Legislative Conduct in Response to Executive Initiative: Unity among Political Blocs in Chile

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Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the behavior presented by the chamber of deputies, with regards to the bills which were presented by the executive power during the 2002–2006 legislative term. The author demonstrates that one of the most relevant reasons that the government of Ricardo Lagos was able to successfully pass the bills it favored, was the high unity of the governmental party and the heterogeneous action of the opposition bloc. Thus, through the use of Roll Call Vote analysis, this article assigns each of the parties and coalitions a percentage point relative to its degree of approval to the Executive’s initiatives. This method indicates that the “Renovacion Nacional” was a pivotal party, which fluctuated between supporting the ruling party and maintaining its stance as an opposition party.

KEYWORDS: unity, legislative conduct, coalitions, parties within the legislature

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1. INTRODUCTION

Two years after becoming president, Ricardo Lagos Escobar found himself facing the most adverse Chamber of Deputies since the country's return to democracy. The pro-government (Concertación) bloc’s loss of seats from 70 to 62,¹ versus the 58 seats won by the opposition (Alianza por Chile), translated into weakened support for the Executive's legislative agenda. In effect, the feeling of triumph experienced by the opposition, combined with the real possibility of their winning the presidency in 2006, introduced uncertainty regarding the postures the opposition congressmen would adopt before the initiatives proposed by the head of state. Therefore, there were apprehensions that the third Concertación government would have to overcome serious obstacles in order to fulfill its agenda. “I will keep working with the agenda I have,” indicated the President of the Republic in response to questions regarding his capacity to advance the projects within his portfolio. “Those who wish to support us are welcome. But I am sorry for those who wish to continue confronting us.”² However, the fears that presaged a difficult road ahead did not manifest themselves. Of the 588 bills proposed by the Lagos government, 53% of them became law during his term; a figure quite similar to that of his predecessors Aylwin (56%) and Frei (54%).³

Although there could be many diverse reasons for the stability of the Executive-Legislative relationship,⁴ this article aims to investigate the behavior and degrees of unity within the coalitions, in particular in regards to the Presidential initiatives that were sent to Congress between 2002-2006. To this end, this paper has concentrated its research on the analysis of Roll Call Votes, an instrument that has increasingly been used by political scientists in the study of party discipline (Rice, 1925; Mainwaring and Pérez Liñán, 1997), the posturing of congressmen (Alemán and Saiegh, 2006; Jackman, 2001), and the levels of unity of coalitions (Carey, 2002). The logic behind this is that although it is not the only method for observing behavior within the Legislature—especially taking into consideration the degrees of negotiation developed prior to the bill reaching the floor—roll call votes are a strong test for measuring the strength and leadership of a party (Ames, 2002:192).

Therefore, the hypothesis of this article is that during the process for approving the laws proposed by the Executive, there was greater unity within the

¹ Furthermore, four legislators of the governing coalition were suspended due to judicial inquiries, which left the government with the meager support of only 58 legislators.
³ Source: Memo 856/07 – 09.2006/GJ/WG from the Secretaria General de la Presidencia
⁴ For instance, the effect of the electoral system on stemming in polarization (Rabkin, 1996: 337), the consensus on monetary policies as a stabilizer of party relations (Siavelis, 2000: 86), or the reactive and proactive powers of the President that allowed him to influence the legislative agenda (Nolte, 2003).
pro-government bloc than within the opposition alliance. In this way, this paper aims to measure the behavior pattern of the so-called *parties within the Legislature* (Montes, Mainwaring and Ortega, 2000), using data collected from the 2002-2006 period, to understand how each of the two political coalitions within Congress, reacted to the messages and indications coming from the Executive. Thus, the analysis will attempt to complement existing studies on legislative unity in Chile through the votes within the Chamber of Deputies and the creation of indices that identify a Representative’s level of approval to the initiatives proposed by the Executive.

This paper differentiates itself from others, in that previous studies of legislative conduct have focused their analysis on intra-party unity without taking into account the relationship of this concept to the interests of the Executive. In effect, in a country where the president has strong legislative authority, such as Chile, the internal unity of a party is as important as the relationship they maintain with the President. This is because the degree of discipline and cohesion of party institutions are an essential component both for managing their agenda and maintaining leadership (Ames, 2002: 191), as for identifying the direction and coherence of the politics of the parties and their willingness to work with the Executive (Morgenstern, 2004: 12).

This article is composed of six sections. The first section will deliver a theoretical discussion on legislative unity and its relation to party discipline and cohesion. The second will review the studies that have used votes as the basis of their analysis, both within Chile and throughout Latin America. Following this, the paper will present the methodology used for analyzing the data, which will then be applied in measuring party support for the government and measuring the unity of the parties and political blocs. To conclude, a short discussion will be presented where the concepts will be reviewed and new challenges will be proposed in regards to this subject.

### 2. DISCIPLINE AND COHESION: TWO COMPONENTS OF PARTY UNITY

Authors often do not make a clear distinction in literature between cohesion and discipline. The overlap of these concepts in the analysis of legislative patterns, has led to their being used synonymously when studying party behavior within Congress. Nonetheless, there is a budding theory based on a book by Ozbudun (1970) that aims to define the scope of each of these elements. Hazan (2003) and Morgenstern (2004) are two important authors within this literature.

The former, understands both concepts as mechanisms to achieve unity. Unlike Ozbudun who conceives discipline as part of cohesion, Hazan takes the
first to be a phase that follows the second, in other words, discipline begins where cohesion fails. The author indicates: “When cohesion weakens then discipline can help maintain unity of action, up to a point” (Hazan, 2003: 3). Hazan’s hypothesis is upheld by two views: a) sociologic, which emphasizes normative roles and reasons through ideological convictions, socialization, and party solidarity; and ii) institutional, which takes into consideration the tensions that could arise due to political pressure and strategic incentives. Therefore, the sociological view would explain cohesion while the institutional angle would elucidate discipline. “Cohesion is associated with a certain consensus in values and attitudes, while discipline is related to compulsion” (Hazan, 2003: 4).

Morgenstern (2004), on the other hand, explains both terms indicating that the degree of unity of a party depends on factors such as the level of ideological agreement among its members, the degree of polarization of the agents, or the way the candidates are nominated (Morgenstern, 2004: 85). In the case of cohesion, the author distinguishes three main components: ideology, geography, and electoral affinity. The first refers to a system of common beliefs among the members of a group that leads them to react communally to a variety of specific issues; the second can be seen as an expression of interests and ethnic, religious, or cultural heredity or by the connection of legislators with common groups; and the third can be understood as an instrument that develops an agent’s necessity to maintain the success of his own party, in other words: “if the party falls, the legislator must reason, then they too are at risk” (Morgenstern, 2004: 89).

With regards to discipline, Morgenstern suggests mechanisms that are related to the abilities of leaders to control certain discretionary resources against agents’ wishes. The leaders that are capable of deciding nominations, who control campaign resources, or who centralize the decisions regarding certain public policies are also capable of establishing exchange strategies among party members and of attaining higher levels of discipline. Thus, the electoral system would be the main determinant of the ways in which political actors define discipline; by assigning formal powers in regards to electoral competition, the system directly shapes the nature of political parties (Morgenstern, 2004: 90). The same author highlights the importance of district size in determining the electoral competition, reelection systems, agent labels, or the power of party leaders in regards to nominations (Morgenstern, 2004: 102). Under this definition, we could assume that the influence of party leaders in the legislative process acquires greater relevance thanks to its ability to determine candidates. Legislators would be subjected to constant pressure by institutional interests and negotiations with the state apparatus (Carey, 2002: 234). The fact that Congressional representatives generally seek reelection makes them more amenable to the wishes of the party, as the controller of resource distribution and internal influence, even though there are often contradictions between the
representative’s own wishes and those of the party (Carey, 2002: 235). This is supported by Stokes’ affirmation that behavior can also adjust to personal trajectories and to party fundamentals and ideologies that emerge in relation to other agents; although the representative structure tends to accommodate contradictions and generate certain politics as part of its constituent’s interests (Stokes, 1998: 351).

All in all, the combination of cohesion and discipline brings about party unity. Cox and Morgenstern (2002) truly appreciated this when they pointed out that the levels of support for political parties in congress, can be generated both by the homogeneity of the preferences of legislators as well as by the influence of their leaders. In other words, the parliamentarians tend to vote as a unit in accordance with their convictions or because their party leaders seek to induce dissidents to vote in accordance with the mandates.

3. ROLL CALLS IN THE ANALYSIS OF PARTY UNITY

The literature agrees that the use of roll call voting is a good option for analyzing a political party’s legislative conduct (Owens, 2003: 13). From Stuart Rice (1925) on to those who are currently validating methods of quantifying cohesion and discipline within the legislature (e.g. Londregan, 2000; Jackman, 2001; Carey, 2002; Hix, 2004; Desposato, 2005), authors have sought to generate a line of research that would enable the explanation or description of behavior and/or events through the analysis of congressional votes.

To this effect, some researchers have begun to develop methods to analyze Latin-American party unity. Along with Chile, countries such as Brazil (Mainwaring and Pérez Liñán, 1997; Figueiredo and Limongi, 2000), Argentina (Jones, 2002), and Peru (Carey, 2003), have been part of these studies. Brazil led the way in this respect. Analyzing roll-call votes from 1987 and 1988, Mainwaring and Pérez Liñán (1997) demonstrate that large parties such as the PMDB (the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party) and the PFL (Liberal Front Party) exhibited lower levels of discipline, mainly due to the large number of factions within them, while the PT (Worker’s Party) was transforming itself into an institution that maintained a high degree of homogeneity due to its strong ideological structure. Consequently, Figueiredo and Limongi (2000) took another look at party conduct within the Brazilian Congress, taking into consideration the votes in the Chamber of Deputies between 1989 and 1998. Their conclusions are similar to the previous ones, granting a greater degree of party discipline to the PT and less cohesion to the PMDB (2000: 159).

Jones (2002), meanwhile, used the voting registers from the Argentine Chamber of Deputies to demonstrate the degree of party unity among the parties
represented. With data from 1989 to 1997, the author was able to characterize the homogeneous conduct of this country’s legislators and explain some of the reasons behind their behavior. For him, the main explanation rested on the relationship between the party and the legislator’s political career: national control of the party in order to access electoral competition and the need of the candidates for party affiliation. Likewise, Jones grants particular relevance to the level of organization among legislators, who tend to group into political blocks and designate speakers with a high degree of autonomy for negotiations (Jones, 2002: 179).

In the same way, Carey (2003) used voting patterns from the Peruvian Legislature to study the party unity of Fujimori’s supporters, in order to demonstrate the impact of the events that instigated his fall in the year 2000. Through the analysis of roll call data and the use of Rice’s indices (1925) and his own, the author observed the general behavior of the parties between 1995 and 2001, demonstrating relative stability in parties such as APRA and Cambio90. Carey developed three cohorts (before-during-after the Vladivideos) in order to analyze the impact of the scandal on Fujimori’s supporters in Congress. In this way he demonstrated that, when the videos were exposed and the President tried to contain the scandal, there was a substantial decrease in the levels of the ruling party’s unity, Perú 2000. Thus, the author proved that during the Fujimori administration, party discipline was achieved through strict controls and the use of legal and illegal means to attain the loyalty of legislators (Carey, 2003: 1003).

In the case of Chile, research on party discipline and degrees of cohesion within the legislature, has also produced relevant conclusions. The unique features of multi-party systems and the way in which parties behave within the coalitions they form in congress, have centered the debate on the conduct of legislators both within their own parties and within their electoral alliances. In this context, Siavelis (2000, 2002), Carey (2002), Alemán and Saiegh (2006), and Londregan (2000) have done the most research on the country. The four authors have focused their observations on the behavior of congressmen in accordance with their relationship to the Executive.

The work of the first author—although he does not focus mainly on roll call votes—is indispensable to understanding the type of relationship that exists between the Executive and the Legislature in Chile. In his research, Siavelis aims to prove that, notwithstanding the institutional structure of hyper-presidentialism,

\[ RICE_j = |\%aye_j - \%naye_j| \]

\[ UNITY_j = \frac{\sum UNITY_j \times ATTEND_j \times CLOSE_j}{\sum ATTEND_j \times CLOSE_j} \]

where i) ATTEND= % of legislators voting on issue j ii) 

CLOSE= 1-% YES - %NO of the whole legislature on issue j iii) UNITY= %YES - %NO, with coalition or party i on issue j
the post-authoritarian presidents exerted extreme prudence regarding the use of their institutional powers. For the author, the fluid and constant relationship between Congress and the governments of Aylwin and Frei, and between the parties themselves, led to a reduction of conflicts and a tendency to negotiate agreements (Siavelis, 2002). These dialogues, which were generated through formal and informal means, were part of the new framework for post-authoritarian executive-legislative, generated a high degree of stability within the Chilean political system. In this respect he notes: “The success of the Aylwin and Frei administrations demonstrate that presidentialism could, under certain circumstances, work well in Chile” (2000: 191). Siavelis shows that Congress took on a relevant role within the legislative process, which prompts the president to negotiate rather than to impose his own will (Siavelis, 2002: 109).

Carey (2002), on the other hand, focuses on measuring the distances between parties and coalitions in accordance with their preferences. Utilizing roll call data from 1994–1998, the author tries to demonstrate the levels of unity that could exist in each of the parties. Through the observation of 215 voting registers, the author is able to ascertain a rapprochement of the political parties within a same coalition; thus demonstrating the strong influence of the electoral system on legislative conduct. Likewise, Carey confirms there was less homogeneity in the Alliance for Chile Coalition in relation to the Concertación Coalition. Referring to the RN and the UDI parties, he notes: “Unity score is lower than that between any of the major Concertación parties” and “One explanation for this is that the Concertación has an advantage in generating coalitional unity due to its control of the executive branch” (Carey, 2002: 235).

Likewise, Eduardo Alemán and Sebastián Saiegh (2006) used roll call data to analyze the positions of the parties within the legislature. Through a bayesian simulation, elaborated by Simon Jackman (2001), the authors are able to characterize congressmen according to their roll call votes. Thus, they are able to demonstrate the degree of preference or Ideal Points for each representative from 1997-2000. In this way, their observations reveal the degrees of heterogeneity and homogeneity of the political blocs in Congress; and conclude that there was a high degree of intra-coalitional unity in the Concertación parties and less uniformity in the Alliance parties. The authors affirm: “In the Concertación, the results are very similar and their differences are statistically indistinguishable. However, within the Alliance one sees less unity” (2005: 17).

Finally, Londregan (2000), unlike the others, observes legislative conduct in light of the preferences of the members of different Senate committees. Incorporating roll call data from within three senatorial committees, Londregan calculates the ideal points of each of the members. Thus, he is able to analyze the behavior of the senators in each party according to three important issues: Human Rights, the social agenda, and labor legislation. In all cases he observes important
degrees of homogeneity by the Concertación and certain differences in the opposition.

Notwithstanding what has just been stated, the different studies that have measured discipline and cohesion within political parties in Latin America have not differentiated between the type of voting being analyzed. Since their primary concern has been the measurement of general party behavior and the level of discipline within them, the authors have not distinguished between the votes initiated by the Executive (mensajes) and those initiated by the members of Congress themselves (mociones). This is a very relevant point if we consider that in presidential systems like Chile’s, the President is the most important legislative actor and, perhaps, the greatest legislator in the country (Siavelis, 2002: 84). Thus, his initiatives are of special interest to the analysis since it is important to the study of executive-legislative relations to understand party behavior towards the legislative agenda advanced by the Executive.

In this way, the aim of this paper, is precisely to deliver certain clues on the relationship between the Executive and Congress from the point of view of roll call votes; and, also, to reduce the gap of knowledge regarding the behavior of the parties in government and the opposition when they are faced with non-unanimous decisions within Congress.

4. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

One of the advantages of the Chilean Congress’ transparency and modernization plan, is that it is now possible to obtain data that enable one to analyze legislative conduct. Their actions have been made public through the use of the Internet. Thus allowing any citizen to access information on laws, monitor a legislator’s attendance, and examine in detail the votes held within a session. It’s this last mechanism that was used to measure the levels of cohesion of the government bloc and the behavior of the opposition coalition.

To analyze the hypothesis of this paper and understand how the third Concertacién government was able to negotiate the corresponding legislative stage, a subset of votes within the Chamber of Deputies from 2002-2006 is studied. These votes were chosen by virtue of whether they dealt with general discussions or discussions specific to projects emanating from the Executive. In this way, bills set forth by Congress as well as motions proposed by legislative committees or by a particular legislator were excluded. It is important to note that all the votes used were on different issues and no issue was repeated. In other words, if the vote was a “general” one, no other vote of this type for the particular law was included. Whereas, if it was a "specific" vote, discussions pertaining to
the same subject were not considered. Any concentration of votes in one or a few bills were also dismissed.

The paper adopts Mainwaring and Pérez Liñán’s (1997) method for calculating relative discipline. In other words, we only considered those votes where each legislator participated and, from those, only the ones that indicated a vote “in favor” or “against.” This method is different in that it adds each legislator's vote "in favor" and divides it by the number of votes in which he participated. The range of iterations of the legislators goes from 90 to 120 votes. From here we observe a simple parameter that we will call approval index, in other words,

\[ IAp_i = 100 \times \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \rho_{ij} \]

Where
- \( IAp_i \) = approval rating of legislator \( i \)
- \( n \) = Total number of votes of the corresponding legislator
- \( \rho_{ij} \) = Votes “in favor,” of legislator \( i \) on vote \( j \)

Thus, each legislator would have his own index in accordance with how he voted for each vote that he participated in. For example, if a legislator voted 95 times, according to the conditions mentioned, and 10 of them were “in favor,” his approval index would be 10.5.

Another important point to consider is that only those votes where at least 25% opposition participated are considered (Mainwaring and Pérez Liñán, 1997). Thus, to an extent, we could weed out from the selection previous agreements made with the Executive or those made within committees. The same logic was applied to absences. If a legislator was absent from more than 25% of the votes in the sample, his votes were omitted.

In this way, what the work seeks to analyze is the behavior of the legislators in relation to the laws emanating from the Executive. Since it deals with initiatives that, theoretically, have not been resolved successfully through negotiations, their analysis will allow us to place the political parties on a continuum based on their support for the bills and motions presented by the Executive, where 0% would be the lowest level of approval and 100% would be total approval.
5. CONGRESSIONAL PARTY SUPPORT FOR THE EXECUTIVE

As with the whole post-authoritarian period, there were two political coalitions that made up the Chamber of Deputies in the 2002-2006 legislature. The first, is the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (Concert of Parties for Democracy) and it has been in power since Chile’s return to democracy. Its core was made up of institutions such as the Socialist Party (PS) with 12 representatives, including the independent pro-socialists, the Party for Democracy (PPD) with 20, the Social Democrat Radical Party (PRSD) with 6, and the Christian Democrat Party (PDC) with 24, including independents. Whereas, only two parties composed the Alliance for Chile: the National Renewal Party (RN) with 22 representatives, including independents, and the Independent Democratic Union (UDI) with 36. Nonetheless, the fact that the political forces between the government and the opposition enjoyed relative equilibrium, created the need to obtain sufficient support for presidential initiatives while maintaining strong unity within one's own bloc and establishing certain agreements with opposition parties.

An initial analysis of Roll Call Data ratifies the previous statement. Table 1 demonstrates that the levels of support by the members of the Concertación were high and homogeneous. In effect, with an average index close to 90% for all the parties in the bloc and a small standard deviation, we can verify that among the Concertación parties there was no relation between ideology and their behavior in the National Congress (Carey, 2002), making the positions of the parties virtually indistinguishable. On the other hand, the figures for the opposition demonstrated a certain degree of variation in regards to its coalition members. For example, the average index of the RN (36.2%) is significantly different from that of the UDI (10.7%), and there is also high dispersion within the former. The Table 1 also indicates the minimum and maximum for each party.

Table 1: Parties’ Positioning Relative to Executive Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Dev.</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>89.50</td>
<td>90.82</td>
<td>2.069</td>
<td>86.32</td>
<td>93.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPD</td>
<td>88.70</td>
<td>89.58</td>
<td>2.194</td>
<td>85.42</td>
<td>93.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSD</td>
<td>91.10</td>
<td>91.24</td>
<td>2.944</td>
<td>87.78</td>
<td>95.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDC</td>
<td>90.50</td>
<td>90.63</td>
<td>2.901</td>
<td>82.88</td>
<td>95.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>34.20</td>
<td>36.20</td>
<td>8.774</td>
<td>23.30</td>
<td>55.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDI</td>
<td>9.70</td>
<td>10.72</td>
<td>4.297</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>19.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The author, based on www.camara.cl
Likewise, the behavior of the political parties can be visualized through a box plot (see Figure 1). Initially, Figure 1 shows that the ruling parties fluctuated in the ranges of 80 to 100 percent. Here, the highest score was obtained by the PRSD legislator Samuel Venegas (95.28), while the lowest belonged to the PDC legislator Pedro Araya (82.88). By contrast, in the Alliance for Chile we see that the distances between legislators are quite evident. While the UDI positions itself in the 5 to 20 range, the RN falls in the 20 to 50 range. Likewise, Carmen Ibáñez of the RN (55.17) exhibited the highest degree of support for the Executive, while the UDI legislator, Dario Paya, (5.88) was its greatest detractor.

It is important to note certain points that could help with the interpretation and reliability of Figure 1. Table 1 demonstrated that there was no significant difference between the means and medians in any of the parties, which implies a normal density in each of the distributions. Hence, although we note slight asymmetries in the dispersions, these tend to be small and do not have enough weight to affect the analyses presented below. On the other hand, the fact that the boxes of each of the parties—with the exception of the RN—are fairly compact, shows a high concentration in party positioning, which can be interpreted as high degrees of unity both within the ruling parties, as in the UDI.

**Figure 1: Relative Position of Parties based on their Approval Index**

![Box plot of political parties' approval indices](source-image)

Source: The author, based on [www.camara.cl](http://www.camara.cl)

Likewise, we can observe the levels of support each party exhibited towards Executive initiatives during these four years. Using the same index previously mentioned, but this time divided in periods and by parties, we can verify that all of these parties, except the RN, exhibited homogenous behavior
without qualitative jumps from one year to the next. In effect, the index of the RN in the first and third year of the legislature was in the magnitude of 30%, while in the second and fourth year it reached approximately 45%.

Figure 2: Position of Parties by year from 2002 to 2006

Source: The author, based on www.camara.cl

6. DEGREES OF UNITY OF THE POLITICAL BLOCS

Although the Concertación parties presented certain ideological differences, the levels of uniformity among them were particularly high. There is no doubt that the differences among the parties in the ruling bloc were so imperceptible, they appeared to be a single macro-party. On the other hand, things were completely different within the Alliance for Chile. Party behavior within the coalition was discordant, implying low cohesion within the bloc.

This can be demonstrated by contrasting the means through the method of multiple comparison. Here it is important to note that the analysis is based on 116 legislators, which indicates a small sample when it is broken down by party. Nonetheless, we should consider that these legislators statistically represent the population we are studying, which is why we can neither increase nor decrease the units under observation. Furthermore, we have already observed that each
party index is supported by at least 200 votes, thereby bestowing reliability on the position of each.  

What stands out is that both RN and UDI exhibited behavior quite distinct from the rest of the parties. Unlike those parties within the Concertación, who exhibit fairly similar behavior, the p-value equal to 0.000 and the difference in means of around 25 points, indicates that unity within the Alliance was substantially lower than that in the Concertación. In effect, by comparing the means of each ruling party, we note that the differences do not amount to even 2 points, with the PPD being the party that barely exhibits less uniformity within the coalition. On the other hand, if we compare the RN with the UDI, the difference surpasses 25 points.

In the case of the Concertación the high degree of unity could be attributed both to the President’s executive powers as well as to his ability to manage when and how they are used. In other words, how and when they were used is as important as the President’s powers themselves. A moment is the preliminary review of the support by the members of Congress to a bill proposed by the President as a means to analyze whether to submit it. This action, which Siavelis (2002) calls informal influence mechanisms (Siavelis, 2002, 105), became institutionalized by means of the so-called Monday meetings, where the heads of the ruling parties and blocs agree upon the initiatives that had enough support to move forward to Congress. As a matter of fact, it was at these meetings that the Executive began generating specific agreements with the parties within Congress. Later, if the agreements are not overly broad, the Executive uses information gained within meeting to adjust his proposals, making the necessary changes to engender greater support for its passage. This is one of the reasons most of the bills emanating from the Executive undergo huge changes.

Things were quite different for the opposition, and therefore, this paper analyzes their case more deeply. Through precedents we were able to demonstrate that the Allianza por Chile did not exhibit homogenous behavior. Without the existence of intra-coalitional incentives to encourage uniform action within the bloc, the opposition parties sought ways to differentiate themselves from one another and follow their own logic. This situation forced the executive branch to develop different negotiation strategies in order to gain sufficient support for their bills’ approval. In effect, negotiations with the UDI were made

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6 Since this is a small sample, the data presented in Table 2 was verified in two separate ways. First, the confidence interval was relaxed to 90% and 85%, without significant changes in the table’s p-values. Each group was then compared to the remaining groups, applying Mann-Whitney’s non-parametric tests, K-S test for two samples, and the Wald-Wolfowitz test. These tests generated the same tendency as the results presented in table 2.

7 The level of significance of the contrast goes from 0 to 1. In other words, if a party's p-value in relation to another is less than or equal to 0.05, it means the null hypothesis of equality of means is not accepted. On the other hand, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, then the equality of means between the parties is accepted.
Table 2: Analysis of the means of Executive Initiatives Party by Party Comparison\(^8\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party (a)</th>
<th>Political Party (b)</th>
<th>Difference between Means (a)-(b)</th>
<th>Typical Error</th>
<th>P-value.</th>
<th>Lower limit</th>
<th>Upper limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>PPD</td>
<td>1.2347</td>
<td>1.75343</td>
<td>0.9920</td>
<td>-4.7075</td>
<td>7.1768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSD</td>
<td>-0.4238</td>
<td>2.55604</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>-9.0859</td>
<td>8.2382</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDC</td>
<td>0.1933</td>
<td>1.72328</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>-5.6467</td>
<td>6.0332</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN*</td>
<td>54.6223</td>
<td>1.7377</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>48.7334</td>
<td>60.5111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDI*</td>
<td>80.0967</td>
<td>1.60066</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>74.6723</td>
<td>85.5211</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPD</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>-1.2347</td>
<td>1.75343</td>
<td>0.9920</td>
<td>-7.1768</td>
<td>4.7075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSD</td>
<td>1.6585</td>
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\(^8\) To control for the different number of observations, Scheffé’s method for multiple comparisons was used.

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different leaders depending on the subject, while negotiations with the RN were more individualized.

Various authors (Joignant and Navia, 2003; Morales and Bugueño, 2001) have identified the UDI as an institution that maintains strict discipline among its members. From its inception, the party has built up a type of objectivized capital (Joignant and Navia, 2003: 154), which subordinates members' individual desires and makes them dependent on the organization. Joignant and Navia note:

This, perhaps, is a unique characteristic of the UDI: the convergence within a single party of particularly homologous individual resources, which, rather than splitting up into factions considering the importance of the resources provided by the individuals, converts it into a politically-oriented, well-disciplined and electorally-powerful force (2003: 154).

This unity can clearly be observed among the legislators in two ways. The first is the process of negotiating certain bills with the Executive. Unlike the RN, the UDI spokesmen are clearly defined and once they come to an agreement among themselves, it is adopted and complied with by the majority of the legislators. Thus, in its negotiations with the UDI, the Executive seeks out specific personalities with whom to negotiate according to the subject at hand. In this way, it could obtain agreements with Pablo Longueira on political matters or with Marcelo Forni on institutional ones, which guaranteed all the UDI legislators would agree with the decisions made. The second way is exemplified in the manner in which a bill from the Executive is rejected, the UDI legislators do not flounder when it came to voting against it in session. Figure 3 shows how closely each of the UDI legislators are to their party's average. The lowest approval rating corresponds to Dario Paya with 5.9% while the highest belongs to the legislator from Arica, Rosa González, with 19.3%.

On the other hand, if we look at the Renovación Nacional’s position in regards to the initiatives put forth to Congress by the President, we come to two important conclusions. The first is that, institutionally, this party established strategies to differentiate it from the UDI in certain in roll call votes. The fact that the means do not cross, reflects the existence of centrifugal forces within the coalition, which made the RN a "pivotal" party for the Executive's pretensions. The second conclusion, is related to the lack of flexibility with a party with a strong ideological structure, such as the UDI, led to greater opportunities for the RN to assume more conciliatory postures towards the Executive's initiatives and also for its legislators to make more individual decisions. Figure 4 shows the tendencies of the Renovación Nacional legislators in regards to its party average.

The uneven distribution of the legislator’s positions in the RN, seem to indicate low party unity.
Figure 3: UDI Distribution: % approval 2002-2006

Source: The author, based on www.camara.cl

Figure 4: RN Distribution: % approval 2002-2006

Source: The author, based on www.camara.cl
Carmen Ibáñez and Arturo Longton Germán Becker show over 48% approval while Carlos Kuschel and Maximiano Errázuriz are closer to 27%. This low level of unity could be due to the fact that the Executive engaged in individual negotiation processes with the RN legislators, taking advantage of each individual’s tendencies and interests. As a matter of fact, although it is important to keep in mind that most of the negotiation process deals with the shape and substance of the policies they are trying to implement, they can also be subject to individual incentives. Members of the cabinet, whose anonymity has been guaranteed, have confirmed that the votes of various legislators were obtained through trades. In fact, the Executive’s ability to influence territorial decisions, was often called upon to resolve the problems and compromises the congressman might face within his own district. Therefore, we are looking at a pork-barrelling and log-rolling relationship with a certain group of RN legislators, who obtained the fulfillment of certain projects or actions within their district in exchange for votes supporting the Executive's initiatives. The Executive’s spokesmen, upon being asked in 2005 about Carmen Ibáñez’s behavior, noted: “She is one of the legislators with whom there is the most negotiation prior to roll-call votes.” Close advisors to the legislator justified her behavior as “a way to distance herself from the Independent Democrat Union and from the more strident factions of the National Renovation.” These two options indicate structural elements that, on the one hand reflect the Executive’s ability to negotiate support and transfers to the constituencies of certain RN legislators, and, on the other hand, generate differentiating tendencies in view of the lack of incentives, which, in contrast, the opposition enjoyed through their strong institutionalization.

7. DISCUSSION

Since the return to democracy in 1989, many authors have noted that the transition from a multi-party system with a dynamic centrifugal force to a system with two stable coalitions has been one of the most important factors for party moderation and the achievement of political agreements (Carey, 2002: 228; Guzmán, 1993: 309). However, the fact that the different blocs are often referred to as macro-parties and that certain studies treat the Chilean system as bipartisan (Navia, 2005), can lead to errors in the way that we observe the political actions of the different actors.

As a matter of fact, this article has shown that the way to obtain unity within a party—and between these and their coalitions—is a direct response to a series of elements that conditions the behavior of the actors involved. For example, while some actors may come together for ideological reasons or electoral affinity (cohesion), others may adopt more instrumental behaviors.
depending on the degree of their leaders’ discretion to control nominations (discipline). Nonetheless, it is common for both these elements to be used by the Executive, leaders, or agents during the decision-making process. The purpose of this is to influence the degrees of unity within the parties and political blocs and to impose their own particular agendas.

In the case of Chile, the Concertación parties have assimilated the Executive's strengths, delegating major legislative responsibilities. This delegation makes the Executive principal actors responsible for passing laws and, thus, makes him the main catalyst of the ruling parties’ behavior. Thus, cohesion and discipline are relevant insofar as they promote efficiency in the approval of laws and the implementation of public politics. In an interview with the author, the ex-Secretary General to the Presidency and later Senator, Mr. Edgardo Boeninger, indicated that cohesion and discipline always alternate in the ruling parties. “Cohesion is a strong element in the Concertación, although the need to impose discipline has never been lacking.”

Meanwhile, things were completely different within the opposition parties. In the presence of a strong Executive and a uniform ruling coalition, the opposition bloc tended to lose discipline on some initiatives. The scant rewards and impossibility of gaining public posts, plus the fact the legislative power was heavily influenced by the President, tend to provoked differences within the coalition. For example one institution (UDI) would tend towards one extreme while another remained fluctuating between supporting the Executive's initiatives and its condition as opposition party (RN). This behavior is not unusual if we consider what Morgenstern says about it: “While a high level of ideological agreement facilitates unity, its effect is magnified when an agent stands firmly in opposition to other agents. In other words, more polarized agents should be more unified than centrists” (Morgenstern, 2004: 87). As a matter of fact, by definition, the more centrist parties tend to pull in different directions, particularly if there are no incentives to control these fluctuations; while those parties with more marked ideologies tend to drift towards the extremes and become more unified.

Hence, this article aims to capture this political game within the legislature. Examining the roll call votes in regards to the bills proposed by the Executive, it aims to demonstrate that in a difficult Congress discipline and cohesion were determining factors when it came to successfully negotiating the initiatives proposed by the President. Thus, this article unearthed data which determined the intersections of three clearly delineated positions in respect to the approval, or lack thereof, of the Presidential initiatives: a) support, b) middle ground, and c) rejection. In the first position we find the four government coalition parties. If we consider the fact that in our study we only analyzed non-unanimous votes, and even so the approval indices were quite high, then we can conclude that during the entire legislature, they acted as a bloc in favor of the
Executive’s bills. Likewise, we observe that it was the RN that occupied the middle ground. This party did not act in conjunction with the UDI, which tended towards a lower level of approval. This could be due to the polarizing factors of a bloc that tended to differentiate itself from its partners due to the lack of the necessary incentives to maintain cohesion. In some instances, this is similar to some north-american studies regarding legislative support to US presidents (Edwards III, 1985; Fleisher and Bond, 1992). Notwithstanding the differences of each regime, it is interesting to observe George Bush’s strategy when faced with an adverse Congress in 1988. Faced with the lack of a sufficient majority, the Executive was forced to form ties with the more conservative sectors of the Democratic Party, in order to pass those bills that he was clearly interested in (Fleisher and Bond, 1992). Thus the authors were able to infer the elder Bush’s attempts to maintain the ruling party united while negotiating with the most convergent opposition factions.

Nonetheless, the Chilean structure demands different types of mechanisms to negotiate support. As long as the President maintains his legislative prerogative and there is no plan to convert the Congress into a strong and proactive institution, the parliamentarians will continue to act in accordance with the Executive's agenda regardless of the political sector in power. Thus, the presence of a binomial electoral system that forces the creation of two blocs and a strong Executive capable of generating incentives and negotiations, was the cause of the unity of the ruling forces and the differentiation of the opposition sectors. Although the previous statement may be relative, it is clear that in a presidential system such as the Chilean one, whoever possesses the executive power will yield the influence to manage their coalition and to negotiate with the opposition. Hence, the weak legislative function in Chile ensures that the losing bloc’s parliamentary seats be occupied by negotiating elements where the Executive may intervene to forward the ruling party’s agenda. In this way, the parties and in many instances the opposition legislators individually seek to instill their own degree of influence, thus creating a crack in the bloc’s unity.

However, we should consider that the data analysis focused on one particular legislature. Considering the problems that arose after the 2001 parliamentary elections, the object of this article was precisely to look into the results of those apprehensions. Further studies should be undertaken in regards to the behavior of other legislatures and other Concertación governments. By means of this analysis we will be able to definitively identify the levels of party uniformity in the post-authoritarian era.

Finally, it is important to determine if the behavior demonstrated during the 2002-2006 period can be extrapolated to other legislative configurations. Previous studies, such as those of Carey (2002), Alemán and Saiegh (2006), and
Londregan (2000), support the finding here and raise new questions in regards to the coalitional incentives of the opposition alliances in Chile.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


