

*Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s**

JOHN M. CAREY

Chile's Congress has conventionally been regarded as among the most effective in Latin America in representing diverse interests and influencing policy. Analyses of Chilean politics prior to the 1973 coup consistently point to the strength of Chilean parties to support this evaluation. Valenzuela (1994), for example, argues for the adoption of parliamentarism in Chile largely on the grounds that its party system resembles those of western European parliamentary democracies. Mainwaring and Scully (1995) point to the stability of support for Chilean parties among the electorate, their ideological consistency, and the strength of national party organizations. In the 1990s, after the return to democracy, the central questions were whether and how the Chilean legislative party system is different from the preauthoritarian period, and what are the implications for the effectiveness of the Congress.

Accounts of Chilean politics at midcentury portray a system characterized by parties with widespread membership and activism at the grassroots, prominent parliamentary leaders, and highly articulated national policy agendas that were spread across a broad ideological spectrum (Scully 1995; Valenzuela and Wilde 1979). This portrait stands in sharp contrast to that of party systems in neighboring Argentina (McGuire 1994), Brazil (Mainwaring 1999), and Peru (Cotler 1994), where personalism and clientelism were endemic, weakening the ability of legislatures to act collectively and to compete with strong presidents in shaping policy.

* Comments on various manifestations of this chapter were offered by seminar participants at the Centro de Investigaciones y Docencia Económica in Mexico City, Harvard University, the Ohio State University, Duke University, and long-suffering graduate students at Washington University. Special thanks are due to Scott Morgenstern, for including follow-up questions for this chapter in his interviews with Chilean legislators and party officials in August 1998. All of the usual caveats apply.

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

In addition to portraying a highly institutionalized party system, the literature on Chilean politics emphasizes that coalitions among legislative parties were highly fluid (Agor 1971). Between 1932 and 1973, for example, Valenzuela (1994, pp. 123–125) identifies 19 separate coalitions among legislative parties in support of the eight presidents who served during this period.¹ The mean coalition lifespan during this period was thus 2.1 years, with the longest surviving coalition lasting five years, from 1932 to 1937. The Chilean Congress was a center of partisan compromise and dealmaking, and served as an effective counterweight to the presidency up through the 1960s. From the late 1950s through the early 1970s, however, a series of electoral and constitutional reforms undermined incentives for cooperation, both among parties and between the branches (Shugart and Carey 1992). In an increasingly ideologically polarized environment, these reforms contributed to the stand-off between Salvador Allende's Popular Unity coalition and the parties on the right, which preceded the military coup of 1973 (Valenzuela 1994; Valenzuela and Wilde 1979).

The transition to democracy in Chile in 1990 raised a number of issues about the roles and performance of the newly reestablished legislature. General Augusto Pinochet's 1980 Constitution, even as amended in 1988, provides for a presidency with extensive formal powers, including the capacity to control the legislative agenda (Baldez and Carey 1999; Siavelis, this volume). The establishment of a large block of generally conservative, unelected senators has served as a brake on policy changes and proposed institutional reforms (Arriagada 1994). With respect to the parties themselves, one question is whether the new, two-member district electoral system imposed by the outgoing military regime fundamentally alters the party system.

In this chapter, I argue that the post-transition Chilean legislative party system differs from the midcentury system portrayed in previous literature in at least one important way: Throughout the decade of the 1990s, it has been characterized by the stability and cohesiveness of the two main legislative coalitions – the *Concertación* on the center-left, and the coalition of

¹ Valenzuela does not define precisely what he means by coalition. Although he discusses efforts by presidents to ensure legislative support by naming cabinet ministers from a range of parties (pp. 119–120), he does not state explicitly that cabinet participation is his criterion for coalition membership. It appears that party statements of support for, or opposition to, the president determines what counts as a coalition (p. 122). How this is operationalized remains unstated.

the right.² The centrality of the coalitions to Chilean politics in the 1990s, moreover, is a product of the two-member district reform of the electoral system. The coalitions coexist with the party organizations that are their main component parts. In conjunction with the traditional parties, they organize nominations for legislative elections, the legislative committee system, and floor voting. In the first post-transition decade, the coalitions themselves have resembled parties composed of multiple factions. The composition of the first three congresses, by party and coalition, are shown in Table 8.1.

Throughout this chapter, I present data on political careers, the committee structure, and voting in the Chilean Chamber of Deputies since the transition to democracy. In order to make a conclusive case about changes in the party system, it would be necessary to provide analogous data for the pre-1973 period as well. Unfortunately, there is no systematic evidence from the earlier era of which I am aware. The bases of intertemporal comparison, therefore, are scholarly accounts of legislative politics in that period. The current data from Chile also provide the basis for cross-national comparison with the other Latin American legislatures examined in this volume. To the extent that we can draw conclusions about legislative capacity by examining legislative organization and the structure of political careers, as Morgenstern suggests in his introductory chapter, Chile is an ideal case for study because information on the Congress is readily available to scholars, including a number of excellent internet sites.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First I review the changes in the legislative electoral system established by the outgoing military regime, emphasizing the incentives that this created for cross-party coalitions. Next I review the early literature on the post-transition Chilean party system, focusing on divergent expectations and evaluations of levels of fragmentation and polarization. Then I begin an empirical analysis of legislative parties and coalitions throughout the first decade after the return to civilian rule, examining legislative careers, the committee system, and floor voting in turn.

² The coalition of the right has gone by a different name in each of the three post-transition elections: Democracy and Progress in 1989, Union for Progress in 1993, and Union for Chile in 1997. In every election, it has included a handful of independents and regional party candidates in a few districts, but over 90% of its nominations are awarded to candidates of either the National Renovation (RN) or the Independent Democratic Union (UDI).

Table 8.1. *Partisan and coalition representation of elected legislators in post-transition Chile.*

Coalition	Party	1989		1993		1997	
		Chamber	Senate	Chamber	Senate ^b	Chamber	Senate
<i>Concertación</i>	Christian Democrat (DC)	39	13	37	13 (4)	39	14 (10)
	Party for Democracy (PPD)	7	1	15	2 (2)	16	2 (0)
	Socialist (PS)	18	4	15	5 (3)	11	4 (1)
	Radical (PR)	6	3	2	1 (0)	4 ^c	0 (0)
	Social Democrat (PSD)	0	1	0	0		
	Independent (I-Conc)	0	0	1	0	0	0
Coalition Total		70	22	70	21 (9)	70	20 (11)
Right	National Renovation (RN)	32	13	29	11 (5)	23	7 (2)
	Democratic Independent Union (UDI)	14	2	15	3 (2)	17	5 (3)
	Center-Center Union (UCC) ^d	—	—	2	0 (0)	—	—
	Independent (I-Right)	0	1	4	3 (2)	9	6 (4)
Coalition Total		46	16	50	17	49	18 (9)
Alternative	Alternative Democratic Leftist Movement (MIDA)	2	0	—	—	—	—
Alternative	Center-Center Union Party (UCCP) ^d	—	—	—	—	1	0 (0)

^a The entire Chamber of Deputies is elected. In the Senate, there are nine additional appointed seats, plus lifetime seats for former presidents who served six or more years in office.

^b All 38 elected Senate seats were initially filled in the 1989 elections. Beginning in 1993, renewal of the Senate is staggered, and the standard term length is eight years. In 1993, 9 of the 19 districts held elections to renew their seats, while senators in the other 10 districts continued for the full, 8-year term. In 1997, these 10 districts renewed their senators. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of seats won (of those contested); the first number represents the total number of seats held in the Senate.

^c The Radical and Social Democrat parties merged between the 1993 and 1997 elections to form the Radical Social Democratic Party (PRSD).

^d The Center-Center Union ran candidates as part of the coalition of the right in 1993, but on its own lists in 1997.

Source: El Mercurio (12/13/93); <http://www.elecciones97.cl/RESULTADOS/INFORME>

The Transition and the Two-Member District Reform

In 1988, the government of General Pinochet lost a plebiscite on its continuation for another eight years by a margin of 56%–44%. Grudgingly accepting the defeat, the military government prepared to conduct open elections – the first in 16 years – in 1989. In doing so, the military government handed down a new electoral law, changing the manner of election for Congress.³ Before the coup of 1973, legislators had been elected from districts ranging in magnitude from 1 to over 20, with a mean magnitude of 5.3 (Nöhlen 1993). Beginning with the 1989 election, all elected legislators are chosen from two-member districts. The entire Chamber of Deputies is elected – with two members drawn from each of the 60 districts. The Senate is composed of both elected and nonelected members. The 38 elected members are drawn, two each, from 19 districts, for staggered eight-year terms. The Constitution of 1980 also provides for nine designated members – appointed respectively by the military (four), the Supreme Court (three), and the president (two) – and for lifetime senate seats for former presidents who have served six or more years in office.

As before the coup, the new system provides for open ballot lists. Voters simply indicate a preference for one candidate within a list of up to two candidates; all votes for candidates within each list are pooled together to determine the distribution of seats among lists; then seats are allocated to those candidates from seat-winning lists in the order of their individual vote totals. In Chile, the practical effect is that both candidates on a list can be selected only if that list more than doubles the vote total of the second-place list; otherwise, the top candidate from each of the first two lists is elected. Quite frequently, these are not the two top individual vote-getters.

Another key element of the new system is the cross-party coalition list. Electoral coalitions in the form of *aparentment* lists had actually been common in Chile and had encouraged cooperation across parties, until prohibited by an electoral law reform in 1958 (Valenzuela 1994). Under *aparentment*, allied parties nominate candidates and present lists that

³ The military government also changed the method of presidential election. Until 1970, if no candidate won >50% in the first round, then Congress selected the winner from among the two top candidates. As of 1989, the two top candidates would compete in a run-off election if no one wins >50% in the first round. For discussions of the effects of this change, see Carey (1994, 1997).

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

appear separately on the ballot, but the vote totals of the allied parties are pooled before seats are distributed (Lijphart 1994). In the new Chilean system, coalition lists straddle the structure of typical party lists on the one hand, and *aparentment* on the other. Each coalition's candidates appear together on a list with the coalition's name at the top and the candidate's party's symbol beside her or his name below. This means that the coalitions must negotiate a common list of candidates in each district prior to the election. Given that the major coalitions have included more than two parties in each election, it also means that in every district some party(ies) must agree not to run candidates.

Under the two-member district system, intracoalition negotiations prior to each election over the distribution of candidates across districts have resembled the internal deliberations among factions within parties over list composition. Parties confront the need to trade their electoral presence in some districts, as well as the freedom to press policy priorities at odds with the larger coalition, in exchange for coalition membership. Negotiations over nominations and policy are therefore a constant source of tension within each coalition, but because only the top two lists can win representation in any district, the incentive to maintain the coalitions has so far prevailed.

Initial Evaluations of the Post-Transition Party System: Fragmentation and Polarization

Fragmentation

Proponents of the two-member district reform claimed that it would discourage fragmentation of the legislative party system, according to the well-known logic that low magnitude reduces the viability of small parties, thus decreasing the effective number of parties winning votes and seats (Cox 1997; Duverger 1954; Taagepera and Shugart 1989).⁴ How one assesses this claim depends on whether one regards the traditional parties or the broader electoral coalitions as the relevant units of analysis.

Most of the current literature on Chile focuses on the traditional parties. The persistence of independent party organizations, public disagreements over policy, and the competing ambitions of presidential aspirants – all among parties within the same coalitions – are cited as evidence

⁴ Cf. Laakso and Taagepera (1979) for a discussion of the concept of "effective number of parties."

Table 8.2. *Effective number of vote-winning parties/lists in the Chilean Chamber of Deputies.*

Year	1925-1973 (mean)	1989	1993	1997
Parties	6.82	7.83	6.29	7.12
Lists	6.82	2.56	2.25	2.52

Source: Siavelis (1997); Nohlen (1993); *La Época* (1997) "Jornada electoral."

that the coalitions are marriages of convenience at election time, whereas the parties are far more important as independent actors (Scully 1995; Siavelis 1997; Valenzuela 1994). On these grounds, the answer to whether the two-member district reform reduced the fragmentation of the Chilean party system is clearly no. Siavelis (1997) shows that, whether one simply counts the number of parties winning Chamber representation or relies on conventional concentration indexes, such as those of Laakso and Taagepera (1979) or Molinar (1991), the number of legislative parties has not declined in the post-transition era relative to midcentury. Siavelis (1997) and Scully (1995) also emphasize that, if one ignores coalitional alliances and divides Chilean parties, pre-coup and post-transition alike, into left, center, and right blocks, then the national vote shares of candidates from parties in each block show striking continuity across both periods.⁵ Conversely, if one were to assume that the coalitions are the relevant units of analysis in the Chilean system, then the conclusion that fragmentation has been reduced would be inescapable. Table 8.2 compares the mean effective number of vote-winning parties and lists during the 1925-1973 period with the same statistic calculated across lists in the post-transition period. If the parties serve as the unit of analysis, there is no difference in system fragmentation across the two periods. If we calculate the index based on ballot lists (i.e., the post-transition electoral coalitions), the average drops from 6.86 to 2.44. The drop in fragmentation would be even greater if it were calculated on the basis of seat distributions in Congress rather than vote distributions. The bottom line here is that the conclusion that one reaches with respect to the effect of the two-member district

⁵ Both authors note, correctly, that tallying national vote shares of parties from these hypothesized blocks is a dubious exercise, given that no party runs candidates in every district, and the very nomination decisions that determine how many votes each party actually competes for are endogenous to the coalition organizations themselves. The validity of national-level vote shares as measures of party system fragmentation, therefore, is suspect.

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

reform on fragmentation depends on what entities one counts. Although I do not suggest that the traditional parties should be disregarded, my emphasis here is on the importance of the coalitions in the post-transition Chilean Congress.

Polarization

Some proponents of two-member districts contend that the reform discourages extremism in electoral competition and legislative bargaining (Rabkin 1996). These accounts hold that coalition reputations are meaningful to voters independent of party labels, and that the existence of coalitions necessarily encourages moderation. For example, Guzmán (1993) contends:

Because the two-member district system rewards large majorities, parties will quickly tend to unite and coalesce into alliances to reach higher combined vote shares than they could win individually. This encourages parties to engage in negotiations that require moderation of their positions. In this sense, the coalitions that the system "forces" generate collective outcomes that reflect more than the individual support of each party. (p. 309)

In advancing the case that two-member districts encourages moderation, both Guzmán (1993) and Rabkin (1996) invoke Downs' (1957) well-known arguments about partisan competition in SMD plurality systems, arguing that Chile's move from high-magnitude to two-member districts is a step toward Downs' centrist result. Criticisms of this argument fall along both empirical and theoretical lines. Many experts on Chilean politics regard the persistence of traditional parties as conclusive evidence against the effects of the reforms (Scully 1995; Siavelis 1997; Siavelis and Valenzuela 1991, 1994). Valenzuela (1994), for example, states:

The key to understanding Chilean politics, even after a lengthy authoritarian interlude, is the existence of several important political currents with strong party representation and clear left, center, and right referents. The challenge for strengthening Chilean democracy is not the illusory and counterproductive attempt to destroy the party system or change the underlying ideological attachments of voters. The military government clearly failed in this endeavor. The challenge for Chile is to structure mechanisms to bridge the centrifugal realities of Chilean politics.... (p. 137)

The principal claim here is that the Chilean party system traditionally has had a tripartite character that persists despite the coalitions that the

two-member district reform makes imperative at election time. For Scully (1995) the

chief conclusion . . . is that the underlying patterns and tendencies within the Chilean political landscape are quite resistant to fundamental change. A key genetic feature, from the mid-nineteenth century on, is that party politics in Chile tends to divide among three fundamental political segments, right, center, and left.

The tripartite (or *tres tercias*) description of the party system refers both to voter attachments and to legislative behavior. Scully (1995) emphasizes the former when he shows that, in response to the survey question, "Do you feel closer to the right, left, or center?" the percentages of respondents who locate themselves in each category has been fairly stable, even from 1958 to 1993. Scully interprets these data as evidence that the party system is "still manifestly tripartite" (p. 133).⁶ Alternatively, the tripartite description at times refers to historical patterns of coalitions among parties. Valenzuela (1994) distinguishes among blocks of parties on the left (Socialists and Communists), center (Radicals and Christian Democrats) and the right (Nationalists – formerly Liberals and Conservatives), emphasizing the fluidity in their patterns of coalition, both in presidential elections and behind common legislative programs, and arguing that these are impervious to the institutional reforms of the military regime.

The second line of argument regarding polarization under two-member districts draws on spatial theories of elections and cautions against overstating the analogy between Chile's system and the Downsian account of SMD plurality. Both Magar, Rosenblum, and Samuels (1998) and Dow (1998) establish formal models of electoral competition under two-member districts, emphasizing the importance of open lists in what are still multimember districts and rejecting the Guzman (1993) and Rabkin (1996) claims of parties/candidates clustering near the median voter. Both of these studies conclude that the new Chilean system encourages the two legislative candidates from within the same coalition in each district to stake out similar ideological positions, but for each pairing to diverge considerably from the center of the voter distribution. If extended to the national level, this would suggest coalitions that are internally cohesive but ideologically distinct from each other. My results suggest that this is an accurate description of the Chilean party system in the 1990s.

* He does not, however, consider whether the result is merely a product of the survey question, which is explicitly tripartite.

Legislative Careers

In the introductory chapter to this volume, Morgenstern makes the point that most prominent theories of legislative behavior work on the assumption that incumbents are motivated to sustain political careers. Students of the U.S. Congress, for example, where renomination and reelection rates are extraordinarily high, have grown accustomed to the assumption that, regardless of legislators' actual motivations, their behavior can be modeled as though they were pure reelection-seekers (Mayhew 1974). In Latin America, however, reelection rates vary substantially across countries, and in many cases the assumption that legislative behavior is primarily motivated by reelection is unwarranted (Carey 1996; Weldon 1997). Before we can generate any expectations about Chilean legislative behavior based on a theory of ambition, therefore, it is necessary to determine whether Chilean legislators seek to build careers in Congress itself, use Congress as a springboard for other public office, or leave politics altogether after serving in the legislature. If the primary career path is within the legislature itself, institutions that structure legislative behavior – such as committees, and party and coalition leadership – should be important to legislators and to the operation and effectiveness of the legislature as a whole (Cox and McCubbins 1993; Krehbiel 1991; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Polsby 1968).

Electoral data from Chile since the transition show that most legislators seek careers in Congress, and that they can reasonably expect success along these lines. Tables 8.3 and 8.4 show re-nomination and reelection rates for the Chamber of Deputies, broken down by party and by coalition, for the 1989–1993 and 1993–1997 periods. Overall levels of reelection do not differ substantially, either across coalitions or among parties within coalitions.⁷

In interviews, legislators and party officials from both coalitions agreed that the parties themselves are hesitant to deny renomination to incumbents who seek it (Canales 1998; Kuschel 1998). In large part, this is because incumbents tend to have personal reputations and name recognition that are important electoral assets in their districts (Melero 1998; Opriš 1998; Paya 1998). Of course, one's party endorsement is only the first step toward being renominated for the coalition, particularly within the Concertación, where there are always more parties demanding spots on the ballot than the two nominations available in each district (Canales 1998). The slightly higher rate of incumbent renomination in the coalition of the right may be due to the fact that it is dominated in almost all districts exclusively by two parties.

Table 8.3. *Renomination and reelection rates to the Chilean Chamber of Deputies, 1989–1993.*

Coalition/Party	Incumbents ^a	Renominated	Renominated winners	Switched coalitions	Switched + Won	Senate nominees	Senate winners
<i>Concertación</i>	68 ^b	47 (69%)	35 (51%) (74%) ^c	2 (3%)	0	3 (4%)	2
DC	38	28	21		0	2	1
PS	17	10	9		0	0	0
PPD	7	5	4		0	1	1
PR	6	4	1		0	0	0
Right	48	41 (85%)	35 (73%) (85%)	0	0	1 (2%)	1 (2%) (100%)
RN	32	27	23		0	0	0
UDI	14	13	11		0	0	0
Indpt.	2	1	1		0	1	1
MIDA	2	0	0	1 (50%)	1 (50%) (100%)	0	0
	118	91 ^d (77%)	71 ^e (60%) (78%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%) (33%)	4 (3%)	3 (3%) (75%)
Total							

^a The number of incumbents does not always correspond exactly to the number of legislators elected by each party from Table 8.1, because of occasional party or coalition switches during the term, or because of deaths.

^b The *Concertación* elected 70 deputies in 1989; of these, three died during the 1990–1993 term and two had not been replaced before the 1993 elections.

^c When two percentages are shown, the first refers to the percentage of *all incumbents* and the second to the percentage of those in the column immediately to the left (e.g., % of those renominated who won).

^d Two *Concertación* deputies ran as independents for the Alternative Democratic Left coalition in 1993. One who was elected on an independent left list in 1989 ran for the Socialist Party on the *Concertación* list in 1993. These three count toward the total number renominated but are not counted as having been renominated by their coalitions.

^e The former independent who ran with the *Concertación* in 1993 won, but he is not counted as a renominated winner either as an Independent or for the *Concertación*.

Table 8.4. *Renomination and reelection rates to the Chilean Chamber of Deputies, 1993–1997.*

Coalition/Party	Incumbents	Renominated	Renominated winners	Switched coalitions	Switched + Won	Senate nominees	Senate winners
<i>Concertación</i>	70	47 (67%)	41 (59%) (87%)	1	1	6 (9%)	3 (4%) (50%)
DC	37	24	21	1	0	2	2
PS	15	11	10	0	0	3	1
PPD	15	10	9	0	0	1	0
PRSD	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Indpt.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Right	50	37 (74%)	30 (60%) (81%)	1	0	11 (22%)	4 (8%) (36%)
RN	29	23	16	0	0	7	1
UDI	15	12	12	0	0	2	2
Indpt.	4	2	2	0	0	2	1
UCC	2	1	1	1	0	0	0
	120	85 (71%)	72 (60%) (85%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%) (50%)	17 (14%)	7 (6%) (41%)
Total							

In the 1993 and 1997 elections, around three-quarters of incumbents have been renominated for the Chamber within the same coalition, and three-fifths have won reelection. In addition, in each period, there have been a couple of incumbents who have switched lists, and in each period one of these has won reelection.⁸ Finally, the number of deputies nominated to run for the Senate jumped from 4 in 1993 to 17 in 1997, although the rate of success dropped off. In both elections, more than 80% of the incumbent deputies have sought and secured nominations to run again for Congress, and about two-thirds have been successful.

Analogous figures for senators show that renomination rates are slightly lower, on average, and reelection rates are slightly below 50%. Given that senators tend to be older, that terms are eight years rather than four, and that progressive ambition does not lead senators to run for the Chamber, a lower rate of reelection-seeking and success is to be expected. This is confirmed by the data in Table 8.5.

The preceding tables demonstrate that it is entirely appropriate to apply theories premised on reelectoral ambition to the Chilean Congress. One other way to cut these data is to consider the overall levels of legislative experience that the reelection rates generate. As of the December 1997 election, in which the Chamber was renewed in its entirety and 20 of the elected Senate seats were contested, each Chamber seat has now been contested three times and each Senate seat twice. The composition of the Congress serving the 1998–2001 term is described in Table 8.6. As the reelection data suggested, levels of experience do not vary much across coalitions or among the major parties. The Chamber is about equally divided among those in their first, second, and third terms, and the Senate among those in their first and second terms and those with prior Chamber experience.

Substantial majorities of legislators in both houses, in both coalitions, and across all parties have prior legislative experience. If current reelection rates persist through the next few elections, the overall level of experience of the Chilean Congress will rise further. Given that every election spells four or eight years of service, current reelection rates suggest that the average tenure of Chilean legislators will quickly approach that of

⁸ In all cases, these are deputies who switched into or out of one of the major coalition to/from minor lists. In no cases has a deputy switched from one of the major coalitions to the other. The stability of party and coalition membership among legislators in Chile is striking, particularly in contrast to the frequency of party switching in Brazil (Desposet 1997).

Table 8.5. *Renomination and reelection rates to the Chilean Senate.*

Coalition/Party	1989–1993			1993–1997		
	Incumbents	Renominated	Renominated winners	Incumbents	Renominated	Renominated winners
<i>Concertación</i>	9	7 (70%)	2 (20%) (29%)	12	8 (67%)	6 (50%) (75%)
Christian Dem	4	2	1	9	6	6
Socialist	3	2	1	2	1	0
PPD	2	1	0	1	1	0
PRSD	2	2	0	0	0	0
Right	9	7 (88%)	6 (75%) (86%)	8	2 (25%)	2 (25%) (100%)
RN	5	6	5	6	1	1
UDI	2	1	1	1	1	1
Indpt.	2	0	0	1	0	0
Totals	18	14 (78%)	8 (44%) (57%)	20	10 (50%)	8 (40%) (80%)

Table 8.6. *Experience of the 1997–2001 Chilean Congress.*

Coalition/Party	Chamber of Deputies			Senate		
	First term	Second term	Third term	First term ^a	Second term ^b	Chamber experience ^c
<i>Concertación</i>	23 (33%)	27 (39%)	20 (28%)	7 (35%)	8 (40%)	5 (25%)
DC	16	10	13	5	6	3
PS	1	5	5	1	2	1
PPD	4	11	1	1	0	1
PRSD	2	1	1	0	0	0
Right	17 (35%)	11 (22%)	21 (43%)	6 (33%)	7 (39%)	5 (28%)
RN	8	4	11	0	6	1
UDI	4	3	10	2	1	2
Indpt.	5	4	0	4	0	2
UCCP	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	40 (33%)	39 (33%)	41 (34%)	13 (34%)	15 (39%)	10 (26%)

^a First elected in either 1993 or 1997, with no previous legislative service in the 1990–1997 period.

^b First elected in 1989; then reelected in either 1993 or 1997.

^c Served in Chamber of Deputies prior to the Senate.

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

members of the U.S. Congress. It is clear, then, that reelection matters to the vast majority of Chilean legislators and that the stability and experience of Congress provide an environment in which stable and effective legislative institutions can be expected to redevelop.

The Organization of Congress

Mesas

The fundamental institutions of both chambers of Congress are the executive boards (*mesas*) and the permanent committees, whose members are elected by majority votes in each respective chamber. The Chamber's *mesa* includes a president as well as a first and second vice president while the Senate's consists only of a president and a single vice president. The rules of both the Chamber and Senate establish that the *mesas* serve for four-year terms, and that they are not collegial bodies; rather, their powers are formally centralized in the presidents, with vice presidents substituting in case of the president's absence or sickness (*Reglamentos de la Cámara de Diputados*, Article 44; *Reglamento del Senado*, Articles 21, 23). Christian Democratic Deputy Roberto León (1998), however, suggests more flexibility in how leadership of the *mesas* is exercised – at least in the Chamber – describing a negotiated agreement within the *Concertación* by which the presidency would rotate from the Christian Democrats to the Socialists, to the PPD, and back, over the four years of the current Congress. This sort of consensual power-sharing agreement, if it can be sustained, appears to be essential to the survival of the *Concertación*.

The authorities of the *mesas*, as outlined in the Chamber and Senate rules, run along the lines of those of most assembly directorates – they are responsible for communications between chambers, with the executive, and with the public; and they have some control over the legislative agenda and committee assignments. These latter two points are particularly important and warrant some more comments.

Regarding control of the legislative agenda, both chamber presidents are given some formal authority in the respective *reglamentos* – in the case of the Chamber, to determine what matters are subject to “immediate versus nonurgent dispatch” (Article 44.4), and in the Senate “to direct debate, distributing and ordering discussion of matters and limiting the number and duration of statements, when necessary to ensure the adoption of resolutions” (Article 23.2). *Mesa* presidents also direct the flow of

legislative traffic through discretion on the referral of bills to legislative committees, an authority that can affect the prospects for a proposal's success, depending on the committee's composition (Alzamora 1998; also cites on bill referral power in U.S. Congress). These measures of agenda control, however, are regularly overridden in practice by the president's constitutional authority to dominate the legislative agenda by declaring his proposed bills urgent, as Siavelis's chapter in this volume shows. Thus, although the formal agenda control of officers of the Chilean Congress *within* the legislature is akin to that found elsewhere, the existence of strong constitutional agenda powers in the executive mitigates the effectiveness of this authority by the *mesas* somewhat.

In both chambers, the *mesa* president considers requests from deputies, filtered through their respective *banca*s (partisan blocs), for desired committee assignments, and then presents proposed committee rosters to the respective Chambers for ratification.⁹ In interviews, legislators from various parties concurred that the process of committee assignments is consensual, and that *mesa* presidents honor the assignment requests from the various *banca*s (Interviews with Kuschel and Mara 1998).

Committees

Most of the substantive policy-making work of Congress is conducted in the committees of each Chamber. Legislation introduced to each Chamber is routinely referred to one of the 17 permanent committees, where hearings are held and amendments are considered. Ordinary legislation can die in committee for lack of majority support, and the fate of bills on which

⁹ There is a subtle, but potentially important, difference between the Chambers here. The Chamber rules determine that the president names all committee members "with the agreement of the Chamber" (Article 44-2). In the Senate, by contrast, "committee members are elected by the Senate at the president's proposal. . . . The president's proposals will not be debated and are tacitly approved if there are no objections." However, if the Senate president's proposal for a particular committee is rejected, the positions on that committee are filled in the next session by cumulative vote, whereby each senator is afforded as many votes as there are positions on the committee and may distribute these votes across candidates as s/he prefers, including allocating more than one vote to a particular candidate (Reglamento, Article 30). This particular voting method is frequently advocated as a means of preventing majorities from swamping the will of minorities with intense preference (Guinier 1991). According to Senator Manuel Antonio Mara (DC), however, the committee assignment process has always been consensual enough that presidential proposals have not been challenged.

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

floor action is required (e.g., executive proposals under urgency provisions) is influenced by committee recommendations.

Permanent committees in the Chamber are composed of 13 members each and in the Senate, 5 members.¹⁰ Availability on the Internet of Chamber committee membership for the 1994-1997 and 1998-2001 Congresses makes it possible to examine in detail patterns of committee assignment at the coalition, partisan, and individual levels. As with the powers of the *mesas*, there are slight inconsistencies between the formal rules of the Chamber with respect to the allocation of committee seats and actual practice. Article 213 of the Reglamento states that the partisan composition of each committee shall proportionately reflect the partisan composition of the Chamber as a whole. This rule implies uniformity of partisan (and, of course, coalition) composition across committees. Table 8.7, which presents data on Chamber committee membership from 1997, and then at the beginning of the 1998-2001 Congress, illustrates that such uniformity at the partisan level is not strictly maintained.

At the coalition level, the *Concertación* maintains a majority, of either 76 or 85, on all committees at all times. At the partisan level, the proportionality rule is observed in the aggregate, but not in the particular, case for each committee. That is, the overall number of committee posts assigned to each party mirrors its share of Chamber seats, but there are many instances of particular committees in which proportionality across parties within coalitions is not observed.¹¹

There is a change between the two Congresses in the distribution of committee chairs. In 1997, 5 of 17 were held by members of the opposition, whereas 10 of the remaining 12 were occupied by Christian Democrats. At the beginning of the 1998-2001 Congress, the majority coalition has asserted a near-monopoly over chairs, holding 16 of 17, while simultaneously distributing them more proportionally within the coalition itself. The columns Repeat, Reappointed, and Experience, respectively, indicate whether the same person held the chair for successive periods, whether the former chair (if reelected) still serves on the committee, and whether

¹⁰ When amendments generate different versions of the same bill in each Chamber, the respective committee members, plus an additional eight senators (such that each Chamber has equal membership) participate on conference committees to resolve the differences and to report uniform legislation back to the respective Chambers for floor votes.

¹¹ It is noteworthy, however, that there is no evidence of parties specializing in issue areas that are of high salience to their constituencies—for example, of the Socialists dominating the Labor Committee.

Table 8.7. Committee characteristics, Congresses of 1994–1997 and 1998–2001.

Committee	Coalition Ratio Concertación: Right		Partisan Ratios DC:PPD:PS:PRSD/RN: UDI:Indpt.				Chair		Members	
	'94-'97	'98-'01	'94-'97	'98-'01	'94-'97	'98-'01	Repeat	Reappt	Experience	Reassigned
Finance	8:5	7:6	4:2:2:0/3:2:0	5:1:1:0/3:2:1	UDI	DC	no	yes	yes	7/7 (100%)
Constitution +										
Justice	7:6	8:5	4:1:2:0/4:2:0	6:2:0:0/3:2:0	DC	DC	no	yes	yes	7/8 (88%)
Health	8:5	7:6	4:2:2:0/3:2:0	4:2:1:0/2:3:1	PS	PS	yes	yes	yes	6/8 (75%)
Defense	7:6	7:6	3:2:2:0/4:2:0	4:1:1:1/3:2:1	PPD	PS	—	—	yes	5/7 (71%)
Educ., Culture, Sports	7:6	7:6	3:2:1:1/4:2:0	4:2:1:0/1:2:3	DC	DC	no	yes	no	7/10 (70%)
Mining +										
Energy	8:5	7:6	4:2:2:0/3:2:0	4:1:1:1/2:2:2	RN	RN	no	yes	no	4/6 (67%)
Family	8:5	8:5	4:2:2:0/3:1:1	4:2:2:0/3:0:2	DC	PS	—	—	yes	6/10 (60%)
Agriculture + Fisheries	8:5	7:6	4:2:2:0/3:2:0	5:1:1:0/3:2:1	RN	DC	no	no	yes	7/12 (58%)
Security	8:5	8:5	5:1:2:0/3:2:0	4:2:2:0/3:2:0	DC	DC	no	no	yes	5/10 (50%)
Local Govt. +										
Planning	7:6	7:6	5:1:1:0/4:2:0	4:2:1:0/2:2:2	DC	DC	—	—	no	4/8 (50%)
Foreign										
Relations	8:5	7:6	4:2:2:0/5:1:0	4:1:1:1/3:3:0	DC	DC	—	—	no	3/6 (50%)
Nat. Resources, Environ	8:5	8:5	4:2:2:0/3:1:1	4:2:2:0/1:1:3	DC	PS	—	—	yes	5/11 (45%)
Human Rights,										
Citizenship	7:6	8:5	4:2:1:0/3:2:1	4:2:1:1/2:3:0	DC	DC	—	—	yes	4/9 (44%)
Economy	7:6	8:5	4:1:1:1/4:2:0	4:2:1:1/2:2:1	UDI	PPD	no	yes	yes	3/7 (43%)
Public Works	8:5	8:5	4:2:2:0/3:2:0	4:2:1:1/3:1:1	DC	PPD	—	—	yes	3/7 (43%)
Housing, Urban Devel	8:5	7:6	4:1:2:1/4:1:0	4:2:1:0/3:1:2	RN	DC	no	yes	no	3/8 (38%)
Science + Technology	7:6	8:5	4:1:1:1/4:2:0	4:2:1:1/3:1:1	DC	PRSD	—	—	no	3/9 (33%)
Summaries	8:5 (10) 7:6 (7)	8:5 (8) 7:6 (9)	68:28:29:4/ 60:30:3	73:31:20:7/ 42:31:21	10:1:1:0/ 3:2:0	9:2:4:1/1:0:0	1/9* (11%)	7/9* (78%)	11/17 (65%)	82/135 (61%)

* Eight committee chairs from 1994 to 1997 did not return to the Chamber for the 1998–2001 period.

Repeat: Chair in 1998–2001 served as chair during 1994–1997 Congress.

Reassigned: Chair in 1994–1997 served on committee during 1998–2001.

Experienced: Chair in 1998–2001 served on committee during 1994–1997.

Source: <http://200.9.122.8:80/html/comis/index.htm>

the current chair served previously on the committee. Unlike in the United States, committee chairs do not normally retain their posts from one Congress to the next. Instead, the coalitions work out agreements by which committee chairmanships rotate (Kuschel 1998; León 1998). When they are reelected, however, they generally remain on the committee, and those selected as chairs generally have prior experience on the committee.

The importance of committee composition, and its relationship to the coalition structure of Congress, are best illustrated through an extended quotation from Deputy Andrés Palma (1996) (during the 1994-1997 Congress) with respect to budget legislation:

An agriculture bill might not go through the Agriculture Committee, but it has to go through the Finance (Hacienda) Committee if it affects the budget. That is, it will generally pass through Agriculture and then go to Finance; but if the bill came with urgency from the executive for immediate discussion, it would go straight to Finance without going through Agriculture, although the subject is agriculture, because it affects the budget. Because of this, we've been particularly concerned that the composition of the Finance Committee is 8-5 [*Concertación* - right] so that even the absence of a couple of legislators won't affect the transmission of [financial] bills. There will always be a *Concertación* majority there. If one is missing, OK, there's still - or better, even up to 6-5 - you could be missing two people without affecting the majority.

[In the 1993-1997 Congress] in the Senate, the standing Finance Committee is the only one... with a *Concertación* majority. That is, there are three from the *Concertación* and two from the opposition. [When an additional 8 senators are named to serve on the Joint Finance Committee, to bring the numbers of representatives from each chamber to an equal 13] the other eight are named by vote in the Senate Chamber, more or less in proportion to the senators; and because there are eight, four come from the *Concertación* and four from the opposition; so the entire Senate contingent ends up 7-6. But in the previous [1990-1993] Congress it wasn't like this. At that time... the other eight were three and five, respectively, such that whole Senate contingent was 6-7.... At any rate, it doesn't matter what the distribution of senators is because the composition of the Chamber's contingent will give us a majority in the Joint Finance Committee.

Palma's extended analysis touches on some key points about the role of committees in legislative policy making. First, his primary concern is with the nature of committee majorities - both within each Chamber and in conference - in terms of coalition membership. Second, the Finance Committees in each Chamber play the role of control committees over a wide range of policy jurisdictions, by vetting all legislation that has an impact on the budget.

All of the above reflect on the level of experience and expertise that accumulate within the committee system. Committee expertise is widely regarded as an indicator of a legislature's capacity as an independent policy-making institution (Norton 1994; Polsby 1968; Schuttemeyer 1994; Strom 1990a). On the rationale that experience is a good measure of expertise, the committees in Table 8.7 are listed in order of the rate at which members from the first period who were reelected to the Chamber were reassigned for the second period. Thus, all seven Finance Committee members from 1997 who returned to the Chamber in 1998 were reassigned to Finance, seven of eight in the case of Constitution and Justice, and so on. The resulting rank order is consistent both with the accounts of Palma and other deputies (Kuschel 1998; León 1998) about the centrality of the Finance Committees, and with conventional intuitions about the complexity and salience of the various policy jurisdictions in Chile. The committees with the highest reassignment rates - Finance, Constitution, Health, Defense - all deal with complicated policy areas that have been heavily contested in the 1990s (Baldez and Carey, 1999; Weyland 1995).

The data presented thus far demonstrate that the Chilean Congress is highly professionalized - particularly for a young legislature - and that its committee system is accumulating substantial expertise, and is organized and dominated by the majority coalition. Within the comparative study of legislatures, these are all regarded as indicators of strong legislative capacity. The accounts reviewed thus far suggest the importance of coalitions in determining committee membership and performance, but they do not provide sufficiently fine-grained information to distinguish clearly the relative importance of the traditional parties versus the broader coalitions in making policy. To address that issue, I turn to the subject of floor voting in the Chamber.

Legislative Voting

The Unity Index

Academic studies of the U.S. Congress have long focused extensively on roll-call voting behavior, and particularly on levels of party discipline (Anderson, Watts, and Wilcox 1966; Brady 1973; Collie 1984; Cox and McCubbins 1993). Systematic analysis of partisanship and legislative voting in Latin America has begun only more recently, as legislatures

have become more prominent in policy making and data have become more accessible (Ames 1997; Limongi and Figueiredo 1995, 1997; Mainwaring 1999; Mainwaring and Pérez Liñán 1997). In this section, I present an analysis of a dataset of all 215 votes recorded in the Chamber of Deputies' *Boletín de Sesiones*, from the 40 sessions of *Legislatura Ordinaria* No. 336 (September 30, 1997–January 21, 1998). The main products of this analysis are indexes of voting unity within parties and coalitions, which can range from 0 (the party or coalition is evenly divided between voting "aye" and "nay") to 1.0 (the party or coalition is perfectly united, whether for "aye" or "nay"). The unity index is weighted according to the rationale that we should be more interested in cohesiveness the more critical the vote, and that both attendance by legislators and the overall closeness of the vote are indicators of *criticalness*. Thus, in calculating the index, votes that are sparsely attended and/or lopsided one way or the other are discounted. The basic formula for measuring party or coalition unity on legislative votes is

$$\text{Weighted UNITY}_i \text{ index} = \frac{\sum \text{UNITY}_{ij} * \text{ATTEND}_j * \text{CLOSE}_j}{\sum \text{ATTEND}_j * \text{CLOSE}_j}$$

where

ATTEND_j = % of legislators voting on issue j

CLOSE_j = $1 - \% \text{aye} - \% \text{nay}$, for legislature as a whole on issue j ¹²

UNITY_{ij} = $\% \text{aye} - \% \text{nay}$, within coalition or party i on issue j .

Thus, the extent to which unity on a given vote contributes to the overall index score depends on how heavily attended a vote is, and how close it is to a tie.¹³

¹² This formula is based on the assumption that a measure is approved as long as more legislators vote "aye" than "nay." In some cases, however, legislative procedures establish more stringent requirements for a measure's approval – e.g., an extraordinary majority of the entire Chamber's membership. In Chile, such supermajority requirements exist for changes to the Constitution and to organic law and are applied to ten of the votes included in the dataset analyzed here. The modified formula for calculating the unity index to accommodate such votes is discussed in Carey (n.d., Appendix C).

¹³ Most of the votes in this dataset were sparsely attended and unresponsive. *ATTEND* was between 33% (the minimum quorum) and 50% of the deputies on almost half of the votes, and on almost half, the losing side attracted less than 10% support (yielding *CLOSE* scores between 0 and 0.2). It is noteworthy, however, that there is no correlation between *ATTEND* and *CLOSE*. Both variables, therefore, appear to bring to the weighted index independent and important information about the criticalness of votes.

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

The motivation for and properties of the unity index are discussed at length in Carey (2000). For the present purposes, however, it is worthwhile to discuss briefly the use of legislative voting as a manifestation of party and coalition unity. In this volume, Ames makes a compelling case that, by the time legislation reaches a vote, either in committee or on the Chamber floor, much of the bargaining over its content may already have transpired, such that if party and coalition leaders have good information about legislators' preferences, voting outcomes themselves may be foregone conclusions. To the extent that leaders with control over the legislative agenda prevent votes on issues that they expect to be divisive within their parties and coalitions, measures based on recorded votes will overrepresent levels of unity.¹⁴ Nevertheless, legislative voting is a central procedural element of all democracies, and there are good reasons to pay attention to the information that it reveals about parties and coalitions. First, leadership information about legislators' preferences is never perfect, so floor votes are not inevitably predetermined. Second, important votes often cannot be avoided despite the threats that they might pose to unity – for example, on legislation on urgent issues and annual budgets, or when qualified minorities are enfranchised to bring matters to the floor (Carey 2000). Third, patterns of division in floor voting can communicate to voters the relative positions of legislative actors; even unresponsive votes can convey important information about both unity within parties and coalitions and differences among them. Finally, although recorded votes have historically been unusual in most Latin American countries, suggesting skepticism of the accuracy with which they reflect general legislative dynamics, the recent adoption of electronic voting in a number of countries, including Chile, means that we can rely on recorded votes to provide a fairly complete picture of floor activity. In short, although a more complete portrait of legislative bargaining that encompasses action occurring off the floor, such as Ames provides for Brazil, would be preferable, there are theoretical and empirical reasons to take an interest in floor voting patterns.

The first cut is to examine index scores across the two major coalitions and their main component parties.¹⁵ Table 8.8 provides a good deal of

¹⁴ Of course, leaders may also tolerate *disunity* when such behavior does not threaten the outcome of votes, implying a bias in measures of unity running in the opposite direction.

¹⁵ For the 1993–1997 Congress, four candidates without party affiliations were elected as independents on lists run by the coalition of the right, as were two candidates from the minor party, the Unión del Centro Centro (UCC). Two candidates from the Partido

Table 8.8. *Weighted UNITY scores for coalitions and parties.*

Coalition/Party	All votes	Economic	Social/ Military	Foreign Policy	Government Reform	Miscellaneous
<i>Concertación</i>	.69	.83	.71	1.00	.61	.97
DC	.75	.92	.75	1.00	.67	.94
PPD	.71	.89	.71	1.00	.61	1.00
PS	.77	.86	.76	1.00	.78	1.00
Right	.61	.67	.59	.49	.50	.48
RN	.68	.82	.63	.82	.70	.46
UDI	.78	.92	.78	.96	.73	1.00
Whole Chamber	.38	.50	.31	.84	.79	.90
N	215	96	66	14	31	8

information about the levels of unity within both coalitions and within the major parties of which they are composed, both for all votes analyzed and for subsets of votes coded by policy issue area.¹⁶ The index scores reported for the whole Chamber give an indication of how hotly contested votes in each issue area were, with lower scores there indicating that votes tended to be more divisive. As one might expect, votes on foreign policy and on miscellaneous (e.g., approving construction of monuments to a nineteenth-century priest and a policeman killed in the line of duty; renaming a city park) were the most consensual, whereas votes on social and military issues, and to a lesser extent economic matters, were the most divisive.

At the level of coalitions and the parties that comprise them, the scores are higher within the parties than within the coalitions overall. This is to be expected if common party membership means *anything at all* as a predictor of legislative behavior. Arithmetically, the index score of any group

Radical (PR) and one from the Partido Demócrata de la Izquierda (PDI) were elected on Concertación lists. For the purposes of calculating UNITY indexes, these legislators are included in the scores for each coalition. Separate indexes are calculated for each of the major parties within each coalition. Later, when indexes are calculated for cross-partisan blocks both within and across coalitions, only the members of the major parties are included.

¹⁶ Roughly, a score of .700 indicates that 85% of the set of legislators in question voted together on votes of "average" critical-mass. The idea of an average, of course, entails that votes that are most divisive across the legislature as a whole are given the most weight. Scores should be interpreted cautiously.

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

cannot be higher than the mean of index scores of its component subgroups, weighted according to subgroup membership.¹⁷ Given this, it is remarkable how little difference there is between the overall cohesiveness of the coalitions and of their component parties – particularly within the *Concertación*, where cohesiveness at the coalition level is not much below that at the partisan level.

Table 8.8 also gives some idea about the relative divisiveness of different policy issues within each of the parties and coalitions. Both coalitions are relatively unified around economic issues, with the *Concertación* also highly unified on foreign policy and the few miscellaneous bills. Big differences between unity at the coalition level and at the level of component parties indicate issue areas that are internally divisive across parties within coalitions. For example, the two main parties within the coalition of the right are each highly cohesive on foreign policy votes, but the coalition as a whole is not, indicating stark differences at the partisan level on that issue area. The right is similarly (although not as starkly) divided on economic votes and on government reform votes. On the few miscellaneous votes, the UDI is perfectly united, whereas the RN is internally divided. In the *Concertación*, no issue area stands out as clearly dividing unified parties against each other within the coalition.

Unity Among Cross-Partisan Blocs

The next question is how we might draw on the unity index to learn about the relative importance of party versus coalition to explain legislative voting. Consider an alternative cut on the data, distinguishing among various cross-party blocs. Based on survey responses to questions about ideological placement from 94 of the 120 deputies in the 1994–1998 Chamber of Deputies (Rehren 1997), I suggest the following spatial map of party and coalition locations along a standard left–right dimension:

If all parties within a coalition were precisely equally dissimilar on every vote in the dataset, then all of their UNITY scores would be equal, and would equal that of their coalition as a whole. On the other hand, if members of the same party were *at all more prone* to vote together than to vote with members of other parties within their coalition, then the UNITY scores of each party would be higher than that of the coalition.

It is also worth noting that the parties for which index scores are calculated make up the vast majority of members of each coalition, but not all. The handful of minor party legislators and independents in each coalition are included in the coalition scores. For independents and parties with lone legislators, it would be meaningless to calculate their party UNITY scores.

Socialist PPD DC RN UDI

Concertación Right

In the survey, legislators were asked to locate themselves, their own party, and finally each of the other major parties in the Chamber on a left-right ideological scale ranging from 1 to 10. The mean responses, by party, are reported in Table 8.9, with the number of respondents on which each score is based in parentheses. The scores are interesting on a number of counts. First, individual respondents – especially those on the right – tend to see themselves and their parties as more moderate than do their colleagues from other parties. The range of means for self-placement is only 3.8 points (2.9 to 6.7), whereas for placement for other parties it is 6.3 (2.5 to 8.8). Second, the relative self-placement and own-party placement by RN and UDI deputies are the reverse of the general evaluations by deputies and UDI deputies are the reverse of the conventional wisdom about Chilean politics, based on political debate, electoral platforms, and political history. Third, the distance between the adjacent parties across coalitions (whether one regards the RN or UDI as furthest left) is at least as large as the internal spread within either coalition.¹⁸

The ideological placements in Table 8.9 suggest substantial ideological cohesiveness among the parties within each of the major coalitions, an assessment that is supported by the unity scores in Table 8.8. Drawing on the same set of roll-call votes, Table 8.10 shows index scores calculated for legislators from every pair of parties, distinguishing according to whether the pairs are ideologically adjacent and whether they are members of the same major coalition.¹⁹ Table 8.10 suggests that common coalition membership encourages unity in legislative voting over and above ideological adjacency or ideological distance. Within the *Concertación*, distance and adjacency appear to count for very little: the PS-DC unity score is effectively equivalent to those of the PS-PPD and the PPD-DC, despite the fact that the ideology scores place the PS and DC much further apart than

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

Table 8.9. Ideological locations of Chilean legislators, by party, on 1-10, left-right scale.

Mean legislator placement of:	PS	PPD	DC	RN	UDI
Self	2.9 (13)	3.6 (10)	4.5 (31)	6.7 (24)	6.1 (12)
Own party	2.6 (13)	4.3 (11)	4.4 (31)	6.6 (24)	6.4 (12)
Other parties	2.5 (81)	4.2 (83)	4.7 (63)	7.7 (70)	8.8 (82)

Source: Rehren (1997).

Table 8.10. UNITY scores and ideological distances for cross-partisan blocs.

	Same coalition			Different coalition		
	Parties	Ideological distance	Weighted UNITY	Parties	Ideological distance	Weighted UNITY
Adjacent	PS-PPD	1.4	.83	DC-RN	2.5	.54
	PPD-DC	0.5	.80	DC-UDI	2.6	.56
	RN-UDI	0.6	.70			
Nonadjacent	PS-DC	1.9	.78	PS-UDI	4.4	.45
				PPD-UDI	3.1	.43
				PS-RN	4.0	.51
				PPD-RN	3.0	.55

either of the other pairs. At the same time, the unity index shows stark divisions across coalitions.

Ideally, we could evaluate the relative effects of ideological distance and coalition membership on unity between sets of parties by regressing UNITY_{ij} on both DISTANCE_{ij} and a dummy COALITION PARTNER_{ij} variable. If the coalitions do not constrain the voting behavior of legislators, then the boundary between coalitions should not tell us any more about the voting patterns of deputies on opposing sides than does the ideological location of their respective parties alone. On the other hand, if the electoral coalitions are important, then unity between any two parties within a coalition should be greater than that between two parties that are not coalition partners, *controlling for ideological distance*. Statistical analysis is complicated, however, by the small number of observations as well as multicollinearity – distance and partnership are correlated at -.85, significant at .01. To determine whether coalition partnership provides any

¹⁸ On self-placement, the PS-DC distance is 1.6, exactly equal to the DC-UDI distance. On own party and other party placement, however, the intra-*Concertación* distances are slightly smaller than those between the DC and the closest party in the coalition of the right.

¹⁹ Because of the inconsistencies in the relative placement of the RN and the UDI, I simply put them both in the "adjacent" category to the DC on the right side of the *Concertación*, for the purposes of Table 8.10. None of the conclusions that follow would be affected by regarding one or the other parties as adjacent and the other not.

additional leverage over and above ideological distance, in explaining unity, I proceeded as follows:

- Using logistic regression, estimate the effect of distance on coalition partnership, saving the error terms.
- Using OLS, estimate the effect of distance and the error terms on unity.

The intuition here is that the error terms represent the component of the coalition partnership that are *not attributable* to ideological distance. If the error terms help unity, this suggests that coalition partnership matters, over and above ideological proximity, to legislative voting. The results of the second regression (with standard errors in parentheses) are

$$\text{UNITY} = 0.828 - .092 * \text{DISTANCE} + .25 * \text{ERROR TERM.} \\ (.035) \quad (.013) \quad (.066)$$

$$N = 10$$

$$\text{Adj. } R - \text{squared} = .88.$$

At the most basic level, these results demonstrate that legislators from the two main coalitions in Chile tend to vote with each other and that the coalitions also tend to vote against each other.

Discipline, Agenda Control, and Bicameralism

What are the mechanics that generate cohesiveness within coalitions, and polarization across them, in the legislature? Ideological spread is part, but not all, of the explanation. As Siavelis demonstrates in this volume, the executive's authority to control the legislative agenda may assist the *Concertación* in preventing votes on legislation that could potentially divide the coalition from reaching the Chamber floor. The executive's control over the budget, moreover, may provide resources that help to persuade, or co-opt, recalcitrant legislators to vote along coalitional lines (Baldéz and Carey 1999). The fact that unity within the *Concertación* is higher than that within the coalition of the right suggests that control of the executive entails an advantage in generating coalitional unity.

Legislators themselves point to various sources of coordination and pressure to explain coalitional cohesiveness in floor voting. Most commonly, they point to coordination at the level of coalition leadership. In the *Concertación*, for example, leaders of each party and of the respective

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

bandadas, along with key government ministers, meet each Monday in the presidential office building to plan strategy and negotiate the legislative agenda. The substance of these conferences is communicated both at subsequent weekly meetings of the individual *bandadas* themselves and among the entire *Concertación* cohort of legislators. Legislators generally emphasize the informational and consensus-building functions of such meetings, rather than strict coalitional or partisan discipline backed up by sanctions. In different interviews, Dep. Orpis (UDI) refers to both discipline at the coalition level (1996) and, later, to a more subtle "tacit agreement" within the coalition of the right on cohesiveness (1998). The Executive Secretary of the PPD *bandada* in the Chamber gives a similarly ambiguous account, referring to a "moral obligation to support the *Concertación*" and to "discipline," but downplaying the imminence of explicit sanctions against those who vote against the coalition (Canales 1998).

The coalition-level unity that is evident from the roll-call data may be a product either of discipline, which implies exerting pressure on deputies to vote together, or coordination of the legislative agenda. The interviews suggest that discipline at the coalition level is a function of moral obligation rather than sanctions imposed on maverick legislators. An alternative source of discipline is the electoral incentive under the two-member district system for candidates from the same coalition to stake similar ideological positions while distinguishing themselves from the candidates of the other main coalition, as implied by the formal models of Dow (1998) and Magar, Rosenblum, and Samuels (1998). The role that the coalitions play in coordinating the activities of their constituent parties is more clear and straightforward. The weekly *Concertación* meetings provide regular information to those who control the legislative agenda – the executive, the *mexas directivas*, the *bandadas*, and committee chairs – about what issues can be pushed through the legislative process with majority (or, where necessary, supermajority) support; and conversely, when legislation is potentially divisive enough that it should be kept off the Chamber floor. The polarization of the two main coalitions, together with their internal unity, demonstrate that the coalitions are either exerting pressure on their members to vote together, or else that they are determining what matters are put to decisions before Congress, or some combination of these. Whatever the balance between these two types of influence, the coalitions are clearly central actors in structuring congressional decisions.

A second implication, following from the cohesiveness of coalitions in the Chamber, is that the existence of nonelected senators means that much

of the most important deliberation and negotiation within the legislature should take place between, rather than within, Chambers. In the absence of nonelected senators, Chile's would be an example of congruous bicameralism, in which one would expect majorities in each chamber to generate similar decisions, because the electoral systems for the Chamber and Senate are identical (with the caveat that Senate districts are larger) (Lijphart 1999). The nonelected senators, however, change things substantially. The initial cohort was appointed by Pinochet himself, and swung the Senate majority from the *Concertación* to the right. The result was that, for the first eight years after the transition, interchamber negotiations were the principle forum of bargaining and compromise in the Chilean Congress. This is underscored by Rossana Costa, an economist for a conservative think tank and lobbying organization, again with respect to budget legislation:

Q: How would you characterize the relationship between the Chamber and the executive with respect to the budget?

Costa: [In 1995], the Chamber reached an agreement with the executive and, because the opposition is a minority, there is no reason to debate anything. It's voted on and it's done. The source of compromise is the Senate, because there, in some cases it's necessary to reach an agreement with the opposition, and that's what produces negotiation, conversation, discussion – not in the Chamber.

The term of the original cohort of appointed senators ended in early 1998, at which point nine new senators were named, and the retired General Pinochet himself assumed his seat as a former president.²⁰ Because of the constraints of the appointment process discussed previously, the ideological bent of the group appointed in 1998 is still to the right of the *Concertación* majority among elected legislators, providing the coalition of the right with sufficient votes to block key *Concertación* initiatives in the Senate (Santiago Times 1999).

Conclusion

Prior to 1973, the Chilean Congress was long regarded as the most powerful legislature in Latin America, a forum for negotiation and bargaining among strong parties, and a significant counterweight to the executive

Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s

branch in shaping policy. Upon the return to democracy in 1990, the legacy of a long authoritarian hiatus, a new constitution that provides strong legislative powers to the president, and a new electoral system all raised questions about the role of Congress. Recent research confirms the importance of presidential agenda control in shaping policy outcomes (Baldez and Carey 1999; Siavelis 1998). Nevertheless, according to the standard criteria by which legislatures are compared, Chile's Congress is reestablishing itself as an unusually professionalized and technically competent legislature. Politicians endeavor – generally successfully – to build careers through reelection to Congress. They pursue these careers through parties and coalitions that have been stable throughout the post-transition period. Much of the substantive oversight and policy-making work of the legislature, moreover, is delegated to a set of standing committees, and stable membership on these committees (particularly those that deal with the most important policies) means that these intralegislative institutions are accumulating substantial policy expertise. All of these are widely regarded as signs of legislative capacity and autonomy.

Perhaps the most noteworthy characteristic of the Chilean legislature in the post-transition era, however, is the prominence of the two multiparty coalitions, particularly in contrast with accounts of the legislative party system during the pre-transition era. The establishment of coalitions was undoubtedly motivated by the electoral law imposed by the outgoing dictatorship, yet their impact on legislative representation suggests that they are more than marriages of electoral convenience. First, even if either of the major coalitions exploded tomorrow, they have already *both* proven far more durable than *any* legislative coalitions during the entire 1932–1973 period (Valenzuela 1994). Second, two major institutions that direct the work of the Chamber of Deputies – the *mesas directivas* and the committees – are organized on the grounds of coalition control. The *mesa* presidency is rotated under an agreement among the parties within the *Concertación*, and committee composition is marked by consistent coalition majorities, even while the formal rule of strict partisan proportionality is sometimes violated. Finally, coalitions structure how Congress as a whole will divide when it comes time to vote. To sum up, the electoral system encourages parties to coalesce; and the coalitions, in turn, matter to the way in which Congress operates and to the sort of representation that legislators provide.

²⁰ Pinochet's subsequent arrest and detention in Britain later that year, on charges of human rights abuses brought by Spanish Prosecutor Baltazar Garzón, removed him as a direct legislative player in the Senate.