

**Women for Women? Institutions, Political Ambition, and Substantive  
Representation in Latin America**

by

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different environment for female legislators in Chile than in either Brazil or Argentina. According to Chile's electoral rules, candidates from the top two parties in a district each win a seat unless the strongest party wins more than double the votes of its next closest competitor. The use of open-list PR with two-member districts has several important consequences. First, the requirements for winning both seats in a district mean that parties have an incentive to form coalitions. Small parties would have little chance of winning any seats on their own in two-member districts, and large parties must double the votes of their closest competitors in order to win both seats (Baldez and Carey 1999; Magar, Rosenblum, and Samuels 1998).<sup>12</sup> In most districts, the electoral formula and low district magnitude limits the number of parties to two. Therefore, even though Chilean parties try to recruit loyal party members (Morgenstern and Siavelis 2008), the use of open-list PR in two-member districts forces candidates to compete against members of their own parties in an intraparty struggle over nominations for the small number of seats available in each district (Magar, Rosenblum, and Samuels 1998; Carey and Shugart 1995; Marenghi and Montero 2008). Therefore, Chile's electoral system requires candidates to appeal to a broad constituency in order to win in large, diverse parties and coalitions (Cristobal, Londregan, Navia, and Vial 2006).

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<sup>12</sup> According to Magar, Rosenblum, and Samuels (1998, 717), a party lists only "wins both seats in a district if, and only if, it carries twice as many votes as its nearest competitor. Thus, if two lists compete, each list guarantees itself one seat by winning one-third plus one of the vote totals, and a list wins both seats only if it wins two third of the total vote. The obvious effect of this situation is that in most districts, seats are split between the major rightist and leftists lists."

experience, they may gain the political credibility or authority necessary to successfully represent women's interests.

However, Chile's unique electoral system creates mixed incentives for candidates. First, because of the small size of the electoral districts, only a small number of candidates are nominated from each party in each district and parties tend to recruit the candidates who are most loyal to the national party program to fill these few spots (Morgenstern and Siavelis 2008). The small size of electoral districts also limits the number of political parties that can win, which means that parties often form diverse pre-electoral coalitions that candidates must satisfy. Second, however, competition between party or coalition members in open-party lists creates intraparty tensions and incentives for candidates to campaign based on personal characteristics or strike out on their own as independent candidates (Magar, Rosenblum, and Samuels 1998; Carey and Shugart 1995; Marenghi and Montero 2008; Aninat, Londregan, Navia and Vial 2008).<sup>24</sup> According to Siavelis (2000), many Chilean voters believe their representatives in the Chamber are *alcades grandes*, or big mayors, who are expected to deliver jobs, favors, and other pork-barrel demands.

Additionally, although women generally are supposed to benefit from PR elections, Chile's two-member district system often operates more like single-

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<sup>24</sup> Unlike candidates in Chile, candidates in Argentina and Brazil cannot run as independent candidates. Only political parties can nominate candidates in Argentina and Brazil; party leaders usually nominate candidates in these countries, although some parties use primary elections (Marx, Borner, and Caminotti 2009).

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