Uprooted but Stable: Chilean Parties and the Concept of Party System Institutionalization

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ABSTRACT

Mainwaring and Scully's concept of party system institutionalization (PSI) has greatly influenced the literature on parties and party systems. This article contributes to the "revisionist" literature on PSI by exploring the recent evolution of the concept's four dimensions in Chile. It finds that the Chilean party system is not homogenously institutionalized (as conventionally argued) but is simultaneously frozen at the elite level and increasingly disconnected from civil society. In this regard, it approaches some recent descriptions of the Brazilian party system, a prototypical example of an "inchoate" party system that has gained stability over time without developing roots in society. This article argues that the current operationalization of the concept of PSI is problematic. Not only should all four dimensions of the concept be simultaneously measured, probably through multiple indicators for each one, but their trends across time and space should also be better integrated into the concept's theoretical structure.

Mainwaring and Scully's concept of party system institutionalization, first published in 1995, has greatly influenced the literature on parties and party systems, to the point where it has become the established approach for comparative analyses of developing countries. Conceptually, Mainwaring and Scully (1995) identify four dimensions of party system institutionalization (hereafter PSI):

a. the stability and regularity of party competition patterns
b. the presence of party roots in society, which helps to create the stability of institutionalized systems
c. the relative level of party legitimacy in society
d. the presence of well-developed party organizations, as opposed to parties that function as electoral vehicles for personalistic leaders

Mainwaring (1999) explicitly conceptualizes the relationship between the four dimensions of PSI as positive and linear, arguing that high levels of PSI in one dimension usually correlate with high levels in the other three (1999, 27). Accordingly, the concept has been conven-

tionally operationalized by computing a simple additive index of PSI based on empirical indicators for each of the four dimensions. Alternatively, given the lack of comparative data for some dimensions, the concept frequently has been operationalized through single-indicator measures of electoral volatility.

While a series of subsequent studies sought to improve the operationalization of PSI by bringing new indicators into updated versions of the index (see, e.g., Jones 2005; Mainwaring 1999; Payne et al. 2003), the concept's one-dimensional structure has been neither theoretically challenged nor empirically tested (though for significant exceptions see Crisp 2000; Kitschelt 2000; Lindberg 2007).

More recently, some studies have questioned the one-dimensional definition and measurement of PSI (see Torcal forthcoming). For instance, Zucco (forthcoming) shows that in the Brazilian case, decreasing volatility has not been matched by the deepening of party system roots in society. The seemingly contradictory combination of low rootedness and high stability leads Zucco to characterize the Brazilian party system as one that defies a one-dimensional understanding of PSI.

In our view, the concept's limitations are twofold. On the one hand, its structure should be theoretically revised, at least in relation to the additive structure of its four dimensions or indicators.[1] In agreement with Luna (forthcoming) and Zucco (forthcoming), we find change across dimensions that is inconsistent with the additive structure of the party system concept. On the other hand, current empirical indicators of PSI (especially electoral volatility) are incomplete and possibly misleading, especially when it comes down to electoral volatility measures. This shortcoming reinforces the first one, thus potentially obscuring the type of contradictory characteristics (i.e., high stability and low rootedness) present in some contemporary party systems.

This article contributes to the "revisionist" PSI literature by exploring the recent evolution of the concept's four dimensions in Chile. Analyzing only one case has obvious limitations, but we think the analysis presented here is worth pursuing for at least two reasons.

First, as in Zucco forthcoming, the analysis of only one case provides a strong basis for systematically gauging and comparing the four dimensions of PSI. This is an advantage over cross-national assessments based on partial and more imperfect operationalizations, which suffer from a lack of comparable indicators, especially for some dimensions of PSI. This study engages in a multidimensional analysis of PSI in Chile, analyzing the diachronic trends and cross-sectional variance regarding different indicators of party system institutionalization (which are usually measured at the aggregate and cross-national level for only one time period). In so doing, it identifies important limitations of PSI's conventional operationalization, especially when pursued only by looking at electoral volatility.

Second, Chile constitutes a crucial case for empirically testing the adequacy of a one-dimensional conceptualization of PSI. At the moment, there is a strong consensus that Chile is an example of a highly institutionalized party system (Coppedge 1998; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Payne et al. 2003; Siavelis 2000; Stein et al. 2006, to mention just a few).

We take issue with this portrayal and show that electoral stability (measured as low electoral volatility at the national level) coexists with other characteristics that are typical of noninstitutionalized party systems. In other words, we find that the Chilean party system does not rank high on all dimensions of PSI. In our analysis, the Chilean party system combines very low national-level volatility with low levels of rootedness and legitimacy in society, and weak partisan organizations. On this basis we argue that a situation similar to that described by Zucco in the Brazilian case may also be developing in Chile.

To be sure, Brazil has been commonly characterized as an inchoate party system, in which we might be more likely to observe an uneven configuration or evolution of PSI's dimensions. The Chilean case, however, being the epitome of a highly institutionalized party system, constitutes a least likely scenario for finding an inconsistent configuration of PSI across conceptual dimensions that are theoretically conceived as positively linearly associated.

For the analysis of PSI's four dimensions in contemporary Chile, we focus first on electoral volatility (as a proxy for the stability of electoral competition patterns) at both the national and subnational levels, considering both electoral coalitions (pacts) and individual political parties. Then we focus on party system roots, analyzing citizens' attachments to political coalitions and parties (see Agüero et al. 1998). In addition, we study the ideological characteristics of partisan sympathizers, as well as the evolution of political parties' social bases (see Posner 1999, 2004). We present evidence of the recent transformation of partisan organizations in posttransitional Chile, arguing that increasingly personalized and localized leadership styles are emerging while political parties, as institutions, have lost strength. Last, we analyze the legitimacy of political parties and electoral processes in Chile. The concluding section examines the theoretical implications of our empirical analysis.

Electoral Volatility

Volatility has been systematically used as a criterion for party system stability, and is one of the crucial components of any index of PSI (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). It is usually measured as the change in the share of the vote or seats for each party by the Pedersen index, which is the sum of the absolute changes in vote shares divided by 2 (Peder-

Table 1. Electoral Volatility in Latin America
(from transition to democracy to 2004)

	Volatility Lower Chamber	Presidential Volatility	Average Volatility
Honduras	7.67	6.23	6.95
Nicaragua	15.05	10.50	12.77
Chile	**3.47**	**22.17**	**12.82**
Uruguay	14.65	14.59	14.62
Costa Rica	46.96	12.95	14.95
Mexico	14.23	18.43	16.33
El Salvador	18.09	19.48	18.79
Dominican Republic	19.09	23.08	21.09
Paraguay	19.86	28.70	24.28
Argentina	18.35	31.70	25.02
Colombia	17.51	33.64	25.58
Panama	19.36	34.78	27.07
Brazil	28.67	36.35	32.51
Venezuela	28.98	37.04	33.01
Bolivia	29.09	38.68	33.88
Ecuador	32.55	46.26	39.41
Guatemala	46.95	48.95	47.95
Peru	51.83	52.21	52.02
Average	22.35	28.65	25.50

Source: Payne et al.

sen 1983). Constant or relatively stable values of volatility are associated with patterned interactions of party competition. In this regard, Chile excels when compared both to the rest of the region and to the democratic world as a whole, given its low levels of electoral volatility (see table 1).

Despite the continuous use of the volatility index, we posit that this measure is highly problematical, for at least two reasons. First (and going beyond Chilean borders) we consider that the very same concept of volatility has problems of internal validity; it might not measure empirically what it intends to account for conceptually. Pedersen's volatility index systematically commits a gross ecological inference, drawing individual-level inferences from aggregate data.[2] Even though the number of votes for a party at time T and the number of votes obtained for the same party at time T+1 may be almost identical, this does not imply that the people who voted for party A in T are the same people who voted for A in T+1. Although it is extremely unlikely, imagine a perfect bipartisan system with two identical parties, A and B, each with 50 percent of the votes. It might occur that about half of the voters

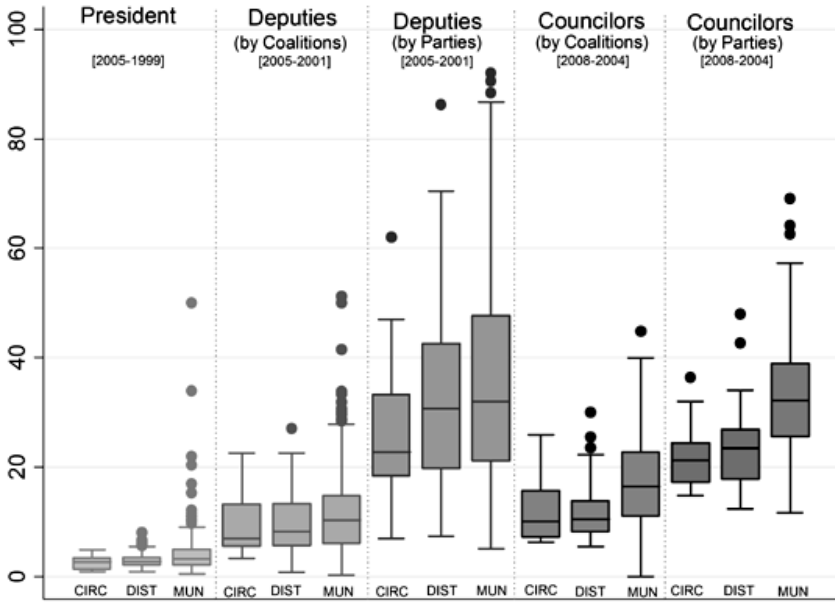
of A shift their preferences to B in the next election and otherwise. In this case, volatility would be zero, even though 50 percent of the citizenry changes party preferences between election T and T+1. Thus, at most, Pedersen's volatility index provides only a lower boundary on the proportion of voters who change their votes.

The second problem is that Chile is one of the most complicated cases for elucidating the evident tension that emerges when selecting the unit of analysis for computing volatility measures.[3] Such tension involves, in this case, choosing as the unit of analysis either individual parties or electoral pacts. The country's electoral system limits the researcher's options: election results observed at the district level, when taking individual parties as units of analysis, could end up blurring voters' party loyalties.

That risk derives from the enormous influence the binominal electoral system has on the distribution of candidates in each municipality and district, making it unlikely that each individual party will fill candidates in every district (Siavelis 2004). For example, in a given district D, the preferential candidate of the Concertación may be a member of the PPD in election E and a member of the PDC in the next election E+1. It would not surprise anyone if committed partisans of the PRSD (another party included in the center-left Concertación electoral pact) were to vote for the candidates of the PPD and the PDC in these subsequent elections. Calculating volatility based on individual party votes would then be "inflating" the PPD and PDC—and simultaneously deflating the PRSD—when in reality the PRSD partisans have maintained their loyalty to the party (though not contributing to its electoral share in elections E and E+1). Thus, extremely low scores in the volatility index actually might be due to a mirage produced by aggregation bias when computing volatility for electoral pacts. Computing by pacts, however, seeks to avoid the possible biases induced because not all parties put up candidates in every district. In short, both available solutions are problematic for the Chilean case.

Despite these limitations, we will stick to the literature and compute the volatility index as usual. Additionally, we will compute volatility indexes at the partisan level, considering different geographical levels (national; senatorial circumscriptions, or districts; deputies' districts; and municipalities). This takes advantage of the system, in which Chileans vote in a national district for the presidency, circumscriptions for senators, districts for deputies, and municipalities for mayors and councilors. Unlike other countries where the vote is a unique and straight party ticket, Chilean voters can perfectly "cut" the vote. Bracketing out the internal validity problems attributed to any computation of the Pedersen index, our evidence shows that as soon as we start digging into those different levels of analysis—both partisan and geographical—a com-

Figure 1. Volatility in Chile by Parties and Coalitions
by District, Circumscriptions, and Municipalities



Source: Authors' construction based on electoral results.

pletely different picture from that embraced by the conventional wisdom is obtained.

There is a rather strong consensus that posits that Chile has very low electoral volatility (to mention a few: Angell 2003; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Roberts and Wibbels 1999). Yet, as already mentioned, this measurement is problematic for our case (compare Morgenstern and Potthoff 2005, 36). Therefore, we compute electoral volatility using different units of analysis (parties and coalitions) and different levels of aggregation (18 senate circumscriptions, 60 lower-chamber districts, and 350 municipal precincts). The graphical depiction of our volatility estimates suggests a completely different take on Chile's electoral stability (see figure 1). Although we expect higher levels of electoral volatility when taking parties (instead of coalitions) as the unit of analysis, volatility at the communal level (where most parties and coalitions fill in candidates at this level in every municipality) is higher as well. In short, there are some grounds to state that the low volatility obtained at the national level, which informs comparative assessments of PSI, is probably a mirage.

PARTY ROOTS IN SOCIETY

The evolution of party roots in society is represented by a variety of evidence, particularly the nature and evolution of ideological linkages between parties and voters in the system.[4] This aspect has been prominent in operationalizing this dimension in recent works, such as Mainwaring and Torcal 2005 (18).[5]

Since the transition to democracy, scholars of the Chilean party system have sought to describe the emerging patterns of partisan competition. In most analyses, continuities and changes in the cleavages described as central in structuring the pre-1973 system have been constantly underscored. Scully (1992), in his outstanding historical work on the Chilean cleavage structure, hypothesizes that after the democratic breakdown, the social cleavages that were fundamental to the party system would soon reappear, structuring partisan competition. This hypothesis was soon revised and replaced by different scholars (Tironi and Agüero 1999; Torcal and Mainwaring 2003), whose analyses described an emerging cleavage structure centered on the democratic-authoritarian divide.

In their highly influential 2003 article, Torcal and Mainwaring argue that in the context of Chile's transition to democracy, political elites were able to recraft the social bases of party competition. They could accomplish this, the argument goes, because the class cleavage that once structured the preauthoritarian system was replaced by a political cleavage, structured from above, which reflected the conflict between prodemocratic forces and those more closely attached to the legacy of the outgoing authoritarian regime headed by Augusto Pinochet. This is a common contention regarding the posttransitional Chilean party system (Agüero et al. 1998; Carey 2002; Tironi and Agüero 1999). Torcal and Mainwaring (2003), however, ground their hypotheses in an ambitious empirical analysis based on survey evidence from both the pre- and postauthoritarian periods.

A cross-national exploration of ideological linkages (or programmatic structuring) of partisan electorates yields support for Mainwaring and Torcal's argument. Table 2 presents different possible proxies for the programmatic structuring of partisan electorates. These alternative indexes are based on two multinomial logit models computed for each case, with cell entries representing the obtained Pseudo R-Square when regressing the declared vote for a party on three potential competitive dimensions (substantive component) and on left-right identifications (symbolic component). The latter model replicates Mainwaring and Torcal's 2005 measurement strategy. The first model tries to approximate a substantive measure of programmatic structuring drawing on three issues that together represent salient competitive divides: state-market, democratic-authoritarian, and conservative-liberal moral positions.

Table 2. Programmatic Structuring of Partisan Electorates (selected countries)

	Substantive 1990s	Symbolic 1990s	Total 1990s	Waves Available	No. Parties	Substantive 2000s	Symbolic 2000s	Total 2000s	Waves Available	No. Parties
Peru	.023	.009	.016	1994–99	3	.012	.007	**.001**	Both	3/3
Brazil	.018	.044	.031	Both	4/6	.015	.007	**.011**	2005–8	3
Colombia	.015	.025	.02	1994–99	3	.016	.007	**.011**	2005–8	5
Venezuela	.011	.064	.037	1994–99	3	.0008	.027	**.014**	2000–2004	2
Argentina	.027	.03	.285	1994–99	2	.022	.013	**.018**	Both	3/4
Mexico	.015	.038	.027	Both	5/3	.013	.025	**.019**	Both	3/3
Chile	.046	.118	.082	Both	3/5	.043	.159	**.101**	Both	6/6
Uruguay	.056	.25	.153	1994–99	4	.037	.3	**.168**	2002[a]	3

[a]In Uruguay, the World Values Survey was not applied. The reported results are based on data provided by Néstor Da Costa, who replicated the WVS questionnaire and sample design in 2002. We thank him for providing access to this dataset.
Source: Authors' construction, based on Luna 2009.

Although not equally important across cases, taken as a group, these three competitive divides should have a modicum of influence on party preferences in systems where programmatic linkages are stronger.[6]

For these cases, both indicators are positively and strongly correlated in both periods (.85 for the 1990s, .77 in the 2000s). For this reason, the simple average of symbolic and substantive components as indicators of programmatic structuring in the 1990s and 2000s constitutes a reasonable proxy.

As table 2 shows, Chile is (along with Uruguay) one of the two most structured party systems in Latin America for which evidence is available in the World Values Survey. This holds true for each of the three possible operationalizations used. Moreover, if, instead of predicting partisan choice, we decided to model vote choice between the system's two major coalitions (the Concertación and the Alianza), the index would further improve. Just as an example, drawing on LAPOP 2006 data, we regressed a dummy variable distinguishing between both political coalitions on citizens' self-declared left-right positioning, obtaining an R-squared of .38 (which more than doubles the already high coefficient obtained for the 2000s when predicting partisan choice).[7]

While at first glance it is consistent with Mainwaring and Torcal's 2003 assessment, our evidence supports a different view of the Chilean party system. It suggests a series of theoretical qualifications to Torcal and Mainwaring's 2003 argument about the top-down creation of political cleavages in transitional settings. At least when applied to Chile, we think there is ground for skepticism.

Methodologically, Torcal and Mainwaring anchor their analysis of posttransitional Chile on survey respondents' declared identification with political parties circa 1995. This is problematic for several reasons. First, in a context of substantial partisan dealignment (more than 85 percent of Chileans do not currently identify with a political party, according to LAPOP 2010 results), party identifiers are not representative of the Chilean electorate. Second, the timing of the survey analysis is too close to the transition and too distant from contemporary events to represent the current dynamics of the party system. We need to incorporate a more dynamic perspective into the analysis of programmatic linkages.[8]

Third, Torcal and Mainwaring took political parties as the relevant unit of analysis. Our study complements this approach by also taking into account political pacts (the Concertación and the Alianza) as units. While Torcal and Mainwaring's specification does justice to the historical characteristics of the system, our own provides a less stringent criterion for analyzing political alignments and identifications in contemporary Chile, and one that is more appropriate in the post-1990s scenario. Taking political pacts as units, we also lower the bar for finding ideological structuring.

Substantively, our re-analysis of the Chilean party system suggests a series of qualifications to the characterization of the posttransitional system as ideologically rooted. The authoritarian-democratic divide is indeed fundamental to understanding posttransitional politics in Chile, but analyzing it in isolation from other factors produces a biased understanding of partisan alignments and the party system in posttransitional Chile. Of such biases, two are central.

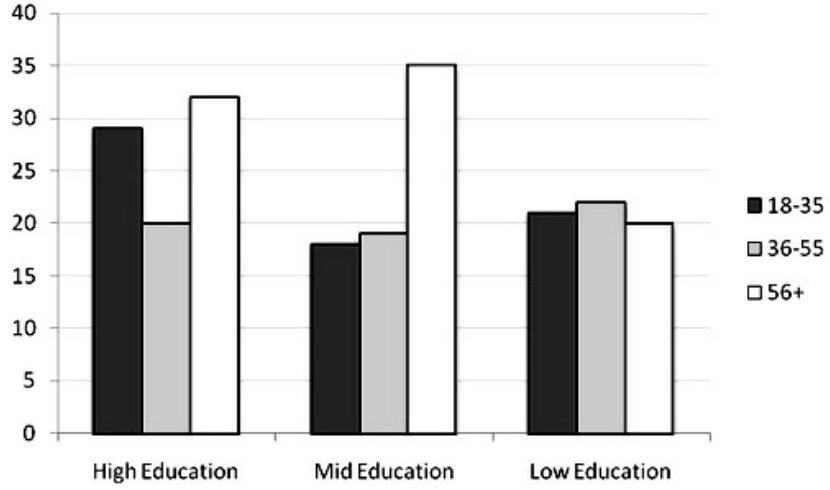
The salience of the democratic-authoritarian cleavage declines with time (which is consistent with Torcal and Mainwaring's expectation) and tends to mobilize specific segments of the Chilean electorate more effectively (i.e., old cohorts and politicized citizens, especially in upper socioeconomic segments). In other social segments, by contrast, personalistic, localized, and increasingly nonpartisan leadership has replaced cleavage mobilization. Moreover, voters who are less politically socialized (particularly the youth) massively abstain from participating in elections. All these features run contrary to a positive reading on the successful recrafting of political competition by political parties. Moreover, the alleged rootedness is caused not by parties' anchoring in civil society (through ideological linkages or otherwise), but by their isolation from society.

Most Chilean citizens do not sympathize with any political party, and most parties have less than 5 percent of sympathizers (LAPOP 2010). Furthermore, according to recent survey evidence, the percentage of Chileans declaring to sympathize with a party declined from 25 percent in 2006 to 20 percent in 2008 and to 11 percent in 2010 (LAPOP 2006–10). This situation calls into question Torcal and Mainwaring's decision to anchor their analysis of posttransitional cleavages on voters' party identifications.

Although the levels of partisan disengagement are high across all social segments, interesting variance is observed when segmenting the sample by education and age terciles (figure 2). Whereas low-educated citizens are homogeneously disengaged, middle-educated citizens, with the exception of the older age cohort, present even lower levels of partisan sympathy. The older cohort in the highly educated segment is the one that presents a greater proportion of party sympathizers, surpassing 30 percent. The youngest cohort in that education tercile also presents relatively high levels of partisan sympathy. However, middle-aged and highly educated citizens display significantly lower levels of sympathy. In sum, low- and medium-educated citizens and youth (with the exception of highly educated youth) are the groups that present lower levels of partisan attachment.

To complement this portrayal, figure 3 presents nonsympathizers' responses to a follow-up question on their voting behavior, discriminating between those who do not have a party but still vote and those who lack partisan sympathy and also abstain from showing up at the polls.

Figure 2. Sympathy with Political Parties
by Age Cohorts and Education Levels



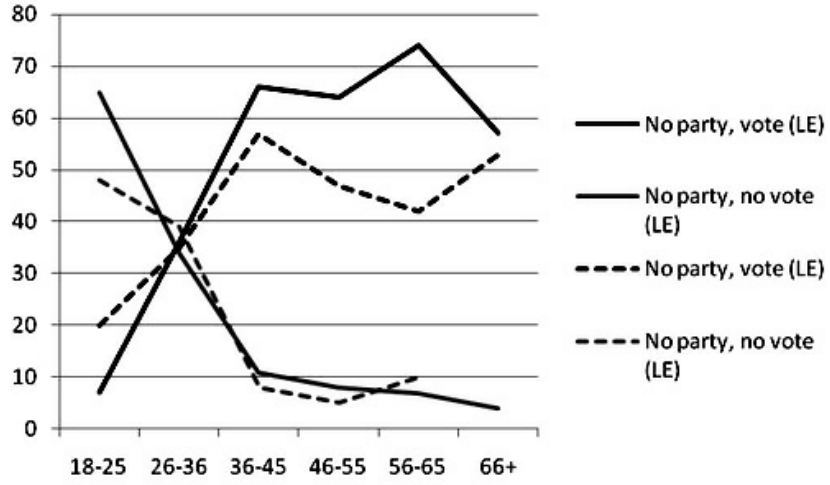
Source: Authors' construction based on LAPOP 2006.

Results are once again shown for different age cohorts and for the higher (HE) and lower (LE) education terciles. Whereas those who do not have a party sympathy are relatively more likely to be in the lower education tercile, nonvoters are overwhelmingly concentrated in the younger age cohorts. This evidence is consistent with declining voter turnout (and voter registration) among the youth (see Carlin 2006; Toro Maureira 2008). However, partisan disengagement is also very high among older (registered) cohorts. Indeed, nonpartisan voters are overrepresented among older and less educated segments of the electorate.

In spite of all the trends we have analyzed so far, comparative evidence shows the strength of ideological self-identifications in predicting vote choice in Chile. Even in a context of weak and declining partisan and coalitional identifications, ideological currents could act as anchorage mechanisms for the party system. Therefore, we also need to examine the evolution over time of ideological currents.

Table 3 presents the correlation between the left-right scale and comparable programmatic factors obtained for 1988, 1996, 2000, and 2006. These factors recover three potential competitive divides: one regime divide that splits the camps between pro-authoritarian and prodemocratic forces, a state-market divide, and a liberal-conservative one (related to religious and moral issues). While the final time point was estimated on the basis of LAPOP (2006) data, previous calculations correspond to the third and fourth waves of the World Values Survey

Figure 3. Reported Electoral Behavior and Relationship to Parties by Age Cohorts and Education Levels



LE = lower education terciles; HE = higher education terciles.
Source: Authors' construction based on LAPOP 2006.

(1996, 2000) and data from the Projeto Cono Sur (1988).[9] The table also reports specific correlation coefficients for the most and least educated segments of the population and computes the gap between them.

Although the regime factor is still responsible for the programmatic divide that most significantly correlates with left-right alignments in each of the time periods for which data are available, we would rather insist on its significant decrease over time. This divide also shows the smaller gaps between the least educated and the most educated population segments. The only exception in this last regard is found in 2006, and may signal the presence of increasing programmatic "confusion"—especially among less educated segments of the electorate—as the legacy of the authoritarian period and the transition to democracy continues to erode.

The moral issue fluctuates in terms of both the strength of the correlation and the size of the gap between different educational cohorts, but it never maps strongly on left-right self-placements. Furthermore, the state-market divide presents stabler but marginal correlations with the left-right scale (especially for low-educated cohorts). It also presents significant social gaps, with highly educated voters mapping more consistently than their less educated fellow citizens. It therefore seems that the correlation between left-right self-placements and substantive programmatic issues has weakened over time while showing significant degrees of social stratification.

Table 3. Correlations Between Left-Right Self-Placements and Three Programmatic Divides

	Regime (+Left=+Democratic)	Moral (+Left=+Liberal)	State-Market (+Left=+Statist)
1988			
Overall Correlation	.62	.17	.08
Highly Educated R	.75	.20	.42
Social Gap (LE-HE)	−.12	.02	−.33
1996			
Overall Correlation	.28	.06	.11
Highly Educated R	.18	.15	.27
Social Gap (LE-HE)	−.04	−.26	−.19
2000			
Overall Correlation	.27	.13	.11
Highly Educated R	.26	.17	.18
Social Gap (LE-HE)	−.02	−.03	−.11
2006			
Overall Correlation	.21	.07	.09
Highly Educated R	.37	.15	.25
Social Gap (LE-HE)	−.22	−.09	−.15

Source: Authors' construction based on Luna 2006; LAPOP.

To complement this analysis, we now turn to citizens' own explanation of their voting decision at the district level (see table 4). Those who claimed to have voted in the 2005 congressional elections overwhelmingly point to candidate-based explanations (either individual traits or congressional campaign platform) for their vote. Meanwhile, partisan explanations of the vote are rare and, once again, consistently segmented by education levels.

This evidence calls into question current assessments of the strength of partisan identities in the system. It also challenges estimations of programmatic structuring based on analyses that are restricted to those who sympathize with a political party. While partisan dealignment is usually seen as a universal phenomenon (e.g., Crewe 1983; Dalton et al. 2000; Inglehart 1984), these trends are expected to occur less in the context of party systems with strong roots in society. Indeed, compared with the other party system in Latin America displaying similar levels of programmatic structure (that of Uruguay), the levels of partisan disengagement and voter apathy observed in Chile are striking.

Nevertheless, the image created after measuring roots at the individual party level might be too pessimistic, given the strong role

Table 4. Explanations of Vote Choice by Education Level, 2006 (percent)

	Education Level			
	Primary	Secondary	University	Total
The candidate (individual traits and campaign platform)	94.7	91.4	83.3	90.9
The party that supported the candidate	5.0	8.3	16.2	8.8
Other reasons	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

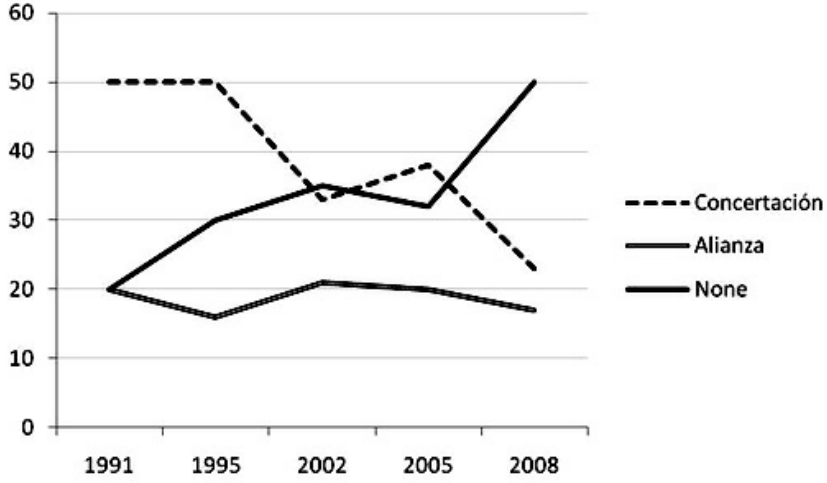
Question: Which of the following was the most important factor in your vote?
Source: Authors' construction based on LAPOP 2006.

reserved for political coalitions in the Chilean system. Since 1990, two broad coalitions have competed for the vast majority of votes. The Alianza (Alliance) is composed of two right and center-right parties, the Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI, Democratic Independent Union) and Renovación Nacional (RN, National Renovation). The Concertación, heir of the moderate opposition to the dictatorship, gained control of the national government in 1990 and held it until 2010. It is composed of four parties: Partido Demócrata Cristiano (DC, Christian Democrat Party), Partido Socialista (PS, Socialist Party), Partido por la Democracia (PPD, Party for Democracy), and Partido Radical Social Demócrata (PRSD, Radical and Social Democratic Party).

The dominance of the Concertación and the Alianza stems from the constraints created by the binominal system (Carey 2006; Navia and Rojas 2005; Siavelis 2009). Those same constraints might make individual parties less relevant for political competition and voters' allegiance than the big electoral pacts in which parties have coalesced since the transition to democracy. To test this alternative explanation of dealignment at the individual party level, figure 4 displays Chilean citizens' declared identifications with the two mainstream political coalitions. As the figure shows, although they obtain relatively higher levels of identification than parties, political coalitions (and especially the Concertación) have experienced declining identification. Meanwhile, those citizens declaring adherence to none of those political coalitions have significantly increased in recent years.

Are these trends toward ideological destructuring innocuous in terms of citizens' symbolic attachment to different ideological or programmatic currents? Although we cannot claim a causal link connecting both trends, the data suggest that the declining meaning of ideological currents is matched by an increasing refusal to identify with any of the ideological

Figure 4. Percentage of Identification with the Two Main Coalitions, 1991–2008



Notes: The scores for the year 1991 are calculated by aggregating parties' scores. The question about identification with coalitions was introduced in 1994.
Source: Authors' construction based on CEP survey.

currents included in the CEP survey (left, center-left, center, center right, right, and independent). Indeed, those who did not identify with any of those ideological currents climbed from less than 15 percent in 1990 (right after the transition to democracy) to more than 35 percent in 2009.

Thus, although they display comparatively high levels of programmatic structure in the Latin American context, the societal roots of the Chilean system have significantly weakened in recent times. The evidence elaborated in this section is also consistent with qualitative narratives on parties' increasing split from grassroots organizations and interest groups (Oxhorn 1995; Posner 2004).

Partisan Organizations

Comparative indicators of party organizational strength are not easily found. Though we present a possible proxy for the scope of parties' organizational penetration of society, we empirically tackle this challenge by first drawing on qualitative evidence drawn from previous research.

Available empirical evidence suggests that constituency service, patronage, and brokerage networks played a vital role in institutionalizing and strengthening the preauthoritarian party system (Borzutzky

2002; Garretón 1988; Valenzuela 1977). It has been argued that political parties were able to maintain their local structures and regain control of local politics following the return to democracy by centralizing candidate selection and subjecting local candidates to dictates imposed by centrally struck pacts (Posner 1999).

However, the evidence we present in this section suggests that the nature of those networks has been transformed in the posttransitional period, producing important implications for partisan activity. Candidate nomination prerogatives have allowed partisan elites to remain powerful. At the congressional level, parties still centralize congressional nominations strategically to maximize the electoral return of their allocation quotas, remaining powerful by rewarding "party loyalists" by prioritizing their candidacies in interparty negotiations. However, the positions of incumbent candidates who want to seek re-election are virtually uncontested (Carey and Siavelis 2005; Navia 2008). Indeed, incumbent candidates run in the majority of the districts (88 out of 120 in the 2009 elections), and their electoral fortunes hinge more on their performance as "constituency servants" than on the programmatic stance of their parties (Navia 2008). Moreover, removing successful incumbents, even if they defy their party in Congress or run "independent" campaigns, would entail the risk of losing a congressional seat for the party. Essentially, the nominating power is then *de facto* restricted to districts in which there are open seats.

Concomitantly, party organizations (and the value of party labels) have declined. At the local level, the strengthening and greater autonomy of mayors provided by municipal decentralization and state reforms has also limited the capacity of partisan organizations to centralize power by maintaining in place hierarchical networks tying local, district, and national-level activists. This has produced, with level-specific nuances, converging leadership characteristics at the municipal, congressional, and presidential levels.

Congressional members cannot count on the party's local structure, and increasingly need to set up parallel organizations to serve their district and assure re-election. These local structures are not partisan in nature, but are fundamentally centered on the personality of the congressional member. This explains the levels of subnational electoral volatily we showed in the first empirical section of this article. Indeed, as a successful PS congressional member claims,

> Unfortunately, my votes are my votes. At most, I think some of my votes will stay within the Concertación. It is sad, but if I decided to run for a senate seat, I do not think those votes are transferable to another PS candidate, even though I have people working with me. (Montes 2003)

The same occurs with candidates of the right.

> The moment she quit RN to join UDI, RN disappeared in the district at the congressional level. We keep the vote at the municipal level, because we have the mayor and he has developed his own support base. . . . The vote here is personal; no one is voting for parties anymore. (Guerra 2003)

In spite of the high costs that the binominal system generates for independent Congress members, recent trends signal an implicit weakening of partisan organizations. In 2005, for the first time since 1990, the independent senator Carlos Bianchi, from region 12, was elected. Moreover, since 2006, four senators from the Concertación have renounced or been expelled from their parties. Among them, two (including former DC president Adolfo Záldivar) defected explicitly, causing the loss of the Concertación's senate majority, which it had held since 1990. Several deputies have also renounced their party affiliation or have made public their differences with the coalition. The electoral success of candidates running as "independent" even when carrying a formal party nomination also contributes to this emerging trend. Certainly this also challenges the maintenance of centralized and cohesive party organizations.

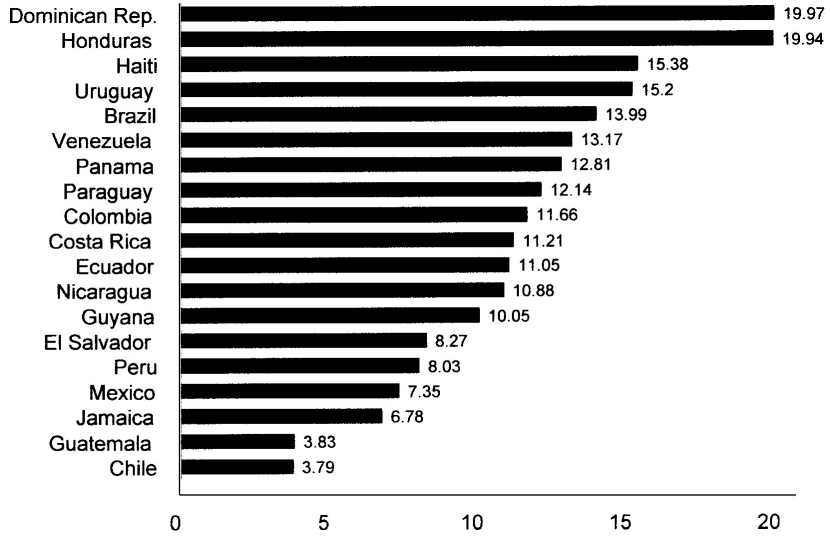
> As an independent candidate, I am entering places where I had never been. People who used to throw stones at me and who sent me to hell as a UDI candidate are now calling me to go and visit them. (Cavedo 2003)

The emerging configuration at the district and local levels also reduces parties' capacity to structure consistent programmatic platforms to mobilize support, thereby reinforcing the loss of programmatic rootedness described in the previous section.

> I think today many of these leaderships are beginning to work a bit as mercenaries. And parties do not have the capacity to take issues. They don't take issue with anything. You can see Congress members taking issues, but parties, as political parties, never. You don't have a party making a proposal together in Congress, supporting a unified and collective motion. As politics is today so harshly oriented toward individual personality, a Congress member who has a good idea about something prefers to present it individually instead of sharing it with the party. . . . Parties today contain a variety of leaderships, some interesting, some with new proposals, some doing well. . . . And that's what citizens perceive, more and more what we have is confrontational groups of leaders that hang together to defend their individual interests. (Tohá 2003)

At the municipality level, the pro-independent trend is stronger. The removal in 2004 of the binominal electoral system for this level of government has surely contributed to this trend. Once the electoral system

Figure 5. Levels of Citizen Participation in Electoral Campaigns



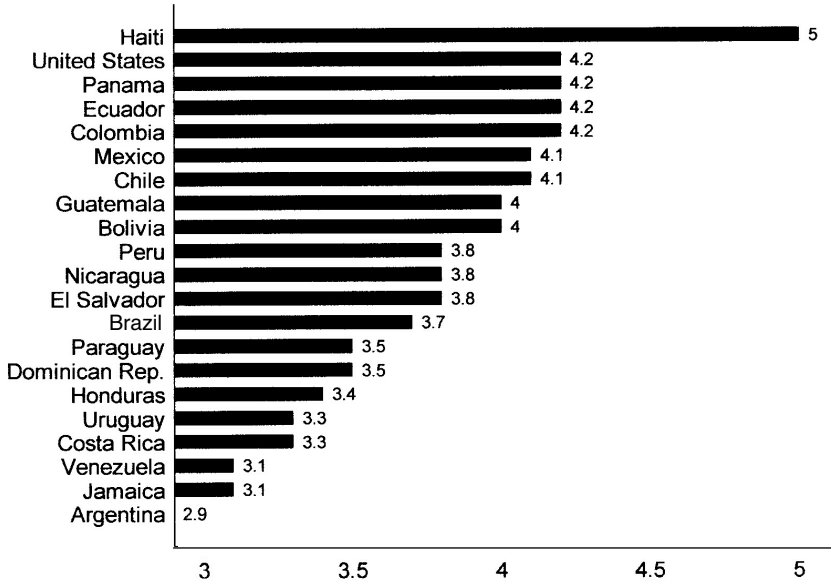
Question: Did you work for any candidate or party in the last presidential elections? (percentage of "yes" answers).
Source: LAPOP 2008.

applied at the municipal level stopped penalizing independent candidacies through the introduction of a simple plurality rule for electing mayors, the number of elected "independent" mayors increased from 0.9 percent in 2000 to 9.3 percent in 2004, climbing once again to 10.2 percent in 2008 (Mardones 2006).

At the presidential level, Michelle Bachelet's candidacy in 2005 benefited from a leadership renewal promise and from a campaign commitment to replace the traditional leadership of the Concertación for a new generation. This promise was made explicit by the slogan, "In my government, none of those who have been in office so far will participate again."[10] In the 2009 campaign, the independent candidacy of Marco Enríquez-Ominami, splitting from the Socialist Party after the party president neglected his request to take part in the Concertación primaries, raised a new red flag. He obtained more than 20 percent of the vote in the December 2009 presidential election. During the campaign, this unexpected candidacy posed a significant threat to the candidacies of former president and traditional Concertación leader Eduardo Frei and the Alianza challenger, Sebastián Piñera.

Thus, Chilean party politics is increasingly localized and personalized, giving rise to the emergence of independent candidates, who sometimes compete on an anti–party politics platform. This results from

Figure 6. Need for Political Parties



Question: Democracy can exist without political parties (1 = strongly disagree – 7 = strongly agree).
Source: LAPOP 2008.

and contributes to the weakening of partisan organizations as institutions. In contrast, we can present a comparative proxy for the strength (or at least the social penetration) of partisan organizations in Latin America. Though not optimal or complete, this proxy is consistent with the arguments presented in this section. As figure 5 shows, in the Latin American context, Chile presents the lowest level of citizen-declared participation in electoral campaigns.

LEGITIMACY

As Mainwaring and Scully (1995) argue, we should expect parties and electoral processes to display relatively high levels of legitimacy in the context of an institutionalized party system. This last empirical section briefly presents evidence on this particular dimension of the PSI concept when applied to Chile.

Figure 6 presents citizens' stances regarding the claim that "democracy can function without political parties." The case is placed among the group of countries that present relatively higher levels of agreement with such a statement. More specifically, table 5 displays the distribu-

Table 5. Ways to Seek Changes in a Country

	Colombia	Ecuador	Bolivia	Peru	Venezuela	Chile
Vote for those who defend your interests	43	38	50	43	76	45
Participate in protest movements	14	21	13	18	9	8
Seek influence by other means	15	25	19	24	10	16
It is not possible to have a say in changing things	28	15	18	15	5	31

Source: LAPOP 2008.

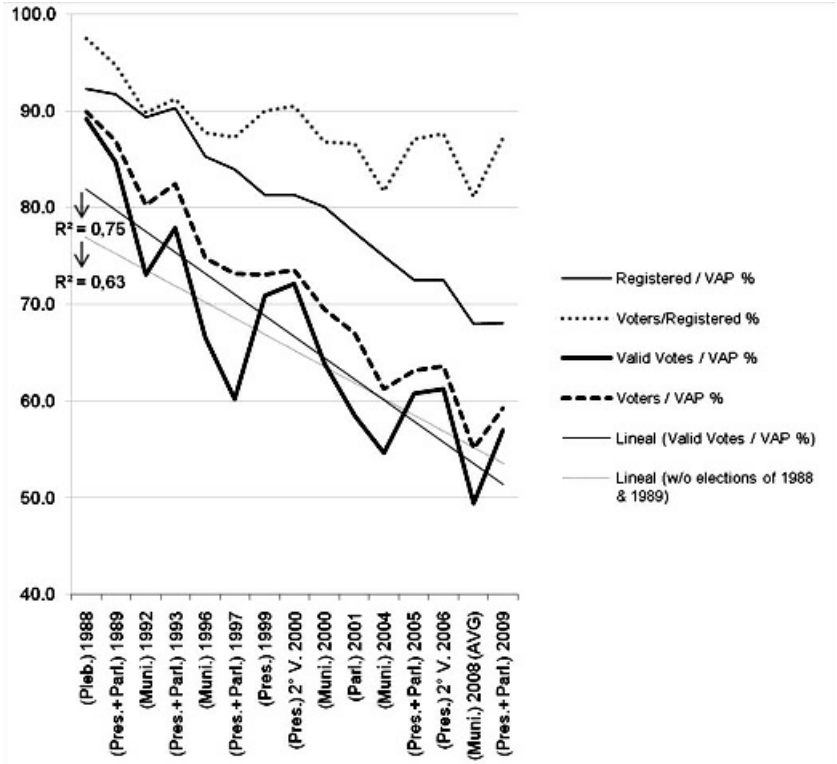
tion of responses obtained in different countries (all of which have seen recent and significant partisan turmoil) when citizens were asked about different ways of seeking changes in the countries they lived in. Chile displays average levels of support for the statement that links political changes to voting behavior, and the greatest percentage of respondents agreeing with the opinion that "change is not possible in the system."

Although these data once again challenge the established view of Chile's party system, they are based not on actual behavior but on responses to public opinion surveys. Actual electoral behavior, however, seems consistent with this evidence. Figure 7 presents data on electoral participation from the beginning of the transition in 1988 to 2008. This figure bluntly expresses the decay in the most basic form of civic engagement: electoral participation.[11]

Although in several broadly used databases Chile appears as a country with constantly high levels of electoral participation (over 80 percent), this is caused by the sole consideration of registered voters (Mainwaring and Scully 2010). However, registration in Chile is an individual right and not a civic obligation, and voting is an obligation only for those who are registered. Once we calculate different measures for electoral participation, the previous figure changes drastically. As figure 7 shows, in different possible operationalizations, electoral participation has significantly declined in the country.

Thus, the evidence in this section lends preliminary support to a hypothesized decline in the legitimacy of parties and electoral processes, once again contradicting the expectation for highly institutionalized party systems. This empirical assessment of the Chilean party system has several implications for the concept of PSI and its current comparative measurement.

Figure 7. Electoral Participation in Chile, 1988–2008



Note: VAP means voting-age population.

CONCLUSIONS

Let us first issue a warning against some possible misinterpretations of our argument in the case. Conventional wisdom on policymaking in Chile (Stein et al. 2006; Mainwaring and Scully 2010; World Bank 2010) tends to relate the country's virtuous policymaking process to the presence of a highly institutionalized party system.[12] We do not argue against such portrayals of the policymaking process; instead, we claim that its virtues might be causally related only to electoral stability (at least as measured through low electoral volatility at the national level), but not to an equivalent evolution of the remaining indicators of PSI (rootedness, legitimacy, and party organizational features). Second, though we bluntly state that the Chilean system shows symptoms of fumbled institutionalization in most of the alternative indicators to electoral volatility that we have discussed here, we do not necessarily contend that Chile

is heading toward party system crisis or collapse. Nor do we mean to imply that the pre-1973 system was more "institutionalized" (or for that matter, normatively better) than the current system.

We are more interested in the analytical implications of the Chilean case for the comparative analysis of party systems than in entertaining teleological or normative speculations on the historical and future evolution of this particular case. From this perspective, what posttransitional Chile conveys to us is a combination of PSI indicators that runs against one fundamental assumption built into the PSI concept and its current measurement (i.e., that the four dimensions are linearly related and evolve jointly).

Therefore, our evidence shows that in a prototypical case of an institutionalized party system, the four dimensions currently integrated into one-dimensional PSI indexes do not empirically relate linearly. Indeed, we have shown that in Chile, decreasing national-level electoral volatility combines with decreasing party roots in society, decreasing legitimacy, and the weakening of partisan organizations as institutions.

In our view, the nonlinear relationship between PSI indicators we have described can be interpreted in at least two ways. Those alternative readings have different implications for the concept and this case. However, we will argue that both readings are possibly complementary. One possible interpretation is to take the inconsistency created by the joint presence of stable but uprooted parties as just a byproduct of having electoral volatility as an indicator of PSI. In this reading, the one-dimensional (positive linear) conceptual structure proposed by Mainwaring and Scully is not challenged. Instead, the inconsistency relates to a faulty operationalization of the "stability" dimension through the use of electoral volatility measures at the national level.

A focus on volatility would therefore yield important blind spots. For instance, comparing the evolution of electoral volatility over time as an indicator of PSI, we would run the risk of placing Brazil and Chile at polar extremes of an institutionalization continuum at one time period, while ignoring that increased (Brazil) or constant (Chile) stability might obscure the consolidation over time of uprooted party systems in both cases. Venezuela in the 1990s, a case described as institutionalized in Mainwaring and Scully's original work and one that had low levels of electoral volatility at the time, witnessed a rapid party system collapse a few years down the road (Morgan 2007). In sum, both the temporal evolution of electoral volatility in regard to other dimensions of PSI in cases such as Brazil, Venezuela, and Chile, and the evidence presented for Chile in this article, suggest that electoral volatility is often not positive-linearly correlated to other indicators or dimensions of PSI.

This is important because electoral volatility is often taken as a lead indicator for other dimensions of PSI, and is, by far, the one most fre-

quently used—in isolation—as a proxy for institutionalization in comparative analyses. In our view, electoral volatility is ill-equipped to capture the undercurrents of change that hinder the survival of electorally stable (as per volatility estimates) but otherwise weak party systems. Especially if all other dimensions and indicators were to behave linearly, as in Chile, in a reasonable number of additional empirical instances, it might be necessary to consider the substitution of electoral volatility as an indicator for the stability dimension.

The second possible interpretation for the evidence we have presented in relation to the concept of PSI is to argue that the conceptual structure (not a mere indicator) of PSI is misleading. In this view, we might want to think of PSI as a multidimensional concept, composed by several dimensions that might relate to each other in nonlinear ways. In other words, the current structure of the concept implies an "all good things go together" assumption, and thus neglects potential trade-offs between different dimensions of the concept. Electorally stable but otherwise weak party systems are theoretically neglected in the structure of the concept. Intertemporal trade-offs between dimensions are also obscured. For instance, if we take volatility as a leading indicator for other dimensions of PSI, as the literature frequently does, party systems that pursue a successful realignment (one that temporarily creates some electoral volatility but contributes in the long run to greater rootedness or legitimacy) are penalized. At the same time, "frozen" party systems, which are stable but become increasingly detached from civil society, get a premium, at least until their volatility increases significantly.

In light of this second reading, the current structure of the concept might be substituted by a structure built around a set of "necessary and sufficient" dimensions (see Goertz 2005). Although it is more intensive and less extensive, this type of conceptual structure seems more appropriate to us, in order to account for the complex reality of party systems in developing nations. In a nutshell, this conceptual structure would theoretically entertain the possibility of observing (perhaps for extended periods of time) party systems exhibiting "paradoxical" configurations, such as those described for Chile in this article, without triggering an immediate (or inescapable) collapse. Moreover, a multidimensional definition of PSI could also integrate, as dimensions, emerging concepts in the party system literature, such as the degrees of party system nationalization or vertical integration.

The case of Chile illustrates the different implications that could be derived from these two alternative readings regarding concept structure and measurement. If the first reading were accurate, low volatility estimates simply mask party system deinstitutionalization in Chile, running contrary to the conventional optimism with which that system is frequently described and admired (Mainwaring and Scully 2010). However,

if the second reading sketched above were more accurate than the first, the case of Chile would approximate, in a two-dimensional conceptual structure, the ideal type of stable but uprooted party systems (a), lacking one of the necessary and sufficient conditions (rootedness) to be considered fully institutionalized. Such configuration differs from three other ideal types: stable and rooted (b), volatile and uprooted (c), and volatile and rooted (d). While types b (fully institutionalized) and c (inchoate) conform to the "all good things go together" assumption (and teleology) built into the original concept, types a and d might eventually be needed to better accommodate the empirical complexity that characterizes the configuration and evolution of contemporary party systems.

We think the two possible readings sketched here are both partly correct and thus complementary. If such were the case, the conceptual structure and the operationalization of PSI would both require significant improvements. If confirmed by future research, the presence of a nonlinear relationship among dimensions of PSI should therefore trigger conceptual and measurement refinements, building on Mainwaring and Scully's groundbreaking contribution to the study of party systems.

NOTES

1. See Luna forthcoming for an extensive argument along these lines.

2. For a discussion on the concept of "ecological fallacy," see King 1997.

3. The tension on the units of analysis to study has been a constant headache for those studying the Chilean party system.

4. This and the following section draw on evidence presented in Luna 2006, 2008.

5. "Theoretically, we prefer the information about party identification because party realignment should be measured by stable elements of party preference, such as PID (party identification) instead of vote, which depends more on short-term changes in public opinion" (Torcal and Mainwaring 2003, 60).

6. The questions representing these three issues are the following: a) 1–10 scale with 1 representing complete agreement with the following sentence: "Incomes should be made more equal" and 10 representing complete agreement with the following statement: "We need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort." b) 1–4 scale reflecting agreement with the following statement: "Democracy may have problems but it is better than any other form of government." c) 1–10 scale with 1 representing "Always justifiable" and 10 "Never justifiable" in response to the question, "Is abortion justifiable?" Full documentation of this analysis is available from the authors.

7. A similar result is presented by Ruiz-Rodríguez (2003), who shows that symbolic polarization has increased in the system while substantive polarization has trended downward.

8. While the 1995 time frame might be consistent with Torcal and Mainwaring's claim that political cleavages might be transitory, from a conceptual standpoint, this is virtually a contradiction in terms, because cleavages are usu-

ally thought of as somewhat more durable. It might be useful to substitute Mainwaring and Torcal's 2005 notion of "political cleavage" for the less restrictive "transitional divides." On the one hand, the notion of "divide" is more consistent with the transitory nature of posttransitional alignments that Torcal and Mainwaring identify as "cleavages"; thus it solves the contradiction built into their original concept. On the other hand, a "divide" is not only more transient but also weaker and less pervasive than a cleavage. Therefore, this notion can better accommodate the "anomalies" we have described in this article, regarding a case conventionally portrayed as virtuously institutionalized after having overhauled its cleavage structure.

9. Full documentation on these factor analyses is available in Luna 2006.

10. During her electoral campaign, Bachelet announced, "*Yo espero que en mi gobierno ningún ministro se repita el plato.*" Public discourse at a campaign seminar organized by the Asociación Nacional de Empleados Fiscales (ANEF), reported by *El Mercurio* (2005).

11. This blatant decay persists even without considering the plebiscite of 1988 or the elections of 1989. Indeed, as the figure illustrates, the coefficient of determination, R2, for the complete series is 0.75; without considering the aforementioned votes, it remains highly statistically significant at 0.64.

12. See, e.g., World Bank 2010.

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