was formed primarily by a new generation of leaders who emerged from within the military government's administration. Ideologically it has contained an unusual blend of the most conservative Catholic social thought with strict neoliberal economic and social policy orientations. It rejected any possibility of deviating from the political program and constitutional-legal framework designed by the military regime, and therefore it refused to contemplate the possibility of even holding discussions with the opposition forces over the matter. The Independent Union refuses to be identified with the 'traditional' Right, a disparaging label it pins willingly on National Renovation.[73] It claims to have a popular urban base and to adhere firmly to principles.

Despite these differences, during the 1988 plebiscite mandated by the authoritarian regime's own 1980 Constitution to enable Pinochet to continue his rule for a new eight-year term, both National Renovation and the Independent Union called for a 'yes' vote. And for the subsequent elections for president, Congress, and the municipalities, both parties have concluded electoral pacts. Under the new democracy the Independent Union has usually been the most outspoken supporter of the legacies of military rule and of the military's own prerogatives. National Renovation has been more willing to contemplate changes but it is still wedded to preserving controversial aspects of the constitutional framework designed by Pinochet, such as an unprecedented degree of military autonomy, a restriction on the right of the president to remove the top military commanders, as well as the influence of the military in selecting the members of the Constitutional Court. For the first time in its history the Chilean party system has parties that have forged close bonds to the military establishment, and this could have disquieting implications for the future of the nation's democracy.

A third new party label on the Right, although it retains a calculated ambiguity over its positioning and has a populist discourse, is the Union of the Center Center (*Unión de Centro Centro)*. It is a vehicle for the political ambitions of Francisco Javier Errázuriz, an entrepreneur who presented himself as a candidate for president in 1989. Given the fact that the new electoral system, to be discussed below, rewards the formation of pacts, Errázuriz led his party into the

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73 See Leopoldo Núñez Tomé, "La renovación ideológical en la Unión Demócrata Independiente" in Gustavo Cuevas Farren, ed., *La renovación ideológica en Chile. Los partidos y su nueva visión estratégica* (Santiago: Instituto de Ciencia Política, 1993), p. 99.

Right's alliance in 1993, thereby winning a senate seat for himself and contributing at least some of his party's votes throughout the country to elect National Renovation and Independent Union candidates.

A fourth important new formation is the Party for Democracy (*Partido por la Democracia*). Its origins lie with the military government's 1987 legislation regarding parties. The parties of the Left originally suggested that the opposition should register a single, 'instrumental' party label following the strictures in the law, but Christian Democrats and Radicals went ahead and legalized their parties with their own labels. Constitutional proscriptions of Marxist parties prevented the Communists from registering, and there were doubts as to whether segments of the then quite divided Socialist Party would be able to do so. Hence, with the requisite statement of principles and signatures, Socialist leaders went ahead and gave legal existence to the Party for Democracy as a means to include all Socialist segments, from Christian to Marxist, in the plebiscite campaign. Subsequently, as the constitutional prohibition of Marxist parties was watered down through reforms approved in July 1989, other Socialist leaders created a new 'instrumental' formation in order to create an electoral pact with other leftist groups, including Communists, for the legislative elections of 1989. With this initiative, the parties of the opposition to the military regime presented congressional candidates in two pacts: one with Christian Democrats, Radicals, and the Party for Democracy and the other with the remaining, and generally more leftist, Socialists as well as the Communists. Both pacts came together in a few districts through an 'omission' agreement, i.e., by presenting only one and not two candidates. Thus, voters opposed to the military regime could elect a candidate from each opposition pact. After the inauguration of Patricio Aylwin's government (1990–94) Socialist and Communist leaders once again gave legal existence to their respective party labels, abandoning the 'instrumental' one. However, the Party for Democracy had assumed a life of its own and it became a real rather than fictive party. Many Socialists were formally members of both the Party for Democracy and the Socialist Party, but in mid-1992 an agreement between both parties forced militants to opt for one or the other. In general, the Party for Democracy contains a larger segment of more moderate militants (some of them former Radicals and Christian Leftists) who have little emotional attachment to the symbols and history of the Socialist Party and/or who never viewed themselves as Marxists. The latter tend to gravitate to the Socialist label.

Party Alliances

Since the Christian Democrats coalesced with the Right to oppose the Allende government, at the time relations between it and the Left became very bitter, but after the military coup the two sides slowly began to put aside their differences and to collaborate in organizing

opposition to the authoritarian regime.[74] In many ways this collaboration emerged at the beginning from initiatives taken by base-level militants rather than top party leaderships. They found themselves working together, often under the protection of the Catholic Church, in the defense of human rights, in creating soup kitchens for the unemployed, in regrouping labor organizations to protect workers in some way from the effects of the new economic policies, in reestablishing student associations, and so on.[75] In the beginning party leaders had difficulty in taking initiatives given divisions within the parties over the events that had led to the military coup as well as the forced exile of many.   However, groups of intellectuals from different parties developed contacts through their various research institutes; constitutional experts met to discuss alternatives to the government's legislative and constitutional initiatives; and with the beginning of the nationwide protests against the military regime in May 1983, the opposition parties began to actively search for broad-based agreements, even with groups on the Right, to press for democratization.   The Communist Party excluded itself from these agreements, preferring a strategy that included force of arms.   The democratic opposition's initiatives culminated in the creation of an alliance to defeat Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite and to elect Aylwin as president as well as a common slate of congressional candidates in the 1989 campaigns.

Although the unity of the opposition was forged mainly by its rejection of the military regime, changes in Socialist Party segments facilitated it. Party leaders criticized what they saw as their errors during the Allende government, and the experience of exile in the former Eastern Europe as well as in Western Europe exposed them to the failures of 'real' socialism and to the achievements of social democracy. These attitudes took root before the collapse of the Soviet block in 1989. The Communist Party also suffered many defections from its ranks as exiled militants were exposed to the same experiences in Europe. As a result Socialists shifted their position away from the revolutionary rhetoric of the late sixties and early seventies, and with the much diminished Communist Party retaining its orthodoxy the Party for Democracy and the Socialist Party became indisputably the major forces of a newly moderate Chilean Left. A formerly inconceivable core alliance of Christian Democrats and Socialists could therefore create the basic nucleus of opposition to the military regime and, subsequently, of the democratic transition government.

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74   A step-by-step analysis of the contacts, discussions, and agreements forged by opposition parties can be found in Eugenio Ortega Frei, *Historia de una alianza* (Santiago: CED-CESOC, 1992).

75   See Arturo Valenzuela and J. S. Valenzuela, "Party Oppositions under the Chilean Authoritarian Regime"; Manuel Barrera and J. S. Valenzuela, "The Development of the Labor Movement Opposition to the Military Regime"; and Brian Smith, "Old Allies, New Enemies: The Catholic Church as Opposition to Military Rule in Chile, 1973–1979" in J. Samuel Valenzuela and A. Valenzuela, eds., *Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorship and Oppositions*.

The electoral laws dictated by the military authorities press, as noted above, the parties to forge electoral pacts. All districts for the senate and the Lower House have two representatives, and parties must list at most two candidates to fill them. Voters cast their preferences for individual candidates, but the votes are counted first by party list. If the winning list has more than twice the votes of the next most-voted list, the best placed one elects both candidates. If it does not, then it elects only one, with the second position going to the candidate who received the highest vote in the runner-up list. In this manner it is possible, as has occurred frequently, that the second elected candidate wins despite having fewer votes than the second-placed candidate on the winning list. If there are only two lists, it suffices for a list to have a third of the votes to be assured of electing a candidate. Hence, the electoral law was designed to favor the parties of the Right, as they were generally expected, given the outcome of the 1988 plebiscite, to have a combined vote of less than half but more than a third of the total. This has been borne out by the electoral results.

With this electoral regime applied to a multiparty system in which no party has more than a third of the vote, parties sharing proximate positions that decide to run separately risk losing many seats to their adversaries if the latter agree to join forces. It is, however, easier for the parties of the Right to combine their forces than for the parties that opposed the military regime to do so now that it has been removed. There are more disparate tendencies among the latter, from Center-Right to Left and from religious to atheist culture, than among the former. The congressional election of 1989 did create a greater aggregation of opposition votes, but that result was generated by the uncertainties of the transition. During the December 1993 congressional elections, the first normal ones with the binomial electoral rules, the main coalition supporting the Aylwin government, the Concertation of Parties for Democracy (*Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia*) was unable to elect up to 9 deputies given the presence of a competing list formed by Communists and other groups of the Left, while the Right's pact, given the votes of the Union of the Center, was able to win 5 additional deputies.[76] The Communist Party sought to capture the voting potential of leftists discontented with the transition and with the government. Ironically, in so doing it probably denied the Concertation a sufficient margin of votes to gain the necessary congressional majorities to change the Constitution in the very aspects the Communists criticized as inappropriate.

With the new pattern of alliances, and with the much broader consensus over socioeconomic policies, the party system in the current period is more akin to that of the early to

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[76] These numbers were calculated on the basis of the electoral results published by *La Segunda*, Santiago, 12 December 1993. They assume that by making a sub-pact with the Communist-dominated list the voters of the Concertation would not defect to the Right in large enough numbers to change these calculations.

mid-1940s than to that of the 1960s and early 1970s. The axis of the governing alliance is located once again in a Center to Center-Left combination, except that presently the most important party in the Center is the one that emerged from the Catholic rather than the anticlerical subculture.

Continuities in Voting Patterns

Before the military regime, analysts could easily find remarkable continuities from election to election since the 1930s in voter support for the country's different political tendencies grouped into Right, Center, and Left blocks.[77] This continuity was expressed even when party labels changed, although it meant at times—as in grouping both Radicals and Christian Democrats into the Center block—glossing over significant differences not captured by the Right to Left placement of parties on the socioeconomic axis.

Analysis of current elections continues to show these continuities in voting patterns.[78] In Table 3 the results of the 1992 municipal elections have been grouped into Right to Left blocks as if the party alliances were the same as those in 1970, i.e., before the Christian Democrats joined the Right in opposing the Allende government but after the Radicals (or what remained of the party) had joined the Left both in fact and in rhetoric. Using the 1992 municipal results is better for purposes of comparison because the electoral system used for this contest was also proportional; this avoids the biases introduced by the congressional electoral regime that distort somewhat the comparisons with the previous vote patterns.

The 1992 results in Table 3 are remarkably congruent with the prior vote averages per tendency. The Right's 1992 vote at 29.9% is virtually the same as the average congressional vote between 1937 and 1973, and if the Center Union's vote is added to it, the total is only marginally above the Right's 1970 presidential vote. The Christian Democratic vote in 1992, 28.9%, is almost equal to the party's congressional votes in 1969 and 1973 and its presidential score in 1970. Adding all 1992 centrist votes produces a result, at 36.3%, very close to the 39.7% received by the Center from 1937 to 1973. Finally, the total 1992 vote for the parties of the Left is, at 24.3%, virtually the same as its 1937 to 1973 average of 24.2%. The smaller Radical vote explains much of the difference, –6.6%, between the vote of what would have been the Popular Unity alliance in 1992 and the result obtained by Allende in 1970 (36.2%).

Correlations of the vote in elections prior to the military coup and current ones also reveal quite startling continuities. Thus, if the votes obtained by the Christian Democratic and the

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77   See for example Robert Ayres, "Unidad Popular and the Chilean Electoral Process," and James Prothro and Patricio Chaparro, "Public Opinion and the Movement of the Chilean Government to the Left," in Arturo Valenzuela and J. Samuel Valenzuela, eds., *Chile: Politics and Society* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Books, 1976).

78   This section draws from Scully and J.S. Valenzuela, "De la democracia a la democracia."

Popular Unity candidates in the presidential election of 1970 are added—thereby simulating the Concertation alliance of 1989 with the results of that year—the correlate of that addition with the Concertation vote in the 1989 presidential elections is .61, and with the vote of the main candidate of the Right (Hernán Büchi) it is –.49. Both results are in the expected directions, and quite impressive.[79] Similarly, the same addition of the Christian Democratic and Popular Unity votes correlates –.53 with the 'yes' vote in the 1988 plebiscite on whether Pinochet should be

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[79]   Scully and J.S. Valenzuela, Table 7. These and subsequently mentioned correlations are significant at the .001 level, although statistical significance levels in this case help affirm the importance of the correlation rather than its validity since the data are not a sample but the electoral universe.

Table 3

Continuities of Electoral Results in Chile, 1937–92*

1992 Parties Grouped as in 1970 Alliances**	1992 Vote by Party List	Total 1992 Vote by 1970 Alliances	1970 Presidential Vote	Average 1937 to 1973 Congressional Vote***
Right:				
RN	13.4			
UDI	10.2			
Independents	6.0			
PL	.2			
PN	.1			
Total RI		29.9	34.9	30.1
Right + UCC	**38.0**			
Center:				
PDC	28.9			
Independents	.5			
Total Center		29.4	27.8	
Center+PR+				
AH-V+SD	**36.3**			**39.7**
Left:				
PPD	9.2			
PS	8.5			
PC	6.6			
PR	4.9			
SD	.4			
Independents	.0			
Total Left (EX UP)		29.6	36.2	
PPD+PS+PC	**24.3**		**24.2**	
Other:				
UCC	8.1			
Independents	2.1			
AH-V	.8			
Total Other		**11.0**	—	

Total registered 1992 voters	**7,840,008**
Total 1992 votes cast	**7,028,616**
Total 1992 blank votes cast	**410,982**
Total 1992 null votes	**215,423**

*   In percentages rounded to the nearest decimal.
**   Party abbreviations: RN = Renovación Nacional; UDI = Unión Demócrata Independiente; UCC = Unión de Centro Centro; PL = Partido Liberal; PN = Partido Nacional; PDC = Partido Demócrata Cristiano; AH-V = Alianza Humanista-Verde; SD = Socialdemocracia Chilena; PPD = Partido Por la Democracia; PS = Partido Socialista de Chile; PC = Partido Comunista de Chile; PR = Partido Radical de Chile; UP = Unidad Popular. Except for the independents in the 'other' category, they are identifiable by tendency according to the pact they subscribed to with other parties, as noted in the electoral results.
***   Average votes in Lower House elections. The election years 1949, 1953, and 1957 are not considered for the average Socialist and Communist vote given the legal proscription of the Communist candidates.

Sources: Ministry of the Interior figures for the 1992 vote; and Arturo Valenzuela, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), Tables 1 and 12.

given another term in office, and .51 with the 'no.' Again, these are solid results in the expected directions.[80]

Obviously, the continuities in voting patterns mask enormously differences in party alliances and sometimes major changes in the programmatic orientations of the parties since the 1930s. Hence, while the levels of support for the Left, Center, and Right tendencies are relatively constant and individual parties with regional bases of strength retain them, this does not mean that party militants and leaders have not fashioned party systems with very different dynamics across these decades.

Conclusions

The Chilean party system—among the oldest in the world—has undergone since its inception a century-and-a-half ago significant transformations that have been discussed in this paper as five distinct systems. In closing, it is worth recalling succinctly some of the complexities that have characterized the system since its constituent parties developed a firm organizational footing in the turn-of-the-century decades.

First, the system has been basically structured by two ideological and programmatic polarities, clerical versus anticlerical and Right versus Left in terms of socioeconomic views and programs. The superposition of both dimensions, each with opposite extremes and a moderate or centrist view, generates a field of political tendencies with nine potential combinations of positions that parties may assume. At no point has the party system contained parties expressing starkly each of these positions, in part because the salience of the two issue dimensions has varied over time as well as for each party at any one time, allowing the parties to straddle extreme to moderate positions along the less salient dimension. Thus, the Liberals after 1925 were clearly a party of the Right, but they could include militants and supporters who ranged from anticlerical to moderately clerical positions. These tendencies found support in organized society through the Catholic and other Churches (and the many educational, health, and social action institutions associated with them), the Masons, social clubs at various class levels, and through employer associations, unions, and other instrumental organizations of the salaried labor force and of the popular sectors, resulting in the creation of links between parties and these expressions of organized society. Ethnic, regional, and other societal divisions, though present in Chile, did not manifest themselves as political tendencies.

Second, the fractionalization of the party system—aided from 1891 to 1973 by the electoral regime—has been such that at any one time more than one party, often splinters of a

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80   Scully and J.S. Valenzuela, Table 6.

common party trunk, could be found competing for the support of the portion of the electorate and various organized groups identified primarily with the same tendencies. Until the mid-1930s the one exception to this rule was the Conservative Party which, given the influence in it of the Catholic hierarchy, was the sole vehicle for clerical opinion. These divisions could reflect differences between the parties in what they would consider the most important polarity, as in the competition between center-leftist Radicals and more leftist Socialists in the white-collar sector associations of the 1930s and 1940s, or it could result from differences along the less salient polarity, as illustrated by the split between Social Christian Conservatives (who were clerical-centrists) and Traditionalist Conservatives (who were clerical-Rightists). Such party divisions could also result from personal conflicts among party leaders that split them apart or from the attachment of some parties to specific political leaders and/or their governments and legacies. This last type of purely political source of fractionalization was so prevalent in the Chilean party system—it was not a factor only in the years from the mid-1950s to 1973—that it should be considered an additional dimension of polarity, sometimes the most important one, in it. Given the fractionalization of the party system and the complexity of the reasons for the formation of new parties, it is highly simplistic, though frequent in the analysis of Chilean politics, to reduce the social base of support of the parties to a class base.

Third, although the Chilean electorate has shown considerable loyalty to political tendencies (as seen primarily since 1925 in the Right to Left distribution of the votes), that loyalty is less intense for specific parties. As a result there could be considerable, though infrequent, shifts in the electoral fortunes of party organizations as the electorate opted to support a new party label that was deemed to better represent or articulate the symbols, views, programs, and interests of a segment if not a majority of the voters who identified with the tendency. Thus, a large segment of the Radical electorate opted for Christian Democracy in the mid– to late 1960s, and Liberal Democratic voters did not accept the unification of the two Liberal Parties in the early thirties. Moreover, winning presidential candidates drew a much larger electorate than that of the specific party or parties that supported them, and the beginning of their governments would generate a significant electoral boost for such parties.

Fourth, since the end of government interference in elections after 1891, no single party has had an absolute majority of the Chilean electorate, and therefore a constant in the nation's politics has been the formation of coalitions around presidential elections as well as to establish working legislative majorities. Normally, the coalitions for the presidential campaigns would fall apart during the course of the presidential term and presidents would establish new coalitions to pass legislation, sometimes including different ones for different issues. By the end of the

presidential term the search for a new coalition for the upcoming presidential election would often dictate the fortunes of the government's legislative coalition.[81]

While parties occupying proximate positions in the societally grounded issue polarities could be expected to provide a first steppingstone to forging the central component of presidential or legislative coalitions, this was frequently not the case. Such parties—whether or not they were formed out of divisions from a common party trunk—were often so bitterly opposed to each other that they preferred to support different presidential candidates and even to make legislative coalitions with other parties. The intensity of their disagreement was often a concomittant of their sharp competition for the support of voters and organized groups in the same or similar segments of opinion, as was the case between Socialists and Communists from 1942 to 1951 or between Democrats and Democratics in the 1930s. It could also be the result of bitter divisions over supporting or rejecting a president or presidential candidate and his political legacy. This is what occurred with Liberal Democrats and Liberals in the turn of the century years.

And fifth, the number of voters was small until women's suffrage after 1949 and, above all, until the compulsory voting law of 1962, but this did not affect the process of development of parties reflecting the positions of all sectors of opinion in Chile's political society. The low numbers of voters was primarily due to the many eligible voters who simply abstained from voting. Hence, such numbers did not reflect 'restrictions' that thereby distorted systematically the fortunes of any particular group and decisively vitiated, as a result, Chilean democracy.[82] In the decades that followed 1894 the party system could become 'complete' insofar as parties reflecting the views of all main sectors of opinion could test their strength in the nation's highly competitive elections.

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[81]   For an analysis of the effects of presidentialism on the difficulties of building governing coalitions among the parties, see Arturo Valenzuela, "Partidos políticos y crisis presidential en Chile: Proposición para un gobierno parlamentario" in Juan J. Linz, Arend Lijphart, Arturo Valenzuela, and Oscar Godoy Arcaya, eds., *Hacia una democracia moderna: La opción parlamentaria* (Santiago: Ediciones de la Universidad Católica de Chile, 1990), pp. 164–80.

[82]   For a recent view that argues that Chilean democracy was 'restricted' for this reason, see Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).