

Country Case: Chile



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POL 002: Introduction to Comparative Politics

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Outline

1. Chile in context
2. Chile and democratization
3. Chile and legislative organization
4. Chile's electoral & party systems
5. Electoral reform in Chile
6. Constitutional reform in Chile

Chile In Context



Capital: Santiago, Chile



Legislative Capital: Valparaiso, Chile



The 1973 Coup



How the Dictatorship Fell in 1988

The Fall of Pinochet, Dramatized



Chile and Democratization Theory

- Why did the coup occur?
- The Allende government was threatening elites with redistribution
- The military, which is *risk-averse*, received covert support from the US government
- Why?
 - Cold war
 - US financial interests

Chile and Democratization Theory

- Why did the dictatorship end?
- Pressure from:
 - Big business
 - International community
- Mass protest
- Unease with Pinochet within the military

The 1990 Constitution

- Negotiated between dictatorship and the opposition
- Added protections for human rights and political parties
- Single four-year terms for presidents
- Also included many features disliked by the opposition, but that the dictatorship was unwilling to negotiate on
- Overwhelmingly approved by national referendum

Chile: Legislative Organization

Chilean Legislative Structure

- The constitution of 1990 created a powerful presidency and a reactive legislature
- The president is the dominant legislative actor
- Oversight mechanisms possessed by congress are weak
- For the outgoing regime that largely crafted the constitution, this balance of power is a feature, not a bug
- The Right is overrepresented by the electoral system and extremely high quorums are needed to change the constitution

Table 1.1. Laws promulgated during the first two postauthoritarian governments (numbers and percentages by origin)

Aylwin Administration (1990–1993)			
Session	Total Laws	Executive Origin	Legislative Origin
1990	153	139	14
1991	123	110	13
1992	112	105	7
1993	52	50	2
Total	440	404	36
% total	100	91.8	8.2

Frei Administration (1994–1997)			
Session	Total Laws	Executive Origin	Legislative Origin
1994	77	61	16
1995	70	49	21
1996	52	40	12
1997	54	40	14
Total	253	190	63
% total	100	75.1	24.9

SOURCE: Congreso Nacional de Chile.

Chile: The Pre-Reform Electoral System

The 1970 Presidential Election

- Electoral system type: absolute majority system
 - One-round popular vote
 - If no candidate receives 50%, the top-two are voted on in the National Congress
 - This variant on the popular vote is no longer used

	Party	Ideology	Vote
Salvador Allende	Socialist	Left	39.1
Jorge Alessandri	Independent	Right	35.3
Radomiro Tomic	Christian Democrat	Centrist	28.1

Elections Under The 1990 Constitution

- Chamber of deputies (lower house)
 - The “binominal” electoral system
 - S=120
 - Four-year terms
- Two-round runoff system for presidential elections
- Senate
 - Eight-year terms, half up every election
 - Initially some Senators were elected, others are unelected military appointees
 - Appointed seats were eliminated in 2005

The 1989 Presidential Election

- Electoral system type: two-round popular vote
 - If no candidate receives 50%, the top-two advance to a runoff

	Coalition	Ideology	Vote
Patricio Aylwin	Concertación	Center-Left	55.2
Hernán Büchi	Independent	Right (Pinochetista)	29.4
Francisco Javier Errázuriz Talavera	Independent	Right (populist)	15.4

The 2013 Presidential Election: Round 1

	Coalition	Ideology	Vote
Michelle Bachelet	PS/New Majority	Center-Left/Left	46.7
Evelyn Matthei	UDI/Alliance	Center-Right/Right	25
Marco Enriquez-Ominami	PRO/Chile Changes, If You Want It	Center	11
Franco Parisi	Independent	Center	10.1
Others		Various	7.2

The 2013 Presidential Election: Round 2

	Coalition	Ideology	Vote
Michelle Bachelet	PS/New Majority	Center-Left/Left	62.2
Evelyn Matthei	UDI/Alliance	Center-Right/Right	37.8

The 2017 Presidential Election: Round 1

	Coalition	Ideology	Vote
Alejandro Guiller	The Force of the Majority	Center-Left/Left	22.7
Sebastian Piñera	Chile Vamos	Center-Right/Right	36.6
Beatriz Sánchez	Independent	Left	20.3
Others		Various	19.5

The 2017 Presidential Election: Round 2

	Coalition	Ideology	Vote
Alejandro Guiller	The Force of the Majority	Center-Left/Left	45.4
Sebastian Piñera	Chile Vamos	Center-Right/Right	54.6

Legislative Elections

- Chile's party system before the dictatorship was fragmented
- Presidential systems encourage consolidation around legislative parties who can field presidential candidates
- Chile also used a low district magnitude electoral system
 - $M=2$ in all districts
 - Sometimes called the “sistema binominal”
- Despite this, Chile had lots of vote-winning and seat-winning parties!

Party Fragmentation?

- 1989 Chamber of Deputies election results:

Coalition	Party	Votes	%	Seats
Coalition of Parties for Democracy	Christian Democratic Party	1,766,347	26.0	38
	Party for Democracy	778,501	11.5	16
	Radical Party	268,103	3.9	5
	Humanist Party	52,225	0.8	1
	The Greens	14,942	0.2	0
	Independents	619,595	9.1	9
Democracy and Progress	National Renewal	1,242,432	18.3	29
	Independent Democratic Union	667,369	9.8	11
	Independents	413,780	6.1	8
Unity for Democracy	Broad Party of Socialist Left	297,897	4.4	2
	Democratic Socialist Radical Party	1,330	0.0	0
	Independents	61,374	0.9	0

What If We Look At the Alliance-level Results?

1989

1993

1997

Alliance	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats
Concertación	53.3	57.5	55.1	58.3	50.5	57.5
Alianza	34.9	40	36.7	41.7	36.3	39.2
Others	11.8	2.5	7.9	0	13.2	3.3

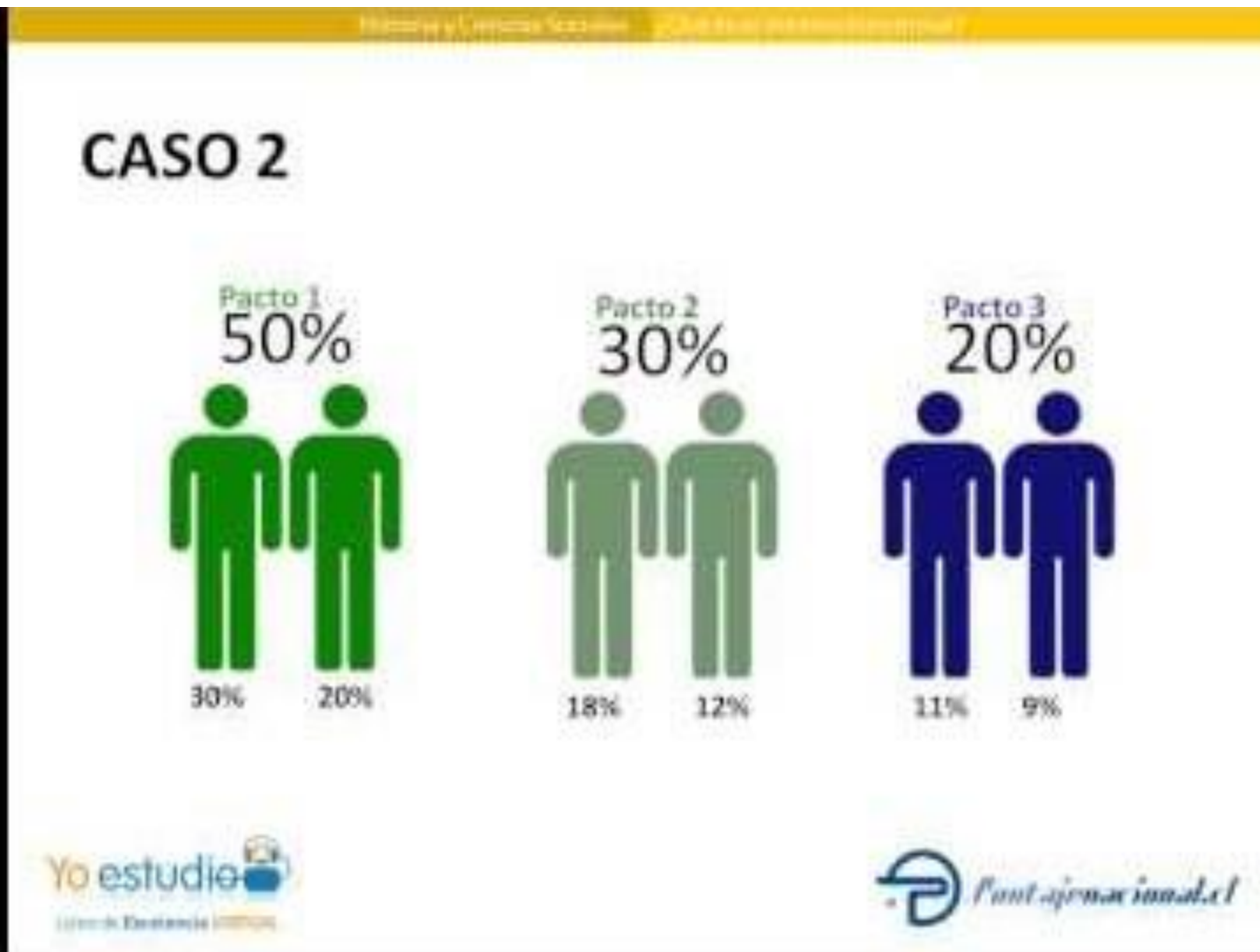
2001

2005

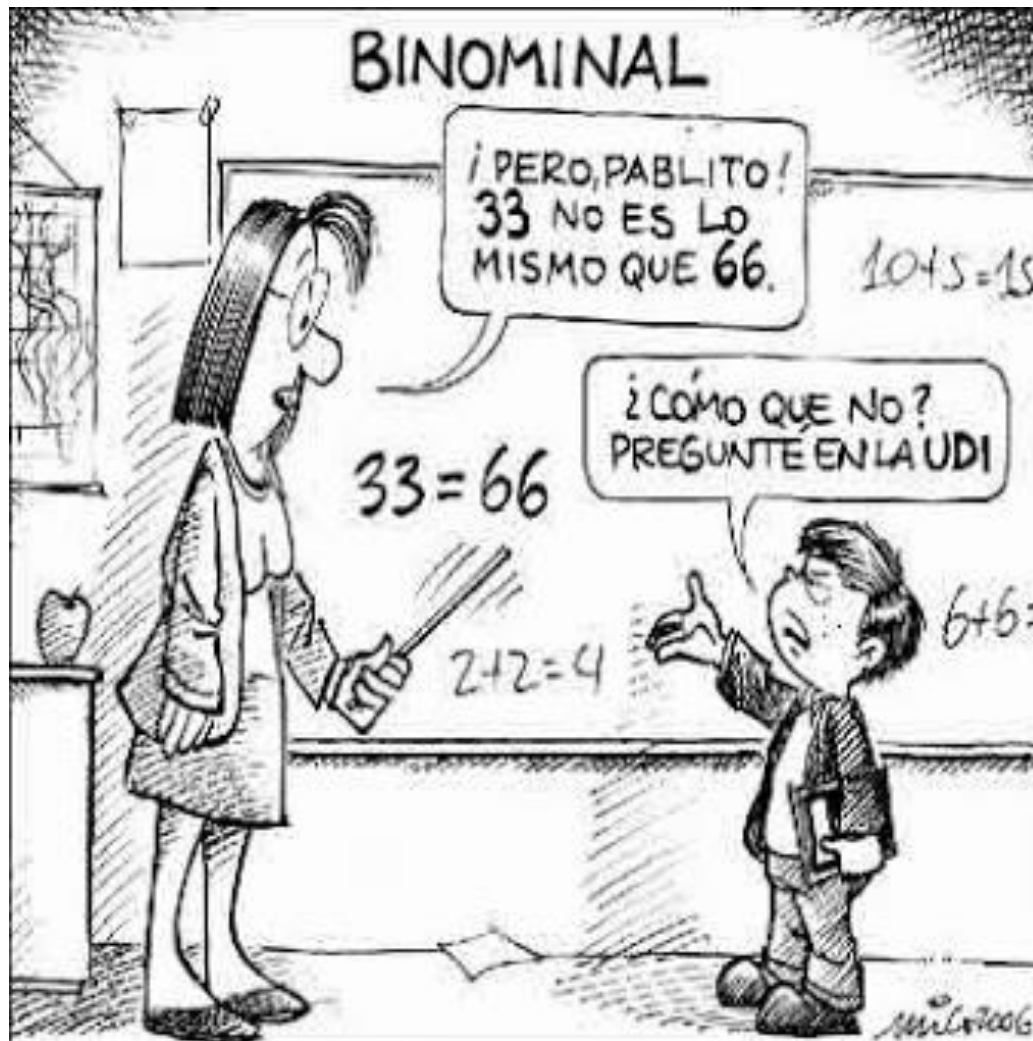
2009

Alliance	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats
Concertación	47.9	51.7	51.8	54.2	44.4	47.5
Alianza	44.3	47.5	38.7	45	43.5	48.3
Others	7.8	0	9.5	0	12.1	4.2

The Pre-reform Electoral System, Explained



The “Binominal” Electoral System



The Chilean Party System

- From 1989-2009, the Concertación dominated the presidency and Chamber of Deputies
- How did the Concertación hold onto power so long?
- In part by convincing strong candidates to run in marginal list positions in Chile's M=2 districts
- How could they convince their strongest candidates to run for less safe seats?
- The “insurance” system gives these candidates appointed posts should they lose

Electoral Reform in Chile

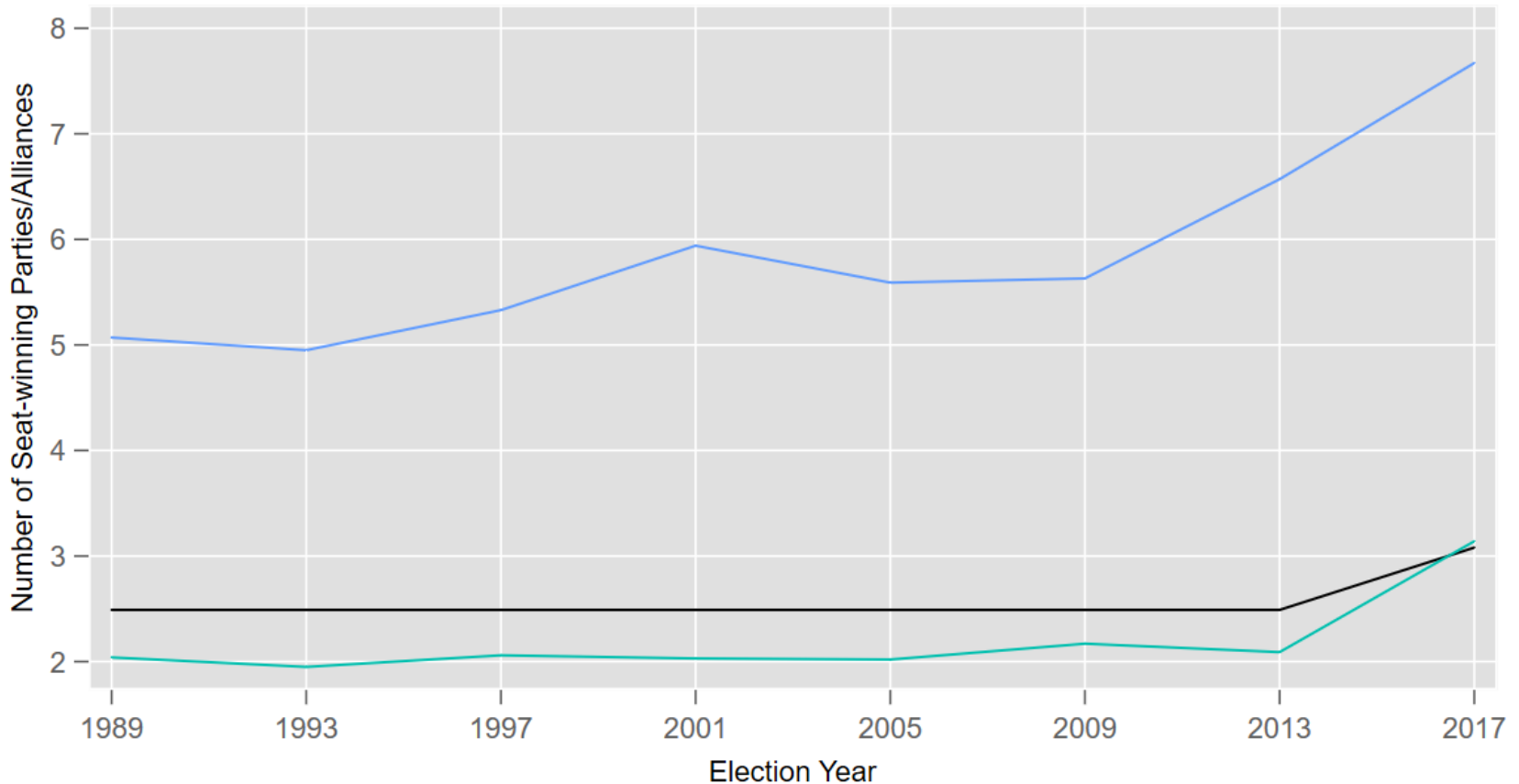
Electoral Reform in Chile

- Chile conducted electoral reform in 2015
 - Now there are 28 Chamber of Deputies districts, with M from 3-8
 - The Senate has 15 districts, with M from 2-5
- This reform is a definite improvement
 - The changes are more modest in the Senate
- Recall: what effect does increasing district magnitude (M) have?

Electoral Reform and the Party System

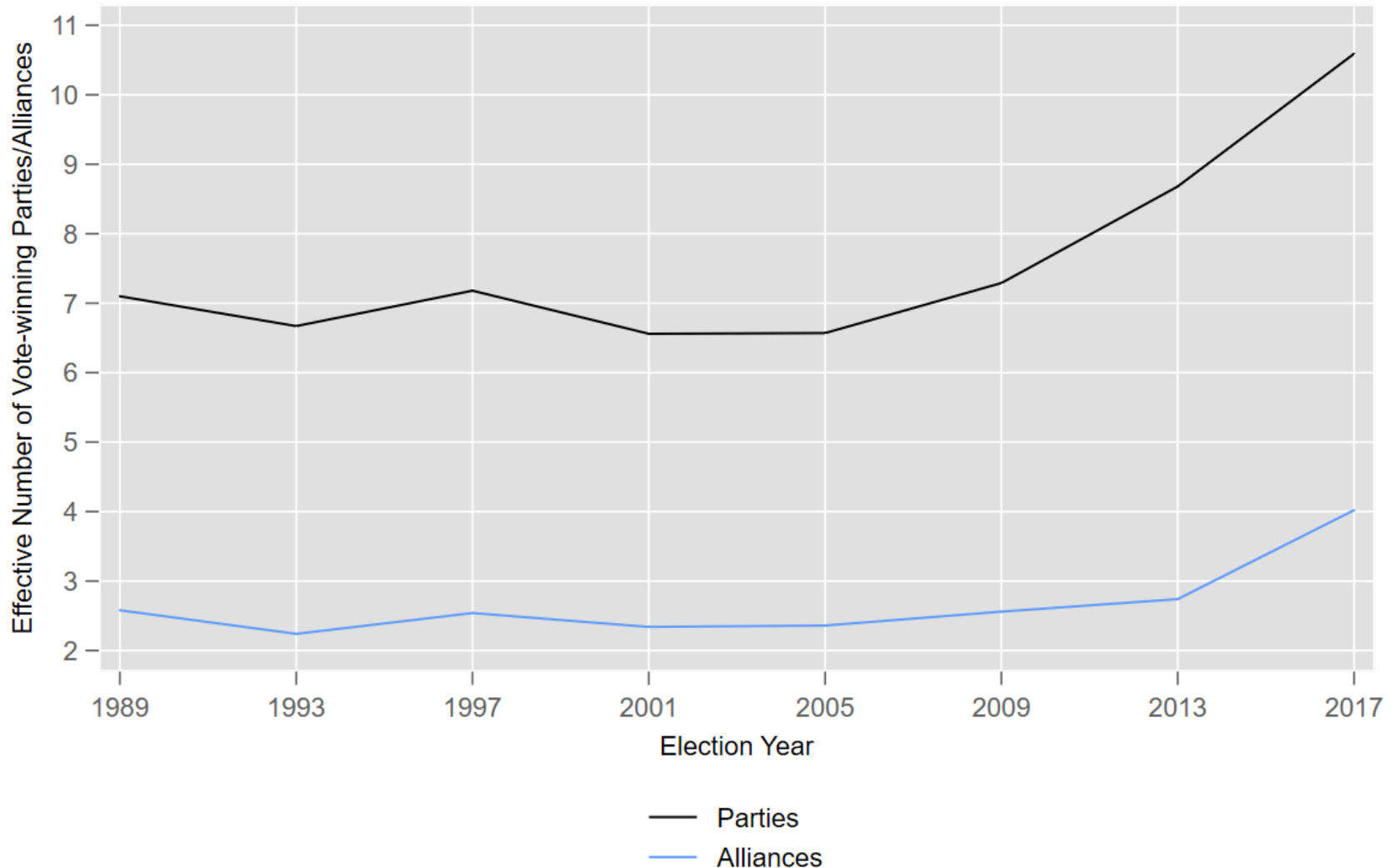
Party	2009		2013		2017 (reform)	
	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats
Concertación /Nueva Mayoría	44.4	47.5	47.7	55.8	24.1	27.7
Alianza	43.5	48.3	36.2	40.8	38.7	46.4
Others	12.1	4.2	16.1	2.3	37.2	25.9

Reform & the Number of Seat-Winning Parties

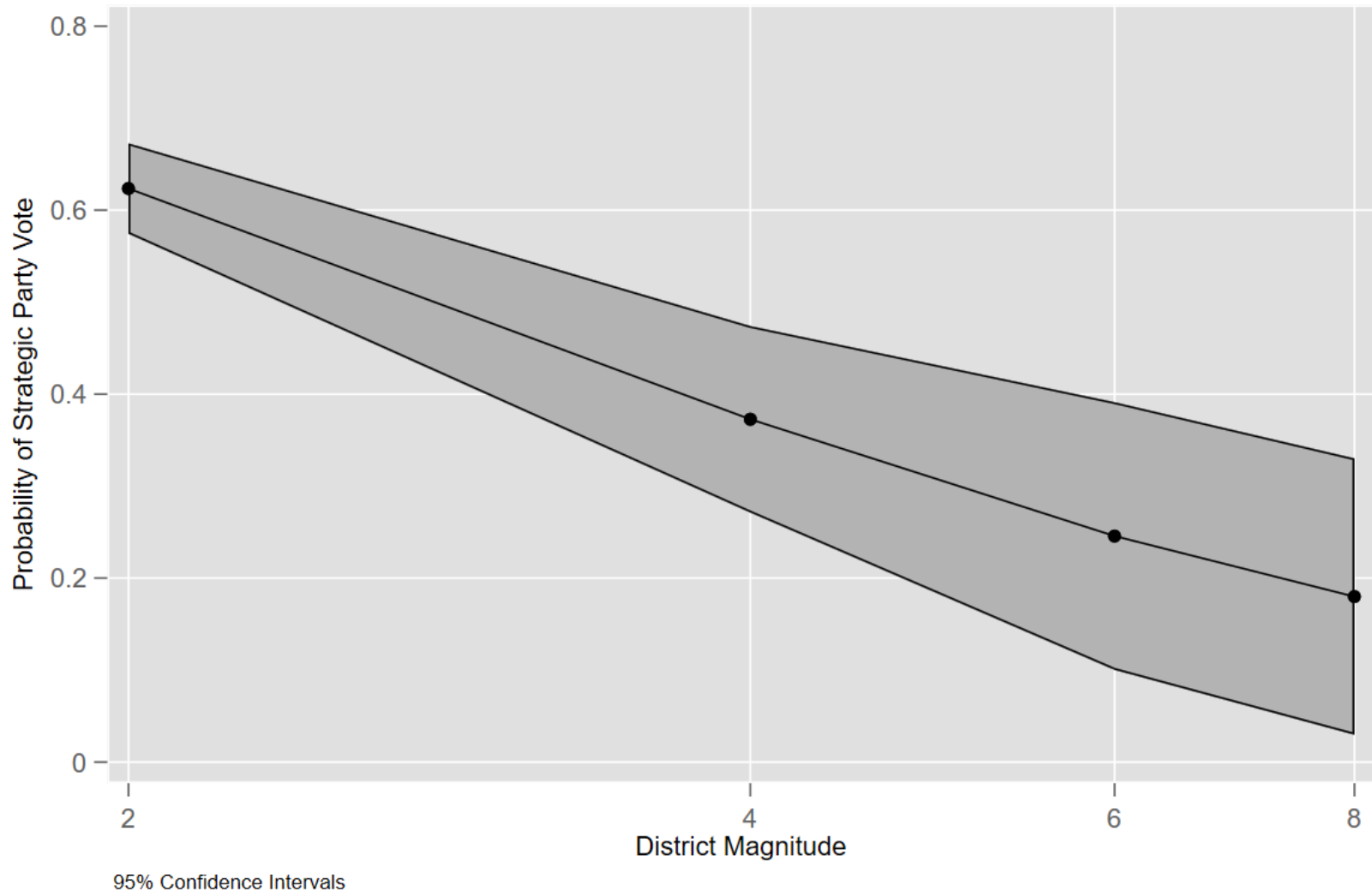


- Expected Effective Number of Seat-winning Parties
- Observed Number of Seat-winning Parties
- Observed Number of Seat-winning Alliances

Reform & the Number of Vote-Winning Parties



Electoral Reform & Strategic Voting



Constitutional Reform in Chile

The 2006 Student Protests

- In 2006, high school students engaged in mass protest
- Short-term demands: free transit passes, no application fee to universities
- Long-term demands: quality education for all, abolition of the Pinochet-era education law “LOCE”
- The protests led President Bachelet to make major reforms
- Many students were left unsatisfied, and protests flared again in 2008

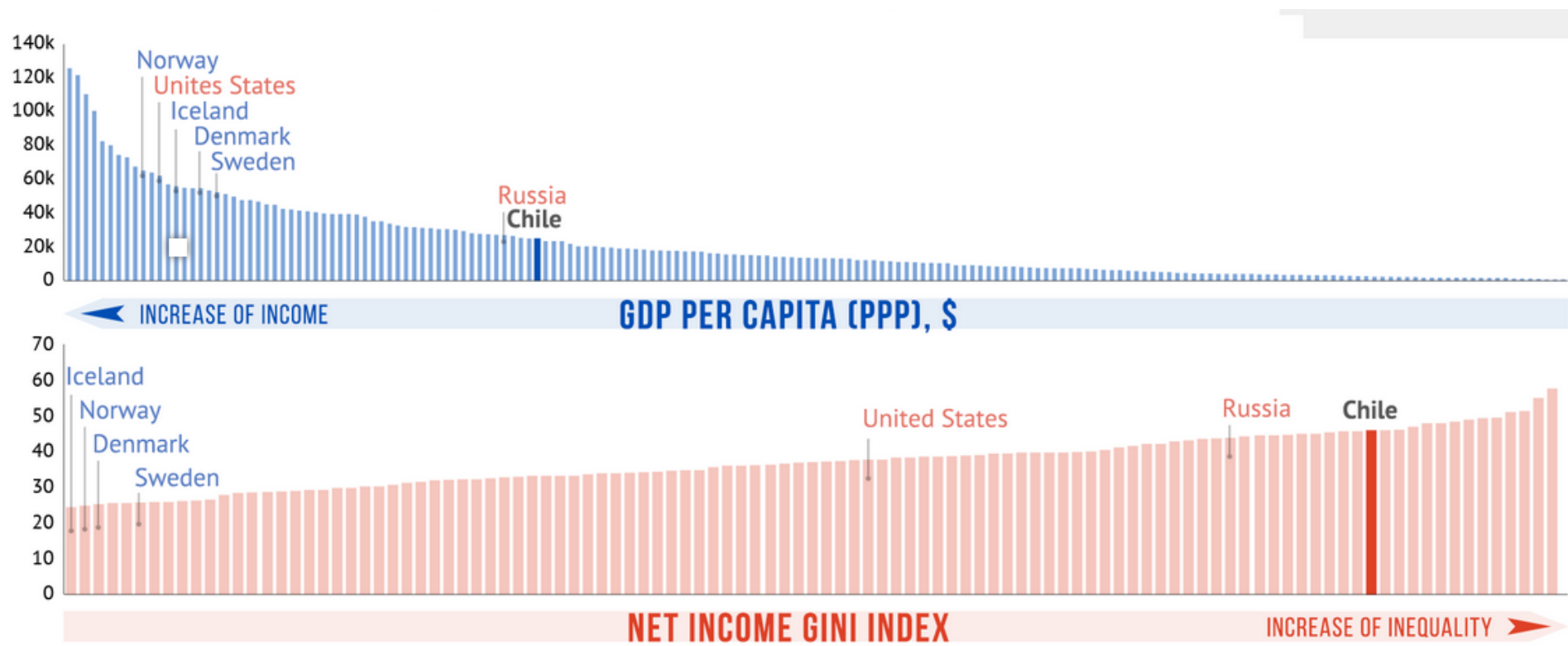
“March of the Penguins”



The 2011-2013 Student Protests

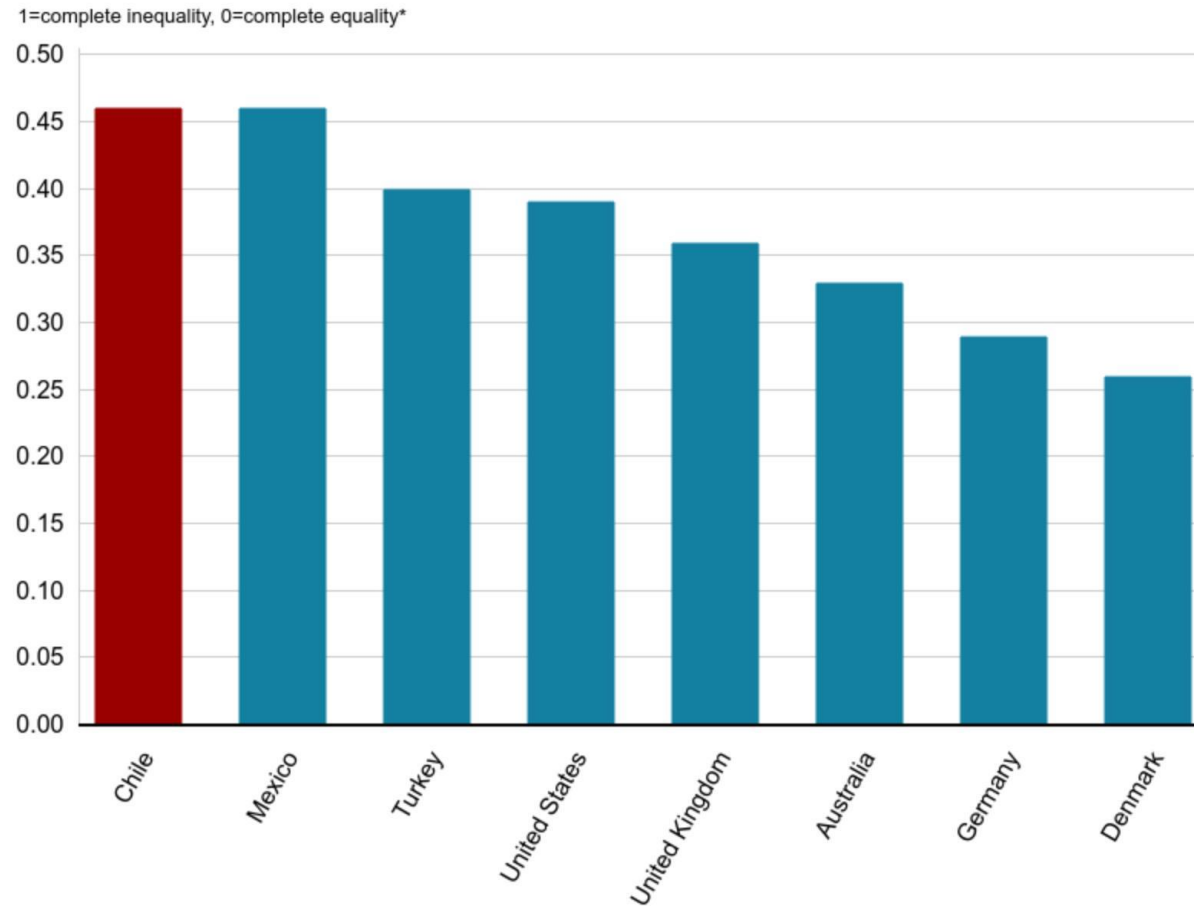
- Many problems were still unaddressed
- Over 45% of students were in public high schools, and most universities were also private
 - Chile's schools are some of the most expensive in the world
- In 2011, mass protests began against President Sebastián Piñera
- The protests more generally reflected frustration with high inequality

Extremely High Inequality



Income inequality

How Chile ranks among OECD nations in the gap between the richest and the rest



*Compares cumulative proportions of the population against cumulative proportions of income they receive.
Key nations shown among 35 OECD members ranked

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

BBC

The Student Protests



**STUDENT
POWER**

The 2019-2020 Protests

- In 2019, Santiago raised metro fare
- High school students organized a fare evasion campaign
- It started with the metro fare... but it quickly became a much bigger protest against inequality, the high cost of living, and privatization
- Metro stations were seized by protestors, and Piñera deployed the army
- The “Chilean Spring”

The 2019 Protests



The Guardian

After a COVID Hiatus, The Protests Returned



The Constitutional Referendum

- Under massive pressure, the government agreed to a constitutional referendum in October 2020

- Q1:

New Constitution?	2020 Vote %
Yes	78
No	22

- Q2:

Who writes it?	2020 Vote %
Mixed convention	21
Constitutional convention	79

The Future Is Uncertain, But Wide Open



CHILE
REFERENDUM

Questions?