

Elections 2013: Configuration of a New Electoral Scenario

Our political system has suffered a number of changes. Automatic registration and voluntary voting have incorporated a great quota of uncertainty in our electoral scenario. Based on the preliminary nomination list recently presented at the Electoral Service, we observe a bigger political segmentation in the political scene. In this perspective, a definition on a runoff election gains still more strength regarding the presidential poll.

Once the registration period for presidential, parliamentary and regional advisors' nominations closed on Monday August 19th, the scenario on which the respective candidates, political parties, pacts and coalitions shall face the election on next November was configured. An overview of the nominations presented at the Electoral Service allows visualizing a more segmented electoral scene, but in general the incumbency factor lies within the historical range as of 1993, and women's participation shows a moderate increase, being higher in the Alliance pact than in the New Majority.

A Segmented Scenario

Our political system has suffered a number of changes, from both an institutional and political viewpoint. The implementation of automatic registration and voluntary voting has incorporated a great quota of uncertainty in our electoral scenario. As a result of today's institutional conditions, new political factions and sensibilities see an opportunity to emerge again in the political scene.

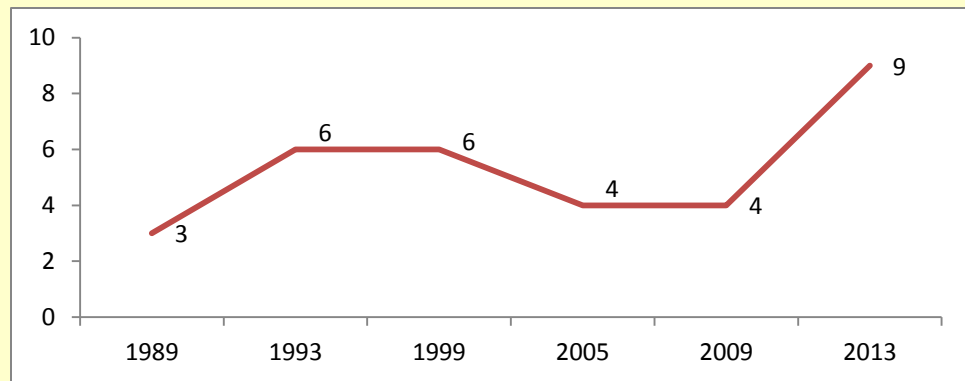
Since there is no previous voter registration record, characterized for being frozen, there are incentives for the configuration of new political groups and pacts which try to capitalize and add new political preferences. This is the situation in Chile, on the verge of presidential, parliamentary and regional advisors' elections.

The first thing that calls our attention when observing the preliminary nominationsⁱ presented at the Electoral Service is the increased number of candidates registered for President of the Republic (see Chart 1). This political segmentation is not trivial in the light of the analysis of the electoral

prospection. In a more segmented scenario, the possibility of a definition on a runoff election gains still more strength, but at the same time it introduces a complexity quota concerning the support and backing structure that each pact needs to prepare the decisive *ballotage* scenario.

Chart 1

NUMBER OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN FIRST ROUND
1989-2013

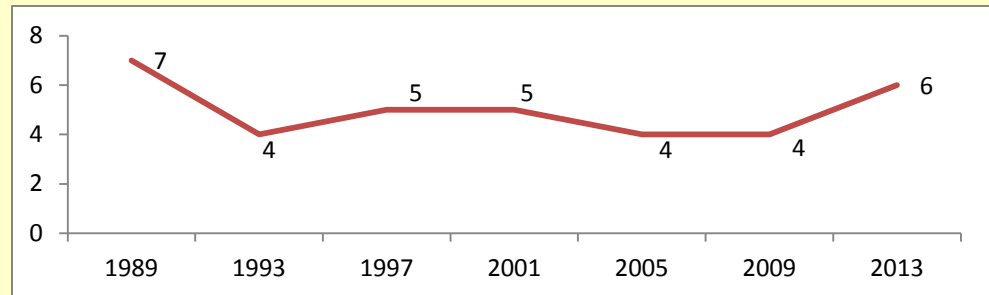


Source: Prepared by L&D based on data from the Electoral Service (SERVEL).

An even more interesting analysis is given by the segmentation visualized in relation to the parliamentary pacts (see Chart 2). The situation is pretty much like the first parliamentary election in 1989, when political forces had to decide how to face the political transition, from the electoral structure perspective, with seven parliamentary electoral pacts. Today we observe a seemingly comparable scenario, although the “political moment” conditions are clearly different. While in 1989 our democratic system was taking up again, in 2013 there is the possibility for new forces to enter the electoral political arena in a fully consolidated democracy. However, a further and very interesting analysis is to observe how the real number of parliament parties will be altered, in order to more precisely assess if this increase is rather a pretension for greater political inclusion, or if it is actually a real political change in the composition of our Congress.

Chart 2

NUMBER OF ELECTORAL PACTS FOR PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS 1989-2013



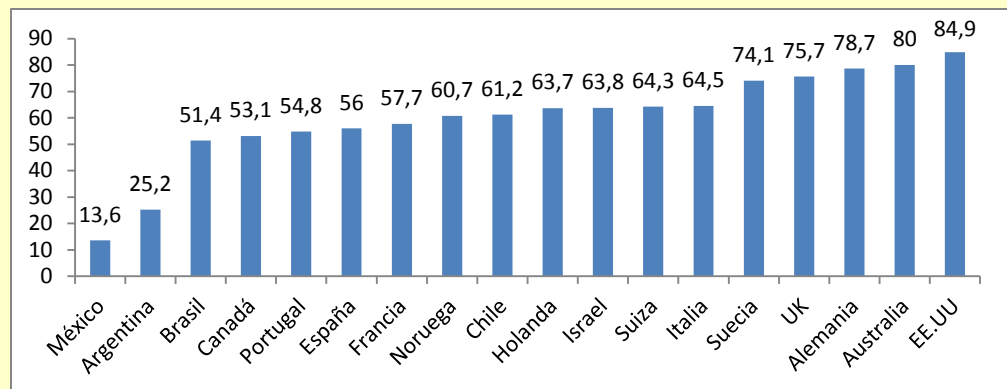
Source: Prepared by L&D based on data from the Electoral Service (SERVEL).

Parliamentary Incumbency Rates

A metrics from which we can draw interesting conclusions in view of the political frames' renovation is the traditional electoral incumbency analysis. By incumbent candidate we understand the person who seeks reelection while holding a (regular) political representation position. Before discussing the current situation, and also considered in a time series analysis, we should mention that in compared evidence, our political system's real incumbency levels (that is, regular candidates that reach reelection) are in the mean of the international standard in the light of compared experience (see Chart 3).

Chart 3

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF AVERAGE REAL INCUMBENCY RATES (%)

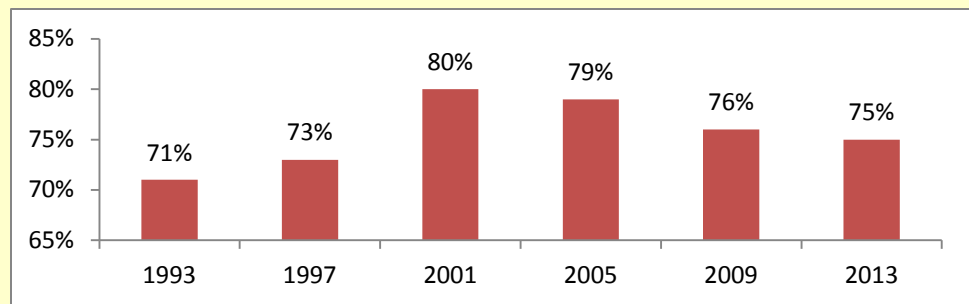


Source: Prepared by L&D based on data from Grupo Res Pública (2013), 95 *Propuestas para un Chile mejor* (95 Proposals for a Better Chile), p. 66.

On the other hand, in Chile the rates of parliament members standing for reelection have followed a pattern fluctuating between 70% and 80% seeking reelection within the same electoral unit (see Chart 4). For 2013, this figure accounts for 75% at the level of deputies and 50% in the Senate. As we previously said, the rate for candidates standing for reelection is different from the real political incumbency, which for Chile has oscillated between 56% and 64% according to the respective election.

Chart 4

PERCENTAGE OF DEPUTIES SEEKING TO BE CANDIDATES FOR REELECTION 1993-2013 IN THE SAME ELECTORAL UNIT



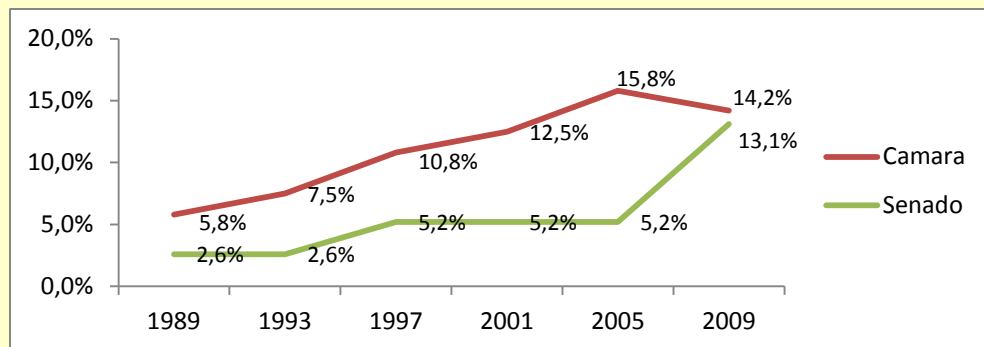
Source Prepared by L&D based on data from Apablaza (2010) and complement of preliminary nominations' list presented at the Electoral Service.

Women's Participation

The issue of women's political involvement has been an emergent subject in the public discussion. As a response to a general diagnosis which sees low women inclusion figures in the political sphere with concern, legislative initiatives have come up that – in a more maximalist viewpoint – recommend setting up a quota system – or in a more moderate line – seek to generate a monetary incentive structure for the presentation of women candidates by partisan groups (Bulletin 8876-06). However, it is necessary to note that, at least in the parliament sphere, a major women's inclusion has been achieved when considering the phenomenon from a time perspective (see Chart 5). Along the same line, it does not seem trivial that the two candidates with best possibilities in the presidential scenario are precisely of the female gender: Michelle Bachelet and Evelyn Matthei. The latter constitutes a symbolic element which we believe contributes to and materializes the full acceptance of the role of women in the political arena.

Chart 5

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS (1989 – 2009)



Source: Prepared by L&D based on data from www.elecciones.gov.cl

In relation to women's political inclusion figures in the parliamentary sphere, in 2009, 71 women stood for candidates for the Chamber of Deputies, which was equal to 17% of the total number of candidates for the Chamber. From these 71 women candidates, 17 were elected, representing 14% of the Chamber of Deputies.

In the 2013 scenario, and still with preliminary data, we observe that a slightly higher number of women will participate in the race for the Chamber of Deputies. Without considering the total independent out-of-pact candidates nor the parliamentary pact's candidates (*Izquierda Unida-Partido Ecologista* (United Left-Green Party) and *Partido Igualdad* (Equality Party)), 73 women presented their personal records before the Electoral Service (SERVEL, in Spanish) in order to participate in the upcoming elections of November. Therefore, we hope that this figure will increase. Notwithstanding the above, although in relative terms we observe a slight increase of women candidates' percentage in relation to the total number of candidates (18% for the present year 2013), this figure is subject to the result of the SERVEL's final ratification.

On the other hand, if we compare the two big coalitions in the sphere of women's inclusion, we observe that the *Alianza* pact will present more women candidates for the Chamber of Deputies than the New Majority pact. The Alliance will present 25 women, equivalent to 21% of the total candidates of their list, and the New Majority will present 18 women, equivalent to 15% of the total candidates of their list. In the Senate, both the Alliance and the new Majority will present three candidates, equivalent to 17% of the total of their senatorial grids.

Conclusions

Based on the preliminary nomination list recently presented at the Electoral Service, we observe a stronger political segmentation in the political scene. This is not trivial in the light of the analysis of the electoral prospection. In this perspective, a definition on a runoff election gains still more strength regarding the presidential poll.

Concerning political renovation matters, the rates of parliament members standing for reelection have followed a pattern fluctuating between 70% and 80% seeking reelection within the same electoral unit. For 2013, this figure accounts for 75% at the level of deputies and 50% in the Senate.

In the sphere of women's political participation, and still with preliminary data, we observe that a slightly higher number of women will participate in the race for the Chamber of Deputies. We observe that the *Alianza* pact will present more women candidates for the Chamber of Deputies than the New Majority pact. While the Alliance will present 25 women, equivalent to 21% of the total candidates of their list, the New Majority will present 18 women, equivalent to 15% of the total candidates of their list.

In brief...

- In a more segmented scenario, the possibility of a definition on a runoff election gains still more strength. This segmentation is also foreseeable in the parliamentary pacts.
- The real incumbency levels (candidates that wish to be reelected) of our political system are in the mean of the international standard in the light of compared experience.
- The *Alianza* pact will present more women candidates for the Chamber of Deputies than the New Majority pact.

ⁱ The report considers the preliminary nominations of five from six electoral pacts (it does not include the pact called New Constitution of the United left (*Nueva Constitución de la Izquierda Unida*), Green Party (*Partido Ecologista*) and Equality Party (*Partido Igualdad*) nor independent candidates. The definitive nomination lists of candidates approved by the SERVEL will be published on Sunday August 18th.

References

- Apablaza, Carolina. *Elecciones 2009: Renovación política y comportamiento electoral en 2ª vuelta*. Serie Informe Programa Sociedad y Política LyD, 2010.
- Grupo Res Pública. *95 Propuestas para un Chile mejor*, 2013.