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**THE STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL CONFLICT: KINSHIP
NETWORKS AND POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS IN THE CIVIL
WARS OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHILE**

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

Based on a novel database of kinship relations among the political elites of Chile in the nineteenth century, this thesis identifies the impact of family networks on the formation of political factions in the period 1828-1894. The sociological literature theorising the cleavages that divided elites during the initial phases of state formation has focused on three domains: 1) The conflict between an expanding state and the elites; 2) the conflict between different economic elites; and 3) the conflict between cultural and ideological blocs. This thesis develops a fourth approach referred to as Florentine, which builds on a tradition of historical and sociological research focused on the Italian city-states of the Renaissance. The Florentine approximation is elitist and relational: elitist because it imputes overwhelming power to the oligarchy vis-à-vis other groups in society, and relational because its analytical leverage comes from identifying the effects of networks on political outcomes. The most influential tradition in Chilean historiography sees nineteenth-century politics as shaped by the state-oligarchy opposition. Other approaches highlight the importance of economic sectors and ideological cleavages. In contrast, this thesis presents data demonstrating the importance of the family. The principal political conflict in nineteenth-century Chile consisted of neither the state versus the oligarchy, nor the mining versus the landed elites, nor the Liberals versus the Conservatives, but of elite families fighting other elite families. To develop this argument, this thesis utilised an original database with information on the family relations among all 1449 Parliamentarians, Presidents, and Ministers in the period 1828-1894. These data were combined with information on the electoral performance of all Parliamentarians over six decades. The analysis sought to infer the alignment of families during the civil wars of 1829, 1851, 1859 and 1891. Using social network analysis techniques, kinship clusters were identified, and the resulting groups were then contrasted against the electoral data. If a family cluster was well represented in Congresses immediately before the onset of violent conflicts, it was inferred that the family supported the pre-conflict regimes; where a family bloc increased its representation in post-conflict Congresses, it was concluded that its allegiance was with whatever administration took power after the conflict. Once the political allegiance of families was coded this way, substantive differences in the social status, geographic origin, and political party affiliation of the inferred sides were examined. If they did not differ substantially on these accounts but were differentiated by kinship, then it was concluded that the cleavage explaining the conflict at hand was familial. The results obtained using this procedure enabled a historical description of how elite factions formed in Chile. At its oligarchic core, the civil war of 1829 involved three large family clusters: a defeated cluster around the Vicuña clan, and two victorious clusters organised around the Irarrázaval and Vial clans, respectively. Upon the formation of the so-

called Pelucón regime following the civil war, members of the Vial cluster became an internal opposition that would impact the subsequent emergence of political parties. In the years 1849-1851, the Vial and Errázuriz families established an alliance with the defeated faction of 1829 led by the Vicuñas and together formed the Liberal party. At its oligarchic core, the civil war of 1851 pitted the new Liberal party against families located near the Irrarázaval clan in the kinship network. 1859 was the only civil war with no clear familial cleavage because most core families sided against the government, which in turn had a strong base of support among bureaucrats and the bourgeoisie. The Liberal party broke apart during the civil war of 1891, which mirrored the old familial cleavage of 1829. The last chapter shows that the intra-elite divisions that structured conflict in the nineteenth century were abandoned at the turn of the twentieth century, upon the emergence of middle- and working-class parties. Whereas in the first century after independence, elites fought one another, now they all joined the same side of the political spectrum.

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1. Introduction

In September 1811, presbyter Joaquín Larraín candidly told the head of the Chilean army, José Miguel Carrera: “[The Larraín] have all the important seats: I am the president of Congress, my brother-in-law is head of the executive, and my nephew is head of the judiciary. What else could we wish for?” Carrera responded: “And who is the president of the bayonets?”¹ Within two months after this conversation, Carrera and two of his brothers staged a coup-d’état that temporarily removed the Larraíns from power.²

Students of Chilean political history often highlight the cohesion of the country’s elites.³ A less told fact is that they also competed against each other. This thesis follows the Larraín, the Carrera, and other oligarchic families that fought for power in Chile during the nineteenth century. It starts with the civil war of 1829 when presbyter Larraín’s nephew was deposed from office. It ends with the civil war of 1891 when a revolt on the part of Congress thwarted the Presidential aspirations of presbyter Larraín’s great-grand-nephew.⁴

The sociological literature theorising the cleavages that divide elites during the initial phases of state formation has focused on three domains: 1) The conflict between an expanding state and the elites (Centeno 1997; Mann 2012; Tilly 1990); 2) the conflict between different economic elites (Anderson 2013; Wallerstein 2014); and 3) the conflict between cultural and ideological blocs (Gorski 2003). I develop a fourth approach that I call *Florentine*, which builds on a tradition of historical and sociological research focused on the Italian city-states of the Renaissance (Bearman 1993; Hillmann 2008; McLean 2004; Padgett 2010; Padgett and Ansell 1993; Padgett and McLean 2006). The Florentine approach is elite-focused and relational: elite-focused because it imputes dominance to oligarchic families vis-à-vis other groups in society, and relational because its analytical leverage comes from identifying the effects of networks on political outcomes. The most influential tradition in Chilean historiography sees nineteenth-century politics as shaped by the state-oligarchy opposition (Edwards 1928; Encina 1952; Góngora 1986). Other approaches highlight the importance of economic sectors (Zeitlin 1984) and ideological cleavages (Scully 1992). In contrast, I present data demonstrating the importance of the family. The major political conflict in nineteenth-century Chile consisted of neither the state versus the oligarchy, nor the mining versus the banking elites, nor the Liberals versus the Conservatives, but of elite families fighting other elite families.

To develop this argument, I collected an extensive database with information on the family relations among all 1449 Parliamentarians, Presidents, and Ministers in the period 1828-1894. I combined these data with a registry of the composition of each Congress within the same period. Using these data, my analysis sought to infer the alignment of elite families during the civil wars of 1829, 1851, 1859 and

¹ See Diario Militar de José Miguel Carrera: Capítulo II. 4 de Septiembre de 1811 - 2 de Diciembre de 1811 (Carrera 1815).

² The Senate of 1812 turned out to be one of only three occasions in Chilean history with no Larraín representation in Congress. The other are the Congresses of 1965 and 2018.

³ See, for example, (Edwards 1928; Felstiner 1976; Gilbert 2017; Jocelyn-Holt 2014)

⁴ Francisco Ramón Vicuña Larraín and Claudio Vicuña Guerrero, respectively.

1891. Using social network analysis techniques, I identified kinship clusters and then contrasted the resulting groups against the electoral data. The aim was to reveal the allegiance of families during civil wars. If a family cluster was well represented in Congresses immediately before the onset of violent conflicts, I inferred that the family supported the pre-conflict regime; where a family bloc increased its representation in post-conflict Congresses, I concluded that its allegiance was with whatever administration took power after the conflict. Once the political allegiance of families was coded this way, I looked for substantive differences in the social status, geographic origin, and political party affiliation of the inferred sides. If they did not differ substantially on these accounts but were differentiated by kinship, then I concluded that the cleavage explaining the conflict at hand was familial.

The results obtained using this procedure enabled a historical description of how elite factions formed in Chile. At its oligarchic core, the civil war of 1829 involved three large family clusters: a defeated cluster around the Vicuña clan, and two victorious clusters organised around the Irarrázaval and Vial clans, respectively. Upon the formation of the so-called Pelucón regime following the civil war, members of the Vial cluster became an internal opposition that would impact the subsequent emergence of political parties. In the years 1849-1851, the Vial and Errázuriz families established an alliance with the defeated faction of 1829 led by the Vicuñas and together formed the Liberal party. At its oligarchic core, the civil war of 1851 pitted the new Liberal party against families located near the Irarrázaval clan in the kinship network. 1859 is the only civil war with no clear familial cleavage because most core families sided against the government, which in turn had a strong base of support among bureaucrats and the bourgeoisie. The Liberal party broke apart during the civil war of 1891, which mirrored the old familial cleavage of 1829. The last chapter shows that the intra-elite divisions that structured conflict in the nineteenth century were abandoned at the turn of the twentieth century, upon the emergence of middle- and working-class parties. Whereas in the first century after independence, elites fought one another, now they had all joined the same side of the political spectrum.

Toward a Florentine Approach

This thesis follows a tradition in the historical sociology literature that I refer to as *Florentine*, after the ground-breaking research of John Padgett and his collaborators on the elites of Renaissance Florence (Padgett 2010; Padgett and Ansell 1993; Padgett and McLean 2006). The axes defining the Florentine approach are relationality and elitism: relational in the sense that its analytical leverage comes from identifying the impact of networks on political outcomes; elite-focused in that it examines historical periods dominated by oligarchies. Let us consider these two axes next.

Put simply, the relational approach posits that individuals ally with individuals to whom they are related and compete against individuals to whom they are not. Belonging to the same social category or identity group is of secondary importance. This point is not to deny that relations and shared identities often go together. Individuals that share similar traits tend to connect, a phenomenon called “homophily”

(Goodreau, Kitts, and Morris 2009). For example, families that belong to the same political factions are more likely to marry one another. In turn, densely connected communities tend to construct shared identities (Kossinets and Watts 2009). As a result, our social environments tend to consist of people like us. However, the raw material of mobilisation is relations. An empirical prediction of the relational approach is that, in times of political mobilisation, when identities and relationships do not match, relationships trump identities. The relational perspective permits collective agents to be diverse insofar as they are densely interconnected or effectively brokered.

Several studies illustrate this prediction. Padgett and Ansell (1993) find that the sides of the conflict that led to the rise of the Medici family in fifteenth-century Florence were – contrary to common perceptions – economically and socially similar. However, families on both side of the divide belonged to different networks. Other studies on political conflict produce similar results. The sides of the English Civil War (1642-1651) had religious underpinnings, but what mattered the most was not the religion of individuals but that of their social entourage (Bearman, 1993). While most Catholics supported the King, individual Catholics inserted in predominantly Protestant networks tended to support Parliament. In London, the coalition that fought against the king was diverse but was made coherent by the activities of segments of the merchant class whose networks spanned the different groups (Hillmann 2008). In these empirical studies, political actors conventionally thought to be socially coherent are shown not to be so. Instead, they were part of joint networks or counted with an active brokerage.⁵

The second axis of the Florentine approach is the idea that the essential features of society are shaped by elite dynamics. The first to systematise an elite-focused approach were the Italian thinkers Gaetano Mosca (1980), Vilfredo Pareto (1968), and Robert Michels (1915) in the first decades of the twentieth century. They proposed that the dominant actors of society can change but hierarchy *per se* cannot: all cultures have elites. Elites will claim to represent the interests of the majority, but their real motivation is to reap the benefits of power for themselves. The few can rule over the majority, these authors argue, because they are organised, something that is facilitated by their small size. The majority, on the contrary, is disorganised. A member of the majority, even if she is adversarial toward the elite, will find it hard to secure the help of others. On top of the organisational advantage, the elites rule over the majority because they control some vital resource like wealth, weapons, or knowledge. The elite theory was formulated against the rise of socialism in the early twentieth century, which envisioned a society without social classes. Not only a classless society is impossible, Michels (1915) says, but Socialist parties themselves are prone to the same oligarchic tendencies of other parties.

Elite and dominant class – as encountered in the Marxist literature – should be differentiated. A social class is a broad category of individuals with similar access to wealth and prestige. Elites are small, organised groups that wield political authority and compete over state power. For example, instead of

⁵ See McLean (2004, 2011) for a network-based account of the formation of political factions in Early Modern Poland.

the “bourgeoisie,” the focus of elite theorists will be “the military,” “interest groups,” and the individuals surrounding these groups. One advantage of elite analysis over class analysis is that the former focuses on groups that are easy to identify; social classes are more challenging to work with because they are large and often do not act together purposefully. Another advantage of elite theory over class analysis is that it sees power as an end in and of itself, which spares the analyst from deducing the underlying economic motivations of actors. A second difference between elite and dominant class analysis is the locus of conflict. While the former gives analytical primacy to disputes occurring at the top of the social ladder, the latter emphasises conflicts between the top and the bottom. For example, class analysts focus on how nobles fight peasants or how capitalists fight the working class. Elite theorists, on the other hand, will emphasise competition between the military and politicians or between interest groups. The rationale behind focusing exclusively on the elites is that elites have a more significant impact on society than do non-elite actors. People tend to remain politically dormant, and on the occasions when they revolt, it is because smaller groups incite them to do so.

The popularity of elite theory has declined in recent decades. Its adoption by Fascism in the 1930s gave it a bad name, and the post-World War II period of democratisation rendered it apparently anachronistic. Wright Mill’s 1956 book, *The Power Elite*, posited that political centralisation, the emergence of large corporations, and the expansion of the military-industrial complex made the elites more potent than ever.⁶ However, Mills did not address a key issue: while the resources available to elites have increased, they have also become subject to unprecedented citizen scrutiny. To use Michael Mann’s (1984) distinction, the increase of the infrastructural power available to the elites has been proportional to the decrease of their despotic powers. Politicians do have larger budgets than their counterparts in the past, but they are more restricted to use them as they please. I cannot resolve the democracy critique entirely. However, nineteenth-century Chile was an oligarchic system, so the critique bears limited application here.

Complex systems theory also posits a problem for the elite theory. It indicates that social processes are not a direct result of anyone’s purposeful actions. Instead, society is an emergent phenomenon that individuals cannot manage. People do the best they can, but not even the elites can control the implications of their actions beyond a limited domain. The critique of complex systems theorists needs a response if an elite theory is to be adequately implemented. In this thesis, I depart from forms of elite theory that draw a straight line between the purpose of action and its outcome. Elites live in societies as complex as the ones the rest of us live in, and while they control enough resources to make their actions matter, their cognitive horizon will be limited by the complexity of society. Network analysis is an appropriate tool to investigate elite dynamics without assuming a direct line between intentions and outcomes. It takes relations as the prime unit of study, not individual actors. Whereas individuals

⁶ Mills (1956)

have some control over their direct ties, they do not exert command over the shape of the entire network. Furthermore, competing elites will often try and make sure that their intentions do not produce fruits. The structure of the network will provide a leading explicative role in this thesis. Chilean elites were culturally equivalent to those of other Latin American countries. However, the density of their networks produced a pattern of state formation that was unique in the region.

Familial dynamics in the formation of states

Historical-comparative sociology has studied the emergence of modern states from statist and Marxist perspectives. Statist accounts (Centeno 1997; Mann 2012; Tilly 1990) explain political centralisation as a process by which states, aided by external wars, expropriate power from nobles and local communities. Wars required them to tax heavily, to build-up an administration, and to raise troops, all of which empowered them vis-à-vis their internal competitors. Marxist approaches see the emergence of the modern state as produced by economic conflicts. Statist accounts tend to perform well for the Early Modern period when Absolutism developed. Marxism has been more successful at interpreting class dynamics during the Industrial Revolution. In describing the formation of modern institutions in nineteenth-century Chile, I will find inspiration, not in scholarly work on these periods but on an anterior period: Renaissance Italy. Research on the politics of city-states like Venice and Florence often focus on kinship and business networks.

This thesis advances an interpretation of the emergence of political cleavages from the standpoint of elite *families*. A common conception in the social science literature is that kinship organised politics in pre-modern times, but that this is no longer the case in modern societies. State offices today have formal procedures of recruitment and promotion based on performance, as Weber (1979) explained. Family is now where individuals find economic security and emotional support; its intrusion in politics persists but on a smaller scale.⁷ The notion that family has lost centrality in politics is generally correct, but the transition from one model of state to the other is not well understood. This thesis advances the idea that modern state institutions did not grow in opposition to the “familial state.” On the contrary, I utilise the Chilean case to show that oligarchic families often built the modern state.

Familial dynamics have been shown to produce the territorial consolidation of the European Late Medieval period; foster the emergence of commercial capitalism in the Netherlands; and, paradoxically, promote the bureaucratisation of states. What follows is a brief review of these three lines of research. The conventional account on the emergence of territorially consolidated countries in Europe focuses on war (Centeno 1997; Mann 2012; Tilly 1990). In a hostile military environment, polities that succeeded at building administrative structures and standing armies absorbed polities that did not. However, Vivek Sharma (2015) shows that family was more important than war-making in producing territorial consolidation. The rules on dynastic succession that emerged in Europe around the year 1000 –

⁷ For a discussion of the extent to which kinship is present in politics in modernity see Adams & Charrad (Adams and Charrad 2011).

primogeniture and female inheritance of political office – created the region's unique pattern of state-building. Primogeniture gave the oldest son the right to succeed as ruler, to the detriment of his younger brothers. Female inheritance gave daughters the right to inherit political power provided the absence of a legitimate male inheritor. These rules stood in contrast to the inheritance laws of the Germanic tribes of the early medieval period, which dictated the partition of land among all male sons. Equal repartition led to the territorial fragmentation of medieval Europe. Around the turn of the millennium, the Church started enforcing monogamous marriage and prohibited unions between individuals of the same family. Forced to scout for mates beyond the limits of their families, dynasties inter-married more. Additionally, since now women could inherit land and office, dynastic unions often led to the aggregation of land. Whereas the bellicist literature posits that militaristic states absorbed weaker states, in fact, a more common path of territorial consolidation in Europe was inter-dynastic unions.

Julia Adams (1994, 2005) shows that the capture of the Dutch state by oligarchic families produced the country's spectacular rise as an economic hegemon in the 1600s. Initially, the union of state and oligarchy ensured the promotion of the interests of merchants. The type of patrimonial polity that Dutch merchant families built proved superior to the French emergent absolutism and the English mixed system. The relative decay of the Netherlands began when the incentives of the oligarchy changed. As families became rentier office-holders, they turned less amicable to new commercial ventures. Consequently, the dynamism of the Dutch state dissipated. In the same period, France and England experimented with bureaucratic forms that proved more effective in promoting their commercial interests abroad.

Changes in inheritance law explain territorial consolidation in Medieval Europe and oligarchic families produced the Dutch Golden Age. How did the bureaucratic state emerge? Pierre Bourdieu (2004) argues that the transition occurred because kings wanted to prevent extended members of the royal family from challenging their line of descent. The most reliable instrument of containment was assigning central state offices to Ministers and not to members of the royal family. Bureaucratisation was a natural consequence of the ascendancy of Ministers over the relatives of the king. With a few modifications, this model applies to nineteenth-century Chile. The President is part of an informal network that promoted him to power and therefore owes the network political favours. But the limits of the network are often unclear, and rulers have some freedom to draw the boundaries of decision-making around a smaller or a larger circle of people. In times of fiscal prosperity, the executive may choose to draw a smaller circle, because it will be in conditions to hire more state employees and increase the salary of military officers – a base of support alternative to the oligarchy. The result of this dynamic is that, in times of military conflict, one side will be formed by the opposition together with part of the ruling block that was excluded from the inner circles of decision-making. The other side will be the inner circle of rule, along with bureaucrats and military officers.

Like Adams, I will show that the Chilean state in its first century of formation was populated by families, not by individual politicians or atomised elites. Parallel to Bourdieu's model of the opposition between the royal family and the Minister, I show that state centralisation in nineteenth-century Chile consisted of elite families opposing related families by mobilising individuals of non-oligarchic background.⁸

The emergence of Liberal democracy

The literature on the development of Liberal democracies emphasises structural causes and political institutions. The former approach sees the formation of democracy as produced by specific class alliances, where the role of mobilised workers and the middle classes is paramount. Gregory Luebbert's (1991) formulates that European countries which had well-organised middle classes produced Liberal democracies (Britain, France, Switzerland). Social democracy came about in countries where the working class had the upper hand (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Czechoslovakia). Fascist regimes emerged in countries where the middle classes established an alliance with Conservative segments of the peasantry (Spain, Germany, Italy). The role of the elites is notably absent from Luebbert's formulation. Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (2005) present a similar line of reasoning for Latin America. These authors put the analytical priority on the economic structure and the autonomy of the state. Like Luebbert, these authors indicate that "[w]ithout structural conditions which allowed the organisation of effective mass pressure democracy was unlikely to emerge" (Rueschemeyer et al. 2005, p. 157). Chile, however, poses a problem for approaches that emphasise the role of the middle and working classes. These segments of society were notably absent in the creation of the country's representative political system. Admittedly, Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (2005, p. 157) acknowledge that the endurance of the democratic system requires maintaining the interests of the elites safe. However, in the Chilean case, it is not only that the Chilean elites permitted the regime to endure: they were their very creators.

Ben Ansell and David Samuels (2014) also focus on the emergence of new social classes but turn the conventional wisdom on its head. The prevailing wisdom says that economic equality creates democracy because it reduces the antagonism between social strata. Ansell and Samuels show that, in fact, democratisation is correlated with increasing inequality. The reason is that inequality proxies the rise of a new upper-middle class. Wealthy but lacking political representation, these emerging sectors demand it. The authors propose an intraelite approach to democratisation that conforms to the following logic: industrialisation fosters the emergence of a wealthy upper-middle class. The political disenfranchisement of this class makes it vulnerable to being expropriated – e.g. taxed heavily – by the

⁸ McLean (2004) shows a similar process for Early Modern Poland, where rulers centralised the state by increasing access to politics to members of the lower nobility.

elites that control the state. Therefore, the new upper-middle classes are incentivised to expand the electoral franchise.

Like Ansell and Samuels, this thesis proposes that a small group of elite actors set the foundations of democracy. In conformity with the authors' predictions, in the Chilean case, democratisation in the 1860s and 1870s did correlate with an increase of inequality (Rodríguez Weber 2018). Also, in alignment with the authors' predictions, democratisation resulted from conflicts to limit the reach of the government. However, the Chilean case posits two problems to Ansell and Samuels' account. First, the fundamental reform of 1874 occurred at a time when direct taxation over income did not exist in Chile, and therefore, the potential of the state to expropriate the emerging sectors were low. Contrary to the authors' expectations, after 1874, taxes rose. The second counter-argument to Ansell and Samuels is that the main party that fought over the electoral reforms of 1874 and 1890 was the Conservative, hardly a representative of the emerging bourgeoisie. In short, the authors got the intra-elite approach right but drew the circle around the relevant elites too large. The competing actors were the very core of the Chilean oligarchy, not the bourgeoisie against the old elites in control of the state. Besides, since the fear that the government would increase taxes on the upper-middle classes was low, the motivation to limit the reach of the state was unlikely to be financial in the terms proposed by Ansell and Samuels. Instead, as Valenzuela (1985) says, the motivation was mainly political: to limit the ability of the state to intervene in elections.⁹

The Chilean case aligns more with Daniel Ziblatt's (2017) description of the formation of a Liberal democratic system. Ziblatt argues that the adoption of an electoral strategy on the part of Conservative parties explains why some European countries democratised consistently. His proposition is counterintuitive: the stronger an old-regime party, even if anti-democratic, the more consistently democratic a country becomes. The reason is that old-regime elites lacking a party, often disrupt the democratic process through alternative, less benign means: the military, the Church, or interest groups. Ziblatt takes the United Kingdom and Germany as his case-studies. The weakness of rightist parties in Germany, Ziblatt argues, left politics vulnerable to extreme right-wing movements and traditionally Conservative bastions such as the military, the Church, and economic interest groups (Ziblatt 2017). Contrary to Germany, British Conservatives developed their party infrastructure to mobilise support in elections. By the 1880s, British Conservatives could mobilise cross-class mass electoral support under the banners of religion and empire in a way that German Conservatives could not. In the long run, this created a situation where the fears of the British old-regime elites against democracy decreased, and the process of expansion of suffrage followed a smoother path than in other countries of Europe.

A more systematic elite-focused approach is that of John Higley (2006). He argues that the political regime is a function of the elite structure. Overly cohesive elites create authoritarian regimes, and

⁹ For an equivalent phenomenon in early modern Poland, see McLean (2011)

divided elites create unstable political systems. Democracies grow in contexts where elites are connected but plural, what Higley calls *consensually united*. “[A] consensually united elite,” Higley (2006, p. 18) indicates, “necessarily entails the creation of a Liberal oligarchy or a Liberal democracy.” Contrary to overly cohesive elites, consensually united elites are differentiated, which fosters their internal competition. Contrary to disunited elites, consensually united elites have interlocked networks of communication, which permit the formation of shared codes of political behaviour. Consensually united elites create stable systems because they agree on the fundamental rules of the game. Also, losers in the context of political competition are treated well: they do not fear a total loss of status, and they can always return to power in future rounds. “Power sharing is the hallmark of such elites” (Higley 2006, p. 18). For this reason, pluralist political systems tend to have broad legitimacy among consensually united elites, which renders such systems stable over time. Importantly, Higley says that plural oligarchies that have produced within-elite power-sharing mechanisms, “inexorably widens the extent of popular representation in time, transforming a Liberal oligarchy, if one exists first, into a more fully participatory Liberal democracy” (Higley 2006, p. 18).

The Chilean political process

Four views of Chilean politics in the nineteenth century prevail: Statists, Liberal, Elite-focused, and Marxist. The canon in Chilean historiography is statist. Classic authors like Alberto Edwards (1928), Francisco Encina (1949), and Mario Góngora (1986) see the opposition of state and oligarchy as the primary fault line shaping nineteenth-century politics. The 1830-1861 Portalian regime, the story goes, was a time when the aristocracy delegated power to the state. This regime was a virtuous period of state formation. The willingness of the traditional elites to delegate power changed in the post-1861 era. Aware that the state bureaucracy could become independent, the aristocracy – as represented in Congress – took control back, which it achieved in the civil war of 1891 and the subsequent establishment of a parliamentary regime. Several historians in the first half of the twentieth century saw the parliamentary era as one of decadent oligarchism. Pessimistic about the empowerment of the oligarchy vis-à-vis the state, they came to see the 1830-1860 period as a golden age. Extreme versions of the statist perspective link the existence of a robust and autonomous state to the political weight of the army. The army’s post-1861 loss of power, says military historian Arturo Contreras Polgatti (1990), “resulted from the advance of the aristocracy, which gradually recovered and consolidated power.” “This process,” he adds, “is consistent with a period of sustained political decomposition.”¹⁰

Another perspective on the political process of nineteenth-century Chile is that of Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela (A. Valenzuela & Valenzuela, 1983; see also J. S. Valenzuela, 1985, 1996, 1998,

¹⁰ Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt (2014) criticises the view of the nineteenth century state as an autonomous pole of power. The elite, he says, were fully in charge for most of the century. Only after the conquest of the nitrate-rich Atacama Desert in the War of the Pacific could the state claim a source support independent of the elites. The 1891 civil war pits exactly state versus oligarchy, and, Jocelyn-Holt argues, should be seen as the real beginning of the twentieth century. In the same way that the nineteenth century was the century of the elites, Jocelyn-Holt proposes, the twentieth was the century of the state. Thus, Jocelyn-Holt does not get rid of the state-oligarchy dichotomy that is so fundamental to traditional Chilean historiography. In anything, it makes more fundamental and all-embracing.

2012). I classify their work as Liberal due to their focus on representative institutions. Like the statist, they explain the Chilean political process in two steps: first, the state gained strength from 1830 to 1860, then it democratised from 1860 to 1891. Contingent factors secured the construction of an active state during the first phase. The War against the Confederation (1836-1839) brought previously divided elites together, stabilising the regime. Manuel Bulnes, the hero of this war and subsequent President of Chile (1841-1851), could have become a personalist *caudillo* but chose to consolidate republican institutions. Relatively autonomous from the patronage of landlords, public officers came to identify with the state project. When the traditional elites became aware of the formation of a self-sustaining bureaucracy, Valenzuela & Valenzuela (1983a, p. 35) indicate, it was too late. The civil wars of the 1850s were attempts by the oligarchy to recover what they felt was theirs. The second step in the account of Valenzuela and Valenzuela begins with the oligarchic defeat in the civil war of 1859. This episode made the elites realise that the military strategy was doomed to fail; instead, they decided, the way to go was electoral reform (A. Valenzuela & Valenzuela, 1983a, p. 36). In subsequent decades, parliamentary groups – including the Conservative Party – engaged in constant efforts to modernise the electoral process. This “democratic turn” of the traditional elites was not ideological but strategic. If they were to avoid being excluded from power by a bureaucratic elite, it was only rational for them to take the electoral process away from the hands of the executive (A. Valenzuela & Valenzuela, 1983a, p. 36). The electoral reforms of 1874 and 1890, as well as the civil war of 1891, were the culmination of the state-Congress conflict.¹¹

The view of the Valenzuela brothers differs in some respects from traditional statist accounts. It follows a rational choice perspective; it adopts a narrative of progress about the political changes in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, in terms of periodisation and of the identity of the actors involved in political competition, Liberals and statist converge: in the first phase (1831-1861), the state built strong administrative institutions; in the second (1861-1891), the oligarchy took power back. From both perspectives, the civil wars pitted the landed and the rich as represented in Congress against the state.

Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt has criticised the state-versus-oligarchy approach. I classify his approach as *elite-focused* because it imputes overwhelming power to the traditional elites. The state in nineteenth-century Chile, he says (2014, p. 54), “was nothing but an instrument in the service of a social elite whose power resided in the social structure rather than in the state apparatus.” His crucial evidence to criticise the supposed state-oligarchy contradiction of traditional historiography is the social origin of state officials: always la crème of the Chilean oligarchy. Gabriel Marcella, also an elite-focused, indicates that “[p]olitics was not simply an affair of the few, for the few were often integral parts of large extended families” (Marcella 1976). On a fundamental level, however, Jocelyn-Holt does not get rid of the state-

¹¹ For a more systematic version of the this two-step account of the Chilean political process, see Terrie (Terrie 2013).

oligarchy contradiction. Instead, he pushes the entrance of the state as a significant agent later in Chilean history, namely to the 1880s, and more definitively to the 1920s. The twentieth century, Jocelyn-Holt says, was the century of the state, in the same manner that the nineteenth century had been the century of the oligarchy. In other words, Jocelyn-Holt offers a different periodisation, but his state/oligarchy dichotomy remains as strong as that in the work of the classics of Chilean historiography.

A stronger departure from the state-versus-oligarchy approach is the *Marxist*. There is no fundamental opposition between state and oligarchy because the former represents the latter. The real opposition, Marxists say, is that of the oligarchy versus the productive classes of society. Gabriel Salazar (2015) indicates that “the unrestricted control of the state became the only instrument of [the elite’s] hegemony, as well as the main weapon of their resistance against the thrust of the productive classes.”¹² Maurice Zeitlin (1984) argues that the fundamental struggle of nineteenth-century Chile was that between class fragments: miners and manufacturers, on the one hand, versus nitrate, financial, and landed interests, on the other. While the mid-century Chilean civil wars (1851-1859) pitted the industrialising elites against the state, Balmaceda’s rule was their attempt to change Chile’s political economy “from above.” Balmaceda’s defeat in 1891 pushed Chile to become “a capitalist democracy in which the large landed estate was pivotal” (Zeitlin 1984).

Table 1: Approaches to the study of Chilean politics in the nineteenth century

	1830-1860	1860-1890	1890-
Statist	Oligarchy takes control from Liberals and delegates construction of healthy state; golden age	Oligarchy reacts to the autonomisation of the state and engages in efforts to take control back	Final oligarchic takeover; establishment of Parliamentary system; political decomposition
Liberal	Oligarchy takes control from Liberals and delegates construction of strong state; establishment of strong administrative institutions	Oligarchy reacts to the autonomisation of the state; loses civil wars and adopts an electoral strategy in subsequent decades	Final takeover by oligarchy; establishment of democratic institutions

¹² Charles Pregger-Román (Pregger-Roman 1975) shows that the introduction of joint stock companies in the 1850s brought financial, mining, and landed interests together. The interlocking of the elites gave Chile a relatively stable political structure for most of the nineteenth century. The War of the Pacific produced a new axis of polarisation within the elites which ultimately led to the civil war of 1891.

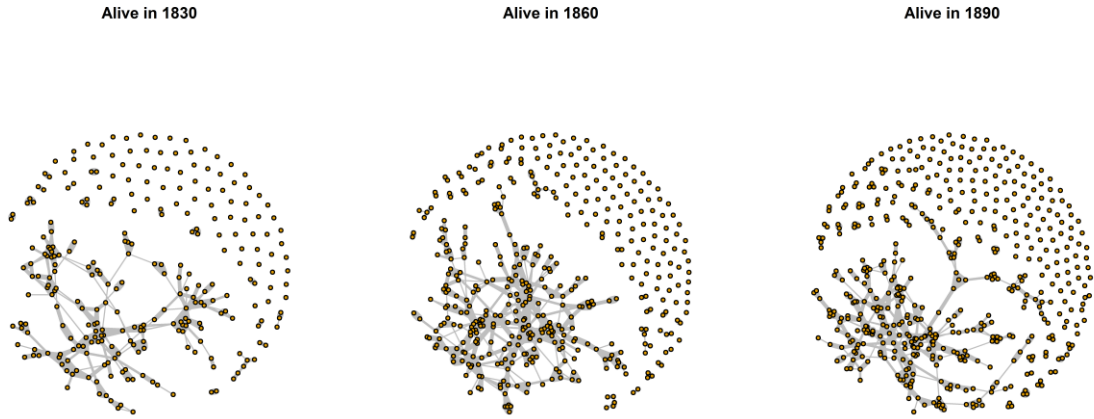
Elite-focused	Oligarchic takeover	Continued oligarchic control	State-oligarchy conflict in 1891 and 1925 takeover by state
Marxist	Oligarchy takes control and builds centralised state in their image	Productive classes rebel but lose against oligarchy-backed state	Productive classes gain access to state power but are defeated by the oligarchy

The analytical framework presented in this thesis is elite-focused, in the sense that it sees the collective power of traditional oligarchic families as decisive. Authors like Jocelyn-Holt and Marcella are correct in indicating that the sharp executive-Congress opposition typical of traditional historiography fails on two accounts. Not only did most individuals holding executive positions come from oligarchic families, but they also followed extensive careers in Congress before entering the executive. However, the account presented here departs from the elitism of Jocelyn-Holt in that it pays more attention to divisions within the oligarchy. Familial cleavages within the traditional elites gave the Chilean political process of the nineteenth century its dynamism. The most systematic accounts describing divisions within the elites have been Marxist. They propose that the main divide of Chilean politics was sectoral. The evidence presented in this thesis does not support this claim. Instead of miners fighting bankers, the crucial actors were families struggling with other families.

Data and Methods

The political elite network. The data utilised in this study contains information on the kinship ties among all persons that held a seat in Congress, in the Cabinet, or as a governor of one of Chile's three main centres of power (Santiago, Concepción, and Coquimbo) during the period 1828-1894. This universe consists of 1,449 persons. It includes all Presidents and all persons that signed the political constitutions of 1828 and 1833.

Figure 1: Network of kinship ties among members of the Chilean political elite: 1830, 1860, 1890



Note. Edge width represents the type of link: grandfather-grandson, father-son, siblings, uncle-nephew, cousins, father- and son-in-law, and brothers-in-law, in that descending order. Several nodes represented as isolates in these subgraphs are connected in the combined graph. Only individuals that had reached the age of 20 by 1830, 1860, and 1890, respectively, were plotted.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of Chilean political elite network, 1828-1894

Number of nodes	1,449
Number of edges	4,686
Density	0.004
Mean degree	6.4
Mean distance	5.2
Main component (%)	69%
Isolates (%)	31%

The kinship data was digitised from genealogiachilenaenred.cl, genealog.cl and geni.com. For detailed information, I used biographical dictionaries by Figueroa (1974) and Sepúlveda Rondanelli (1983). These sources are biased against unmarried individuals (including priests), individuals of low social status, and local elites without substantial national connections. For this reason, the data are likely to underestimate the connectivity of the network's periphery. However, since the focus of this study is the network's core, this problem does not appear to bias the results.

Congress-membership data. The Congress-membership data was obtained from *Anales de la República* (Valencia Avaria 1986), a registry of all persons holding high-level political office in Chile since 1810, including presidents, ministers, Senators, and Deputies. In the nineteenth-century, legislative seats had a proprietor and a substitute. Substitutes did not typically attend legislative sessions unless asked to

replace the proprietor. All proprietors and alternates were included in the kinship database, but only proprietors were counted in the electoral analyses.

Identifying families. I identify kinship groups with community detection algorithms. These identify groups of nodes that have many internal ties but few ties outside the group.¹³ The most popular algorithms are designed to find network partitions with the highest possible modularity scores (Good, de Montjoye, and Clauset 2010). Modularity measures the difference between the number of edges inside a cluster versus the expected number of edges in a random graph. Modularity-maximisation algorithms present two problems. First, resolution limit: they do not identify small communities in large networks (Fortunato and Barthélemy 2007). Second, degeneration: very different partitions can produce similar modularity scores (Good et al. 2010). These problems increase as the network becomes large and its hierarchical structure complex (Good et al. 2010).

Another challenge in community-detection is that the identified communities are only rough approximations of extended families. Here I often use the shorthand term family to refer to these manufactured communities, but a stricter way of thinking of them is as network locations: a neighbourhood rather than a household. The algorithms often group together individuals that would not think of each other as relatives (e.g. ego and the brother-in-law of his cousin) and the borders dividing communities would not always be recognised as meaningful in qualitative research. However, in the present, these algorithms are the best way to identify extended families quantitatively.

To test the robustness of the results, I run the analyses using the eight community-detection algorithms evaluated by Yang, Algesheimer, & Tessone (Yang, Algesheimer, and Tessone 2016). These are Edge betweenness (Girvan and Newman 2002), Fastgreedy (Clauset, Newman, and Moore 2004), Infomap (Rosvall and Bergstrom 2007), Label propagation (Raghavan, Albert, and Kumara 2007), Leading eigenvector (Newman 2006), Louvain (Blondel et al. 2008), Spinglass (Reichardt and Bornholdt 2006), and Walktrap (Pons and Latapy 2005). Inter-algorithm comparisons are meaningful robustness-checks because different algorithms can generate varied sets of communities. For example, the Spinglass algorithm identifies 25 communities in the network's main component, while Label propagation identifies 135 communities. Louvain produced the highest modularity, so it was chosen as the primary method for partitioning the network.

Another way of partitioning the network is by levels of structural cohesion. James Moody and Douglas White (Moody and White 2003) operationalise structural cohesion as the number of individuals required to maintain a group connected. At the cutting point 1 (or $k-1$), the removal of one individual disconnects a group; at the cutting point 5 ($k-5$), five individuals need to be removed to break the group apart. A k -

¹³ For examples of research using community detection algorithms in politics see (Desmarais, La Raja, and Kowal 2015; Porter et al. 2006; Waugh et al. 2009; Zhang et al. 2008), for scientific citation networks see (Shwed and Bearman 2010), for air transportation network see (Guimerà et al. 2005); for trading networks see (Lupu and Traag 2013); for genetic clusters see (Han et al. 2017).

5 group is more cohesive than a k-1 group. In the Chilean case, the network has a Russian doll structure that goes as deep as the k-7 level before breaking into the concrete families composing the core.

Inferring civil war allegiance. This thesis devises and implements a method for inferring the loyalty of individuals and families during the civil wars of 1829 and 1891. For 1891, the fidelity of family clusters is inferred based on the number of cluster members occupying seats in the Constitutive Congress of 1891 (Balmacedist) versus the regular Congress of 1891 (Congressist). If a given cluster counted more than two-thirds of its politically active members in the Constitutive Congress, then it was coded as Balmacedist; if it scored more than two-thirds of its politically active members in the regular Congress of 1891, then it was coded as Congressist. In the few cases where family clusters were split in their allegiance, then they counted as mixed. Affiliation to either Congress is a good indicator of civil war allegiance. The Constitutive Congress was “undoubtedly made up of men who cast their lot with the beleaguered President” (Zeitlin, 1984, p. 162). Likewise, Balmaceda supporters were legally excluded from sitting in the post-war Congress formed in November 1891. Therefore, the members of it can be safely counted as Congressists.¹⁴ For 1829, a similar procedure was followed. I inferred allegiance by counting the cluster members that occupied seats in the Congresses before and after the conflict. If a cluster had at least two-thirds of its politically active membership at the time in the Congresses of 1828, 1829, or signing the Pipiolo Constitution of 1828, then the cluster was coded Pipiolo. If a group had at least two-thirds of its politically active members occupying seats in the Congresses of 1831, 1834, or signing the Pelucón Constitution of 1833, then the cluster was coded Pelucón.

Analysis. For the statistical analyses presented in Chapter 6, I built a set of matrices representing common allegiance during the civil war of 1891 and other variables. I obtained the sample from the membership of the two competing congresses of 1891: the one supporting Balmaceda and the one supporting Congress. The former counted 116 members and the latter numbered 126. Other independent variables included in the analyses are political party affiliation, economic background, region of birth, and level of integration in the network (core versus periphery). The data on party affiliation (Liberal or Conservative party) was obtained from the reports of the Liberal Presidential conventions of 1876, 1881, and 1886, and the reports of the Conservative conferences of 1878 and 1881.¹⁵ The data on land ownership was obtained from the 1874 land census of Chile (Chile, Oficina de Estadística 1875). The information on noble descent was obtained by combining Domingo Amunátegui Solar’s (1901) historical study of noble families and my relational data.

This thesis uses QAP regressions to conduct the statistical analysis of co-membership during the civil war of 1891. The method was performed using the Igraph (Csardi and Nepusz 2006) and Statnet (Handcock et al. 2008) packages in the R programming language. In QAP regression, coefficients are

¹⁴ This changed after the law of amnesty of 1893. In the elections of 1894, Balmacedists obtained a good representation in Congress.

¹⁵ (Partido Conservador 1947; Partido Liberal 1881, 1886; Partido Radical 1889; Vicuña Mackenna 1875)

obtained using a standard logistic regression and then evaluating their probability using a permutation-based method. The method randomly reshuffles all the rows and columns of the dependent variable matrix and then calculates the regression coefficients again (Krackardt 1987). This process is repeated 3000 times to simulate a distribution of possible coefficients that are consistent with the structure of the matrix. The method uses this distribution to evaluate the probability that coefficients could present values as extreme as the observed values.

Overview

This thesis is organised as follows. Chapter two discusses the democratisation of Chile in the nineteenth century. Chile had one of the most entrenched oligarchies in Latin America, yet the country observed a consistent path of democratisation. Whereas the conventional wisdom highlights the role of the middle and working classes in producing democratisation, these strata were not involved in bringing about the opening of the Chilean system. Political conflict in nineteenth-century Chile occurred at the very core of the oligarchy. This proposition differs from the statist position, which sees the state-oligarchy cleavage as crucial, and Marxism, which emphasises the economy. Chapters three, four, and five describe three episodes of heightened political conflict: the civil war of 1829, which confronted Pipiolos and Pelucones; the civil wars of 1851 and 1859, which split the elites into Liberals and Conservatives; and the civil war of 1891, which opposed Balmacedists and Congressists. These three chapters emphasise the elite nature of conflict and show how kinship networks drove the formation of alliances.

A warning is in order. Chapters three, four, and five present detailed historical descriptions of the period 1828-1894. Often, I provide specific information on who attended meetings, who signed letters, and who expressed feelings about who. In historical narratives, I usually include the names of individuals and their two last names, paternal and maternal. While this level of detail can slow down the reading progress of those who are not familiar with Chilean political history, it is necessary for my purposes. The very raw material from which I build my argument is the connections among individuals: who is friends with who and who is hostile to who. These connections are the micro-foundations of the formation of political alliances.

Chapter six quantitatively assesses the continuity of the factions that fought the civil wars of 1829 and 1891. It shows that individuals from families that fought on the Pipiolo side in 1829, tended to fight on the Balmacedist camp in 1891, and individuals from a Pelucón background, tended to fight on the Congressist side. This result is robust after controlling for political party, wealth, and the kinship network itself. Furthermore, the result is robust to different methods of assessing the political background of families. The familial continuity between 1829 and 1891 confirms the hypothesis that underlies this research, namely that kinship is crucial when accounting for the structure of political conflict. Not only kinship as a network, but as a tradition: the friends and enemies that grandparents form in their bids for power impact who the friends and the enemies of their grandchildren will be.

Chapter seven summarizes the empirical material presented in chapters three to six, and it identifies the connections with the theoretical intuitions expressed in the introduction. Further, it extends the implications of this research to three areas of historical-comparative analysis, namely state formation, democratisation, and party formation. I argue that the familial density and the internal plurality of the elites gave the Chilean state stability because it ruled out alternative centres of power while permitting a manageable degree of competition. Furthermore, the fact that local elites had connections to national elites via kinship made the implementation of local policies more efficient. About democratisation, I present new data on the social composition of the Chilean Congress from the nineteenth century up to 2018. These data show that the elites lost representation in Congress after the 1930s. About party formation, I present data on the party membership of elites from 1861 up to 2018. These data show that the elites were internally competitive in the nineteenth century but flocked all on one side of the political spectrum in the twentieth century. This transition resulted from two parallel processes: the network consolidation of the Chilean upper classes in the second half of the nineteenth century and the rise of middle- and working-class political parties in the early twentieth century.

2. Oligarchic democratisation (1833-1891)

This chapter discusses the paradoxical democratisation of Chile in the nineteenth century. The Chilean elites were among the most dominant of Latin America, yet their country experienced a consistent path of electoral democratisation. The first section reviews the literature on democratisation. It shows that structuralist and institutionalist approaches do not fit well with the Chilean case. An elite-focused approach is more convincing. The section posits that Liberal democracy emerged because of intraelite restrained competition. The following sections provide substantive support to this argument. After characterising the Chilean oligarchy, I present a qualitative reconstruction of political democratisation throughout the century. The next section presents quantitative evidence showing that Congress became more plural over time. Finally, I explain the mechanisms that produced the Chilean path of democratisation.

A cohesive oligarchy

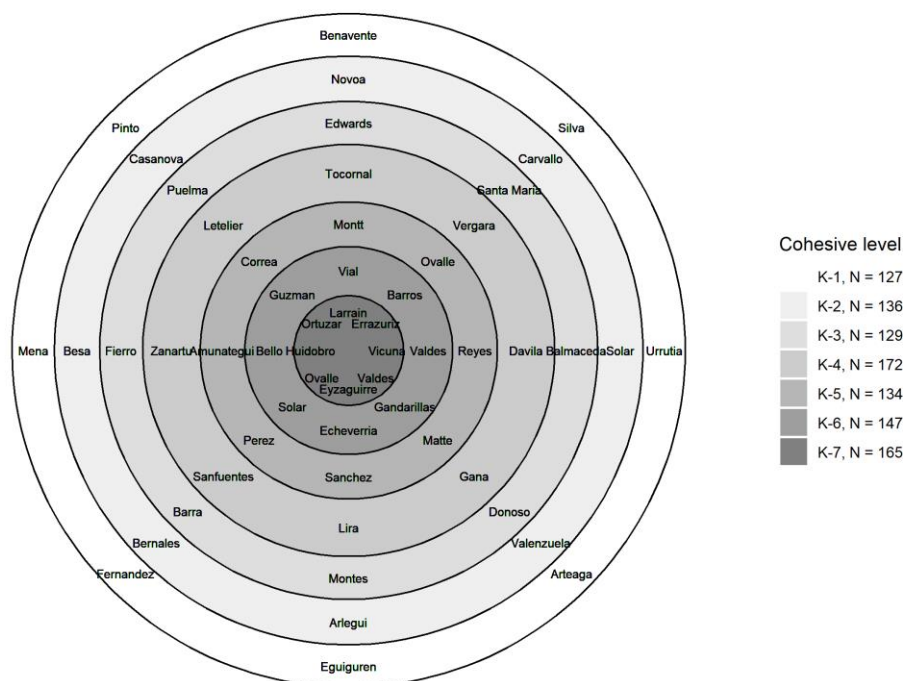
In the late eighteenth century, the elites of Santiago consolidated in what Chilean historians call the Castilian-Basque aristocracy. The Castilian component were families arriving in the first century after the Spanish conquest, including the Ovalle and the Valdés. The Irarrázaval also came in this early period, but they were of Basque extraction. More typical Basque families arrived in Chile in the eighteenth century as merchants and colonial administrators. These include the Larraín, Errázuriz, Vicuña, Eyzaguirre, and Ortúzar. Jacques Barbier (1972, 1973, 1980) shows that, whereas in the pre-1755 period only 3 per cent of the “old elite” married into the recently arrived merchants, in the period after as much as 12 per cent did. Also, by expanding the colonial bureaucracy, the Bourbon reforms created a pool of marriageable officials. Whereas in the pre-1755 period, 19 per cent of the old elite married colonial officials, in the post-1755 period, this figure increased to 48.8 per cent (Barbier 1972). By the time of Independence, in 1810, the elite of Santiago was integrated, with old-new distinctions blurred and with public administrators intertwined with traditional creole families.

Contrary to other Latin American countries, the wars of independence left the Chilean ruling class intact (Basadre, 1978, p. 322). “[T]he history of [the independence movement],” writes Alberto Edwards (1928, p. 49-50), “can be written without even a cursory reference beyond the patrician quarter of Santiago.” Mary Felstiner (1970) reaffirms: “The revolutionary group had been so small, and so related by family ties, that it was able to continue into the nineteenth century without serious threats.” Some guerrilla groups challenged the concentration of power of this group, but they operated in the South and were not large enough to threaten the existing social structure.

Compare the continuity of the Chilean upper classes through independence to the Peruvian case. Lima’s elite broke down in the aftermath of the foreign-led Peruvian war of independence. Two weeks after the 1821 declaration of Independence by José de San Martín, 43 of the 64 members of the *Consulado del Comercio* – *la crème* of Lima’s merchant class – and about half of the nobility had already

abandoned Peru. A minister of San Martín boasted that the number of Spaniards in Lima went from 10,000 down to 1,000 during his tenure. Some years later, during the 1826 siege of the Real Felipe Fort, about 6,000 royalists died (Rizzo-Patrón Boylan 2001). Numerically decimated, economically broken, and on the wrong side of history, the Lima upper classes had difficulties in reclaiming political power during the Republican era. “The most genuine representatives of the colonial, aristocratic class [in Peru],” indicates prominent Peruvian historian Jorge Basadre (1978, p. 156), “failed, not before the Liberals but before militarism.” Argentina also offers a contrast to Chile. Julio Pinto (2015) compares the foundational regimes of Diego Portales in Chile and Juan Manuel de Rosas in Argentina. He finds that Rosas could stabilise his rule only after establishing alliances with segments of the popular classes – not something Portales felt he needed. Pinto explains that Portales could dispense from forming such partnerships because of 1) a robust intra-elite consensus behind him; 2) a less disruptive transition from colony to a republic, and 3) workers fully involved in the hacienda system hence less able to mobilise.

Figure 2: Levels of structural cohesion of the Chilean political elite, 1828-1894



Note: Levels of structural cohesion of the Chilean political elites, 1828-1894. Ring width reflects the number of individuals belonging to each cohesive level. At each cutting point (k-1 to k-7), the largest connected block was selected. For instance, the 165 individuals that form cohesive level 7 (k-7) are the largest cohesive block with at least a coreness score of 7. See Moody & White (Moody and White 2003) for more information about structural cohesion. The surnames in the rings are the eight most common surnames at the corresponding level of cohesion.

Surnames in position 12 o'clock are the most frequent, followed by the ones moving in a clockwise direction. In the entire network, the most common surname is Larraín (46 occurrences), followed by Valdés (42), and Errázuriz (39). The most common given names are José, Manuel, and Francisco.

What is more, the Chilean aristocracy remained dominant throughout the nineteenth century. After a visit in 1908, the American political scientist Paul Reinsch (1909, p. 508) referred to Chile as “the only aristocracy in the world which still has full and acknowledged control of the economic, political and social forces of the state in which they live.” The Chilean parliament, he continued, is “the council of a governing class where men who, with all their differences of opinion, respect each other, meet and discuss their common interests” (Reinsch 1909). Chilean parliamentarians were not only the holders of political power but also were the country’s rich and the intellectuals. For instance, of a list of the 80 wealthiest individuals in Chile published in 1882, 52% had been members of Congress at some point, and 22% had had at least one direct relative in Congress in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ The link between politics and the intellectual sphere was even stronger. In its entry for nineteenth-century Chilean literature, Wikipedia lists 30 individuals as representatives of the period.¹⁷ Of them, 77% were members of Congress at some point, and 10% had a direct family member in Congress.

Table 3 displays information on all 29 family clusters identified using the Louvain community detection algorithm (Blondel et al. 2008) on the collapsed network for the entire period. The key indicator in the table is Power index, calculated by multiplying the mean number of relatives that cluster members had among the political elite (“Degree”) and the mean number of terms that cluster members served in Congress (“Terms”).

Table 3: Kinship clusters as identified with the Louvain community detection algorithm

	Family*	N	Density**	Degree***	Terms****	Power*****
1	Errázuriz	61	0.255	17	2.7	46
2	Irrázaval	41	0.237	13.1	3.1	41
3	Ortúzar	64	0.149	12.2	3.3	40
4	Echeverría	37	0.269	13.3	3	40
5	Vicuña	48	0.261	15.3	2.5	38
6	Dávila	11	0.891	9.8	3.3	32
7	Eyzaguirre	42	0.203	10.9	2.5	27
8	Vial	70	0.101	8.4	3.1	26
9	Barros	38	0.208	9.5	2.7	26
10	Solar	38	0.181	8.5	2.9	25
11	Reyes	28	0.214	7.4	3.2	24
12	Valdés	46	0.137	8.4	2.7	23

¹⁶ Vicuña Mackenna (1882)

¹⁷ Wikipedia (2018), accessed on 13 August 2018.

13	Larraín	49	0.157	10	2.2	22
14	Concha	33	0.189	7.7	2.6	20
15	Tocornal	42	0.144	6.9	2.9	20
16	Edwards	21	0.276	6.1	3.1	19
17	Jose	49	0.108	6.3	2.8	18
18	González	37	0.137	5.9	2.9	17
19	Montt	37	0.135	6.2	2.8	17
20	Zañartu	18	0.366	7.1	2.3	16
21	Gana	37	0.158	6.3	2.4	15
22	Vergara	72	0.09	7	2	14
23	Novoa	27	0.168	4.7	2.7	13
24	Mena	4	1	3.5	3.5	12
25	Puga	6	0.533	3.2	3.8	12
26	Castillo	24	0.181	4.5	2.7	12
27	Ossa	13	0.308	4.2	2.7	11
28	Trucios	6	0.8	4.5	2.5	11
29	Pinto	3	1	2.3	1.7	4

*Kinship clusters were identified with the Louvain community detection algorithm. The labels provided are the most frequent surnames per community.

**Density is the ratio of the actual number of edges and the potential number of edges within clusters

***Degree is the mean number of relatives that cluster members had among the political elites as defined here

****Terms is the mean number of terms that cluster members served in Congress

*****The power index is the product of mean degree and mean terms

The power index of Table 3 suggests that there was no one cluster with overwhelming power above all others. Members of the Errázuriz clan were, on average, more densely connected than members of other families, but members of the Irarrázaval clan on average sat in Congress for longer. The power of the core families was balanced. That said, the Errázuriz' capture of the top spot in the table will not come as a surprise to students of Chilean history. The Errázuriz produced an interim President (in 1830) and had three Presidents elected in 1871, 1896, and 1901.¹⁸

Perhaps the most representative families of the Chilean upper class were the Errázuriz, the Vicuña, and the two branches of the Larraín, all originating in the Basque village of Aranaz. The first Larraín to arrive in Chile, in 1685, was Santiago Larraín Vicuña. His nephew – Martín José Larraín Vicuña – followed his steps sometime after, attracted by the prospect of partaking in his uncle's business as a merchant. Uncle and nephew established two branches of the Larraín family that later would be known

¹⁸ Fernando Errázuriz Aldunate (1830), Federico Errázuriz Zañartu (1871-1876), Federico Errázuriz Echaurren (1896-1901), and Germán Riesco Errázuriz (1901-1906).

as *Marquises* and *Ottomans*, respectively.¹⁹ While the Marquises were the older, wealthier, and nobler branch, the Ottomans were numerous and well-represented in the colonial administration (Felstiner 1976). Crucially, during the wars of independence, Marquises and Ottomans stood on opposite camps – against and for independence, respectively. During the Liberal hegemony of the 1810s and 1820s, the Ottomans remained at the centre of Chilean politics, and, indeed, were the ones that initially promoted the career of Bernardo O’Higgins (Chambers 2015), who would become a military independence hero and the first President of Chile.²⁰ After the civil war of 1829, the fortune of the Marquises rose. “The victory of [Diego] Portales and his allies,” indicates Mary Felstiner (1970, p. 216), “turned the state away from the interests and causes of the [Ottomans] and towards those of the noble branch of the family, in which Portales was born.”

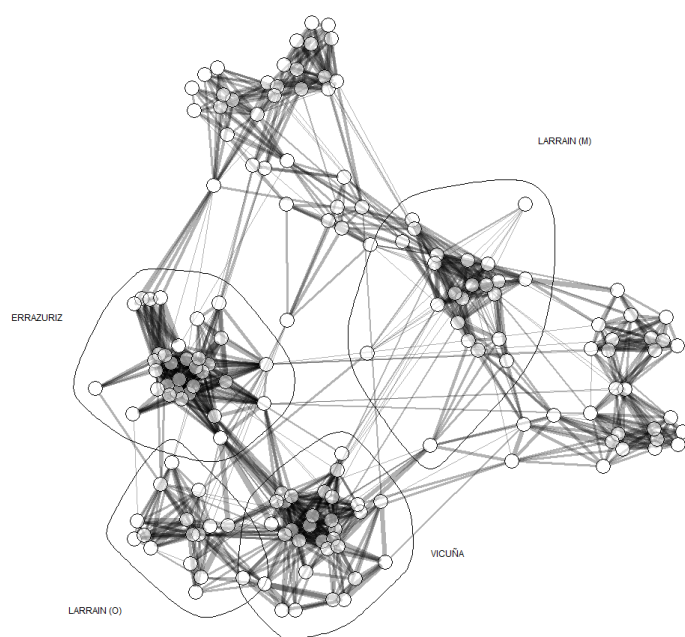
The first Vicuña and the first Errázuriz to arrive in Chile were relatives of the Larraíns. Tomás Vicuña Berroeta – a first cousin of Santiago Larraín – came from Aranaz in 1715. Francisco Javier Errázuriz Larraín – a cousin, once removed of Santiago Larraín – arrived sometime later. Like their Larraín relatives, Vicuña and Errázuriz became merchants and rose in the Santiago society quickly. In 1721, Tomás Vicuña became a member of the governing body of Santiago, as did Francisco Javier Errázuriz in 1746. During the wars of independence, the grandsons of both Vicuña and Errázuriz adhered to the patriot side. However, in the civil war of 1829, the families departed. That year, Francisco Ramón Vicuña assumed the country’s presidency and managed to make Congress elect his brother as his successor after a controversial election had not produced a clear winner.²¹ The prospect of the Vicuñas exerting control over the most important seat of the state provoked a rebellion that had the allegiance of the Errázuriz family. In 1849, Vicuñas and Errázuriz forgot their old differences and – together with the Vial family – formed the Liberal party. This alliance turned out to be quite productive after the Liberal party became hegemonic toward the last third of the century. During the 1871-1876 presidency of Federico Errázuriz, both family clusters experienced a peak in their parliamentary representation. However, in 1891, the alliance ended. Claudio Vicuña – the grandson of Francisco Ramón Vicuña – was nominated to become President, and the Errázuriz became active instigators of the subsequent reaction of Congress that produced the civil war of 1891. For a second time in the nineteenth century, the Errázuriz raised in rebellion against their distant Vicuña cousins.

Figure 3: Oligarchy’s core with the Aranaz families highlighted

¹⁹ The term “Marquis” was given to the older branch of the Larraín clan after José Toribio Larraín Guzman purchased the title of Marquis in 1787. The term “Ottoman” was given to the newer branch of the Larraín family during the wars of independence by the Spanish viceroy Fernando Abascal. Another term that he used to refer to this family was “Ochocientos”, meaning “eight hundred”. In the early nineteenth century, the Ottoman empire was thought of as a very populated polity, and the labels given to the Larraín family denoted its large size.

²⁰ His formal title was “Supreme Director.” The title “President” would be used for the first time in 1826 by Manuel Blanco Encalada.

²¹ The brother, Joaquín Vicuña Larraín, was governor of Coquimbo at the time.



Note: This graph represents nodes with structural cohesion of 7. Structural cohesion is a method for identifying the centre of a network (See Data and Methods for details). 165 out of 1449 politicians had cohesion 7, that is 10% of the net. Family clusters were marked using the Louvain algorithm.

The four families of Aranaz are the best exemplars of the Chilean elites, arguably up to this day. In 200 years of legislative history, from 1810 to 2018, Errázuriz is the most frequent paternal surname of all Chilean Senators. The most frequent maternal surname is Larraín. The cabinet of 2018-2022 President Sebastián Piñera has two ministers with paternal surname Larraín. In a 2017 study, the United Nations identified the 50 most represented surnames among high-end jobs in Chile. Larraín, Errázuriz, and Vicuña were all listed (PNUD Chile 2017).

A gradual democratisation

The overwhelming strength of the elites did not mean that Chilean politics was stagnant. In fact, from 1833 to 1891, Chile democratised gradually. While democratisation was not a challenge to the upper classes, in the second half of the nineteenth century new families did enter politics, limits to the power of Presidents were put in place, and the electoral franchise was expanded. The electoral reforms of 1874 and 1890 were the turning points. Even before, political factions within Congress had been successful at gaining some autonomy from the executive. The Chilean path of democratisation was driven by intra-elite dynamics, not by pressures from below. The driver of liberalisation was the competition between kinship-based political factions. This competition created a system of checks and balances that served as the material condition for the formation of a Liberal political system.

The 1833 constitution specified that the Senate would be formed by 20 individuals older than 36, with rent higher than 2,000 pesos. Senators held a tenancy of nine years, and every three years a third of

them (7, 7, and 6, respectively) were to be renewed. Deputies were required to have an income of at least 500 pesos. Only citizens with an income above a threshold could vote. In the 1834 law, this threshold was low enough to allow a large proportion of male citizens to vote (Valenzuela 2012). Voters folded white paper ballots and placed them in an urn. The Constitution apportioned Deputies to districts by population. In areas with more than one representative, voters wrote as many names as spots available in the ballot. Senators and Presidents were elected indirectly by electoral colleges that met in every province (Valenzuela 2012). The Chamber of Deputies legislated on tax laws, and the Senate decided on constitutional reforms. Yearly budget and expenditure laws were to be approved by Congress. The President was required to ask for Congressional approval for the declaration of states of emergency and the stationing of regular troops in Santiago (Valenzuela 2012).

Chile was born as a representative Republic. However, while outwardly democratic, for most of the nineteenth-century elections were not de facto free. The executive manipulated elections regularly. Santiago often managed electoral registries through local officials, and National Guard commanders were well-known instruments of governmental intervention (Valenzuela 2012). Being in good terms with the president or the Interior minister was the best way of obtaining a seat in Congress. The competition took place in the aisles of the Moneda palace rather than in the urns.²² That said, the executive usually formed lists of candidates that represented diverse factions within the oligarchy. As early as 1840, for example, official lists contained several Pipiolos, the nominal enemies of the regime.²³ In the second half of the nineteenth century, the aisles of the Moneda became too narrow for an expanded and more differentiated elite. As the strategy of co-opting vital members of the opposition began to fail, discontent with governmental interference increased. Samuel Valenzuela posits that the civil wars of 1851 and 1859 were an attempt on the part of the oligarchy to take control of the state by force. When the armed path failed, the aristocracy opted for an electoral strategy (Valenzuela 2012). Indeed, rolling back the government's electoral machine was the central political conflict of the second half of the nineteenth century Chile.

The electoral reforms of 1874 represent a milestone in Chilean electoral history. The Conservative party promoted the reforms after abandoning an electoral coalition with the Liberal party, intending to curtail the ability of the executive to intervene in elections. The changes took the electoral registry away from municipalities and gave it to the most significant local taxpayers, who unlike officials did not depend on the executive.²⁴ The reforms cut one source of Presidential patronage by declaring the incompatibility between public and representative offices. The counting of votes was made cumulative, meaning that voters could write as many preferences as positions available but allowed them to repeat names. This system helped small, but well-organised parties. Finally, the reform discarded income and

²² Palace that hosts the office of the Chilean president and her staff.

²³ Pipiolos were the political faction defeated in the civil war of 1829. The Vicuña family – Pipiolos *par excellence* – obtained many seats in the election of 1840. Pipiolos will be treated in detail in subsequent chapters.

²⁴ Valenzuela, 2012, p. 62, says this was done in 1869. Check.

property as requirements for voting. In the past, these requirements had been used to reject non-aligned voters, and Conservative leaders were confident that the rural masses could be swayed their way (J. S. Valenzuela, 2012, p. 62). For every 20,000 persons, one deputy was to be elected, and for every three Deputies, one senator. Whereas in the previous 40 years, Senators had a fixed number (19), in the 1876 elections the number grew to 37 and in 1888 to 42 (Valencia Avaria, 1986, p. 200).

Further, whereas in previous decades Senators were national representatives, after 1874 they were to represent specific provinces. The legal resources that Presidents now had at their disposal to interfere in elections were scarcer. Local authorities could not dismiss voters on income or property grounds, and the electorate expanded. Valenzuela (2012, p. 63) posits that the parliamentary elections of 1876 were the freest of nineteenth-century Chile. Electoral manipulation kept occurring, but the new legal restrictions rendered them more obviously fraudulent. In the 1880s, the electoral intervention of the government confronted increased hostility. “[I]t was [the municipalities] who decided which citizens would form part of the list [of major tax-payers],” wrote Conservative leader Carlos Walker Martínez (1888, p. 13-4), “it was there where the government put its eyes to ensure victory.”

Chile’s victory in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883) made the state prosperous. The income from the nitrates field conquered in that conflict were used to expand the civil service and build infrastructure. Old-sanctioned mechanisms of negotiation with parliamentarians and local notables were by-passed (J. S. Valenzuela, 2012, p. 63). Crucially, not only the traditional opposition was excluded from the aisles of the Moneda, but members of the governing block too. As a result, the government started losing old friends and Congress. An expanded opposition pushed for further restrictions to the ability of government to interfere in elections. In 1885, Congress extended the suffrage to include all literate males above 25 years-old (Snow, 1972, p. 39).

The most crucial watershed in creating a competitive political system was the August 1890 electoral reform, which secured the secrecy of elections and effectively cut the interference of the executive. Parties now had to compete at the urns rather than exert command over the aisles of the Moneda (Valenzuela 1998). The Conservative party was vital in promoting these reforms, but now it had the support of the anti-Balmacedists within the Liberal party. The core of the 1890 changes targeted not the general principles of democracy but the more pressing issue of voting logistics. The law helped create competitive elections by focusing on three fronts. First, it ensured the secrecy of the vote by, among other measures, providing “isolated desks” for voters to mark their ballots. Second, the counting of votes became more transparent by instructing electoral board members to count out loud all ballots at the polling site before sending the tallies to Congress. Third, a system of the cumulative vote was extended from the Chamber of Deputies to include senatorial as well as municipal and Presidential elections, a system that benefited small but well-organised parties. The law also made the register of voters permanent. The reform strengthened the influence of large landowners – as the most significant

tax-payers – by putting them in charge of choosing the electoral board of each locality. “The electoral reform of 1890 established the foundations for the creation of an electoral process complying with the minimum requisites of a democratic regime in Chile” (Valenzuela, 1998, p. 282). “Subsequent electoral reforms extended suffrage,” indicates Valenzuela (1998, p. 293), “changed the way how the electoral process was administered, and altered the format of the ballot, but they did not have the effect of initiating this fundamental aspect of [competitive elections].”

Additional reforms came the year after, in 1891: Congress was to hold control of ministerial appointments. This change made Chile a parliamentary regime. Now the ultimate source of executive manipulation of elections disappeared. The impacts of these reforms were momentous. Whereas in the 30 years before 1891 the government had always enjoyed a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, this was never again the case over the following 30 years (Scully, 1992, p. 58). Further, when class-based parties started to emerge in the 1900s, they pursued electoral strategies. As a result, the Chilean left of the twentieth century was more committed to representative institutions than left-wing parties in other Latin American countries.

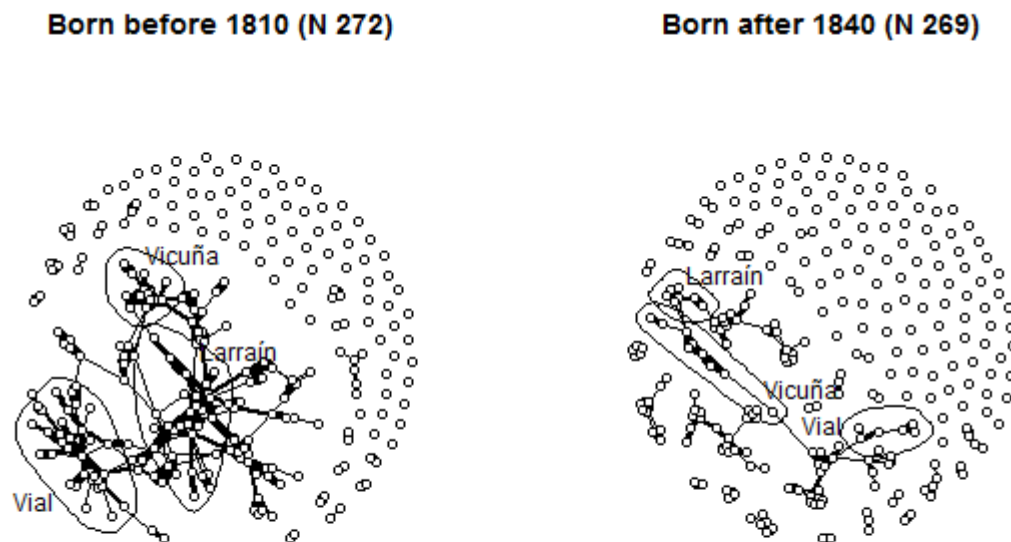
The Conservative Party pushed for the electoral reforms of 1874 and 1890. The party’s interest in expanding the franchise is not intuitive, as it represented the very core of the colonial aristocracy. However, the democratising role of the Chilean Conservative party is consistent with that of its British equivalent, as described by Ziblatt (2017). In Chile, the immediate cause of the Conservative change of politics, as indicated previously, was the Conservative party’s exclusion from the government. As part of the opposition, free elections gave them a better chance of securing seats in Congress than negotiating with the Liberal-controlled executive. The Conservative support of electoral freedom marked a departure from its past. In the Conservative convention of 1878, Carlos Walker Martínez (Partido Conservador 1947) made explicit the party’s change of strategy. “The Conservative party, which in the past had worked to strengthen authority to liberate the country from anarchy, now works to consolidate republican institutions, harmonising them with the progress of society, devolving to citizens the [power of] their actions, restricting the excessive faculties of power.” In terms of its consequences, the Conservative’s adoption of an electoral strategy made the Chilean path of democratisation more stable by securing the commitment of an essential part of the oligarchy to representative institutions (Valenzuela 1985).

Quantitative measures

This section quantitatively describes critical changes in the Chilean Congress from 1828 to 1894. Congress passed from being monopolised by a few, large extended families to being open to new families and unconnected individuals. In other words, the Chilean Congress became more plural as the century progressed. In the 1850s, under Manuel Montt, many newly enriched individuals entered Congress, as did state administrative staff members.

The Chilean elites decentralised. A similar number of politicians of the period 1828-1894 were born before 1810 and after 1840 – 272 and 269, respectively. Figure 4 represents the kinship network of both groups. Visual examination suggests that those born before 1810 were more cohesive, forming fewer but larger extended families. The younger generation was more likely to be unconnected, and even the connected ones built smaller kinship cluster.

Figure 4: Kinship networks Chilean politicians born before 1810 and after 1840



Note: The highlighted kinship clusters were identified using the Louvain community detection algorithm. Note that many isolates in both graphs are not isolates in the more extensive kinship network. This is because many of them had ties to individuals belonging to other cohorts.

The most central cluster of the older generation was the Santiago aristocratic cluster, composed of the families Larraín, Eyzaguirre, Portales, Irarrázaval (annotated “Larraín” in Figure 4). The other large groups were the Vicuña, the Errázuriz, and the Vial-Ortúzar. In the second half of the nineteenth century, these clans shrank and started sharing power with new families such as the Edwards, the Matte, and the Balmaceda.

Congress became less familial. Density is the ratio of existing ties from all potential ties. I use this measure to gauge the prevalence of familism in different parliamentary periods. The familial density of Congress was high in the 1830s and 1840s and dropped in the 1850s. From 1861 to 1873 it increased again to then fall in the elections of 1876 and especially after 1882. These figures contradict previous measures by Gabriel Marcella (1976, p. 115), who claims that “the intensification of the influence of

kinship, reached maximum proportions in the parliament of 1888.”²⁵ Two problems explain Marcella’s wrong proposition. First, he counts the absolute number of family ties instead of a more accurate relative measure. Being as large as it was, the 1888 Congress understandably had a more significant absolute number of connected parliamentarians than the small Congress of 1834. Relative to size, however, 1834 was significantly more familial than 1888. The second problem is Marcella’s incomplete empirical data.

Figure 5: kinship density of the Chilean Congress by period

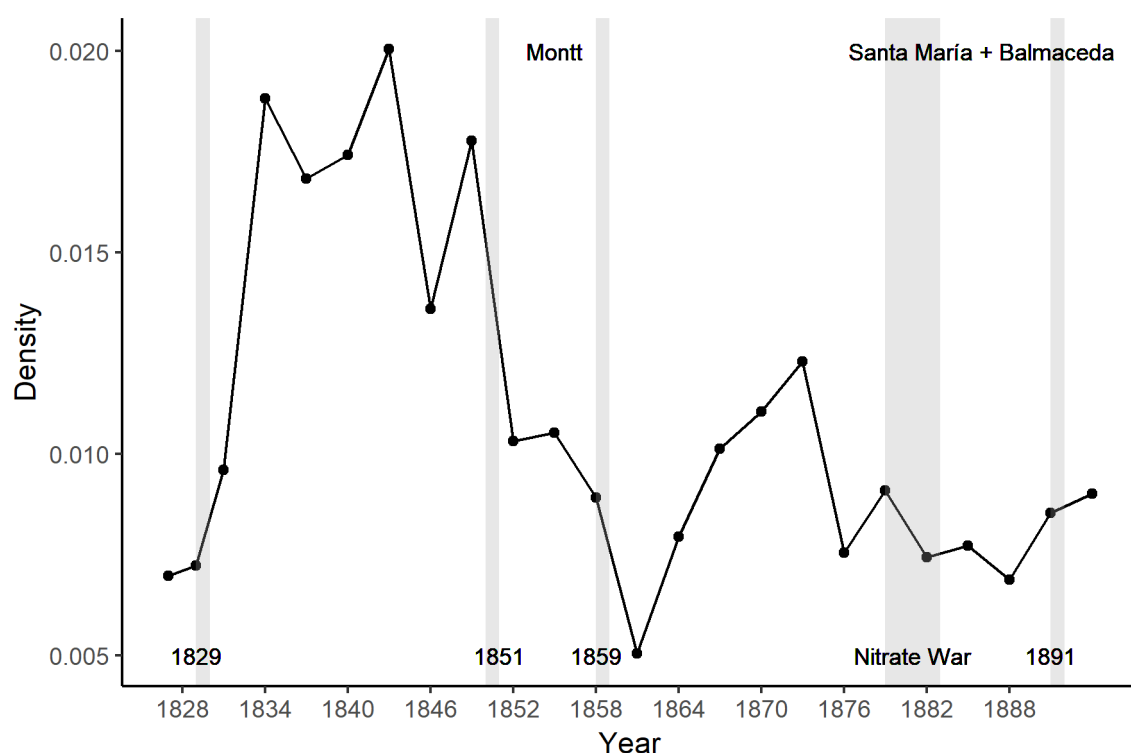
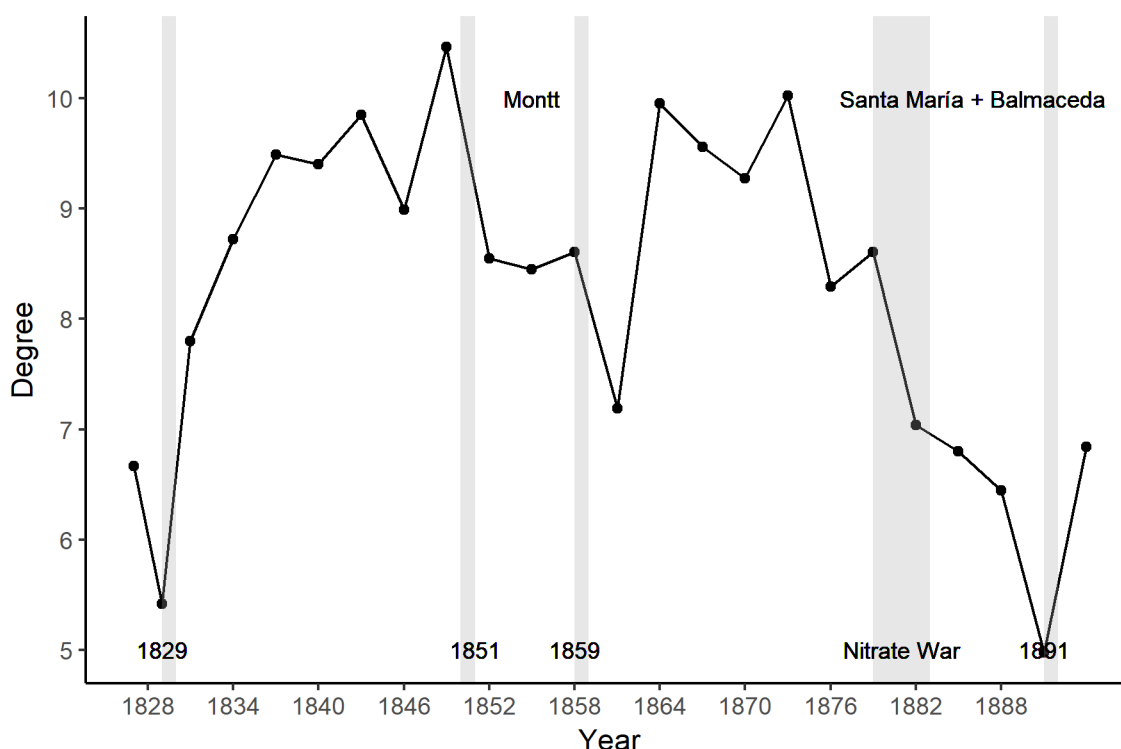


Figure 5 shows that the 1830-1850 period was more familial than the second half of the nineteenth century. This means that 1840s parliamentarians were more likely to be related by kin than 1870s parliamentarians. The change in the level of familism conforms to our discussion of Figure 4 at the beginning of this section, which shows that older politicians were more likely to be part of large familial clusters. The Congresses of 1828 and 1829 were among the least familial in the period. The civil war of 1829 brought in prominent families. In the Congress of 1834, a small number of large family clusters took over and remained in power through the 1830s and the 1840s. 1843 is the most familial year of the period under study. The post-civil war Congress of 1852 represents the first substantial drop of familism, and 1861 was the least familial of our period. After that, there was an increase of familism that reached high levels in the Congress of 1873, to then drop in 1876. Congresses in the last fifteen years of our period were relatively free of familism. In sum, measures of graph density by Congressional period show a clear divide between the period 1831-1851 and the period 1861-1891, with the former

²⁵ Marcella’s numbers have been reproduced by influential historians such as Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt (2014, p. 55).

being substantially more familial than the latter.²⁶ This periodisation conforms roughly to the traditional periodisation that distinguishes between the Conservative Republic (1831-1861) and Liberal Republic (1861-1891). The Montt administration (1851-1861) was different from both the Conservative and the Liberal periods. Montt was made President by the Conservative party, and his government remained one of the most repressive of the century. However, the composition of congresses under his rule was remarkably devoid of familism. The main body of this thesis will consider the 1850s in more detail.

Figure 6: Mean degree of the Chilean Congress by period, 1828-1891



Note: Vertical bars represent the interval of confidence of the mean degree. The 1861-1864 legislative transition was highlighted instead of the 1858-1861 transition – the years before and after the 1859 civil war. The reason is that the losing side of 1859 entirely took over Congress in 1864. Thus the 1861-1864 transition reflects the social difference between the parties fighting in 1859.

Figure 6 shows the mean degree of parliamentarians in congresses from 1828 to 1894. Whereas Figure 5 measures the prevalence of network density among the members of a Congress, the mean degree is a proxy of elitism. The two statistics are correlated but not identical. For example, two members of the same Congress may not be related, but both may come from prominent political dynasties. The density measure would not capture the familial origin of these parliamentarians but the degree measure would. The trends here are roughly similar to the ones of Figure 5, with the notable exception that the degree values for the period 1864-1876 are much higher than the values for density. The second period was

²⁶ Dal Bó et al (Dal Bó, Dal Bó, and Snyder 2009) report that around 30% of United States legislators had relatives in Congress per term in the early nineteenth century; this changed to around 20% in the second half. The authors use biographies as source of data. Biographies usually name a small percentage of all ties for any given legislator. For this reason, their number cannot be compared to the Chilean numbers.

less familial than the first period but was as elite-focused. During the Pelucón republic (1830-1860), a small number of core families controlled Congress. The Liberal Republic (1861-1891) represented a larger number of families, but all belonging to the core of the network.

What determined these changes in density and degree? Civil wars seemed to either increase or reduce familism, depending on who turned out victorious. The 1829 civil war produced a rise of familism, as did the civil war of 1891. The 1851 and 1859 civil wars, however, produced a decline. These changes are perplexing because they do not correlate with preconceived political expectations about the behaviour of political parties. We expect a Conservative victory to empower the oligarchy and a Liberal success to undermine it. However, the evidence shows that the Conservative victory of 1851 resulted in a decreased representation of core individuals in the Congress of 1852. What mattered, it seems, was not the identity of the political parties involved, but the government's role in the conflict. Official victories promoted individuals outside the core of the elite; the triumph of the opposition promoted core members. Thus, after the opposition victories of 1829 and 1891, familism increased, but after the governmental victories of 1851 and 1859 familism decreased. Why was the oligarchy overrepresented in the opposition in times of civil conflict? The argument is circular: opposition movements that do not count with the support of the aristocracy do not gain enough momentum to start a civil war. Since the government has preferential access to the means of coercion and to the administrative apparatus, forming an opposition is a formidable enterprise that can be sustained only by the very rich and well-connected. Let us remember that the armies that fought against the government in 1859 and 1891 were built from scratch. On the other side of the fire line, governmental supporters tend to be less oligarchic than the opposition. To conduct the war effort, the government often relies on soldiers and administrators from non-elite backgrounds. Their war effort opens political opportunities to them closed otherwise. The significant presence of military men among the pro-Montt Congress of 1861 and the pro-Balmaceda Congress of 1891 illustrates this point.

The association between oligarchism and anti-state activism has been documented using network data for Haiti's 1991 coup d'état. Naidu et al (2016) show that individuals that contributed to this coup were likely to be central in the elite kinship network, independently of their economic situation. The reason, they say, is that the political intervention of central individuals is effective. Based on this finding, they indicate that "the density of elite networks may be an important factor in explaining... whether or not democracy is consolidated" (Naidu et al. 2016, p. 38). While Naidu et al. focus on a coup-d'état, not on civil wars, their finding is consistent with the pattern presented in Figure 6, which shows that the anti-government oppositions in times of civil war was overrepresented in the oligarchy. However, the authors' conclusion that oligarchic density deteriorates democracy applies only in contexts where the elites are not competitive. The Chilean case shows that a very dense oligarchy can be internally competitive even within its very core.

The Cabinet and Congress uncoupled. With a mean degree above 8, Ministers were better connected than Deputies (6.7) but had a slightly lower degree than Senators (9.4). Among ministers, those in Interior and Finance had the highest degree, with 10.5 and 9.5, respectively. Justice and War, on the other hand, were less well-connected, with 7.4 and 7.1, respectively.

Figure 7: Mean degree of Ministers by Presidential term

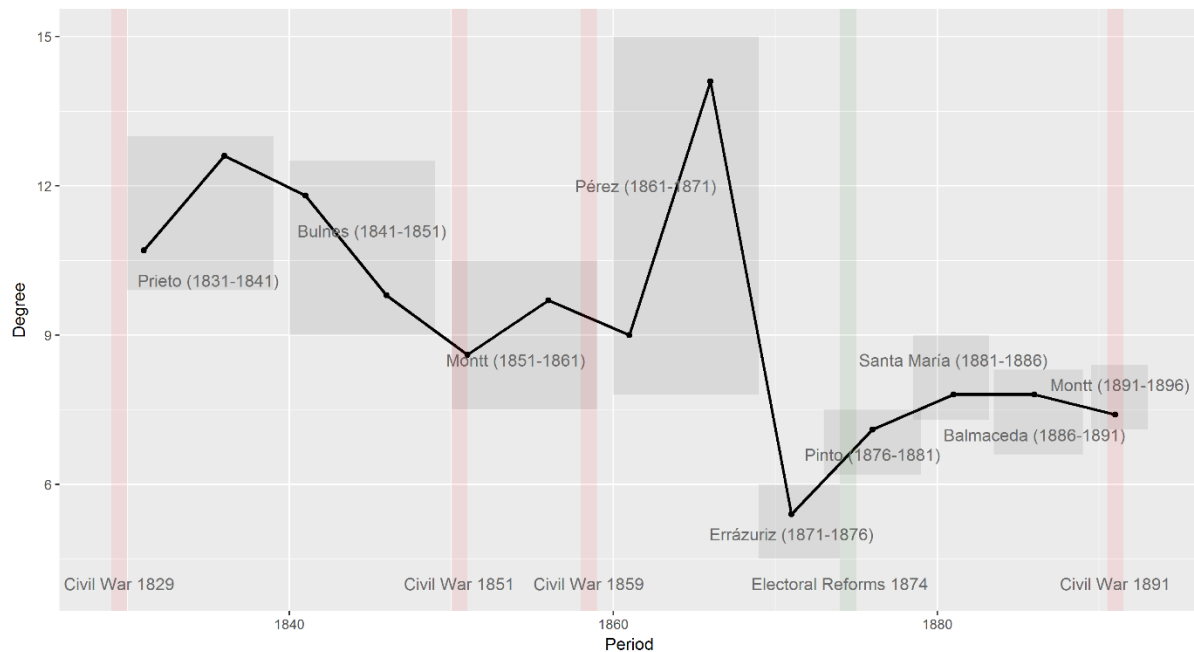
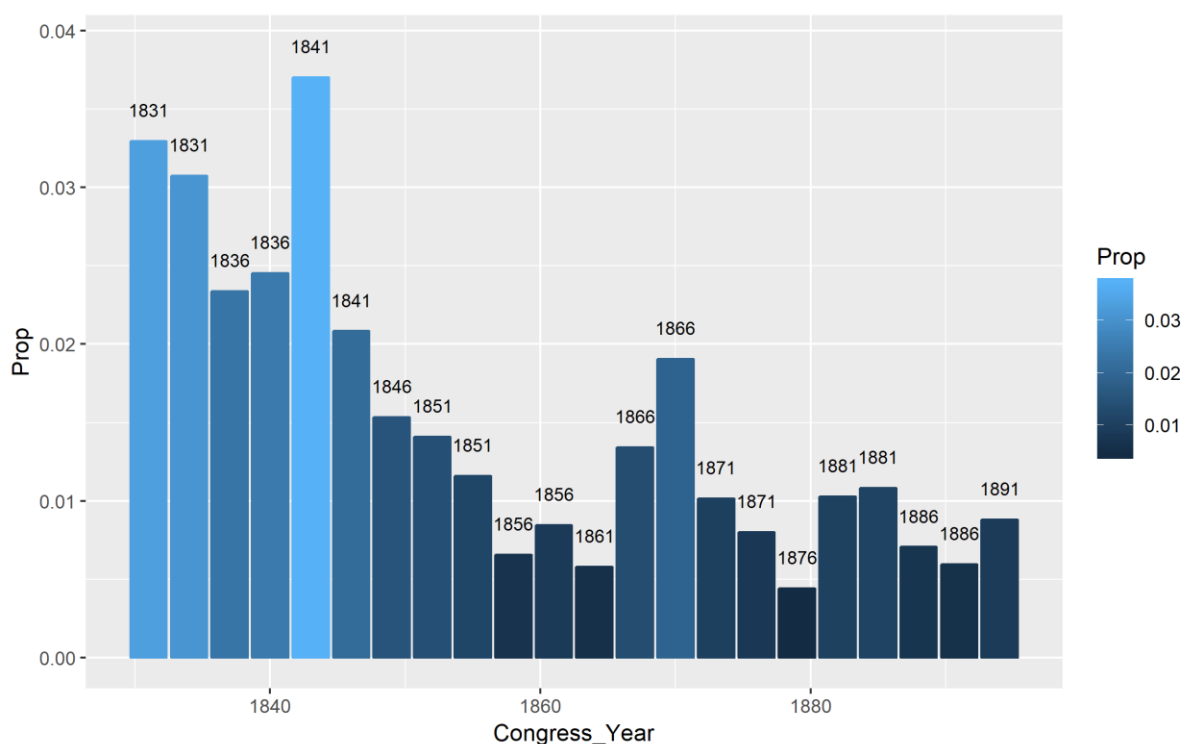


Figure 7 echoes the trends observed for Congress. The 1830s and 1840s, present high levels of familism. Manuel Montt (1851-1861) was the first President to choose Ministers with few connections, especially in his first period (1851-1856). His Minister of Finance, José María Berganza Lorca, for example, had no relatives among parliamentarians of the period 1828-1894. The cabinet of President José Joaquín Pérez Mascayano's second term scores the highest mean centrality of the period, with ministers having on average 14 relatives among the political elite. Federico Errázuriz (1871-1876) had a familial Congress (mean degree 14.5 in Senate), but a remarkably peripheral Cabinet, with an average degree of 5.3, the lowest score in our period. After that, through the presidencies of Aníbal Pinto, Domingo Santa María, José Manuel Balmaceda, and Pedro Montt, the mean degree of ministers remained low compared to the earlier period.

Figure 8: Average proportion of Congress members connected by kinship to Cabinet



Perhaps a more meaningful indicator is the number of relatives that ministers had among Congressmen per term. Figure 8 presents a measure of the proportion of every Congress composed by the relatives of cabinet members, divided by the number of ministers by period. The trend conforms with the patterns presented earlier. The first twenty years of the Pelucón regime was strongly familial, as cabinet members had strong kinship ties to Congressmen. The cabinet-Congress changed association decreasing in the government of Manuel Montt, especially his second term (1856-1861). After that, the ties between the cabinet and Congress remained relatively low, except for the second term of the government of José Joaquín Pérez Mascayano, where the connection cabinet-Congress strengthened momentarily.

The bourgeois increase their presence in the 1850s. The figures so far show that the leading oligarchic families loosened their grip of Congress as the century progressed and that individuals with less oligarchic credentials expanded. A group that started doing well in the 1850s were the bourgeoisie – wealthy individuals that did not necessarily come from aristocratic families. The bourgeoisie occupies an essential place in scholarly accounts of democratisation. In the enlightenment tradition, it is the leading group aiming to limit the despotic tendencies of the state (Ansell and Samuels 2014). In Marxism, the bourgeoisie conducted the French revolution of 1789. In Chilean historiography, the new group of entrepreneurs have also received attention (Nazer 2002; Villalobos 2006).

Figure 9: Electoral trajectory in Congress of the new rich and their familial entourage (1882)

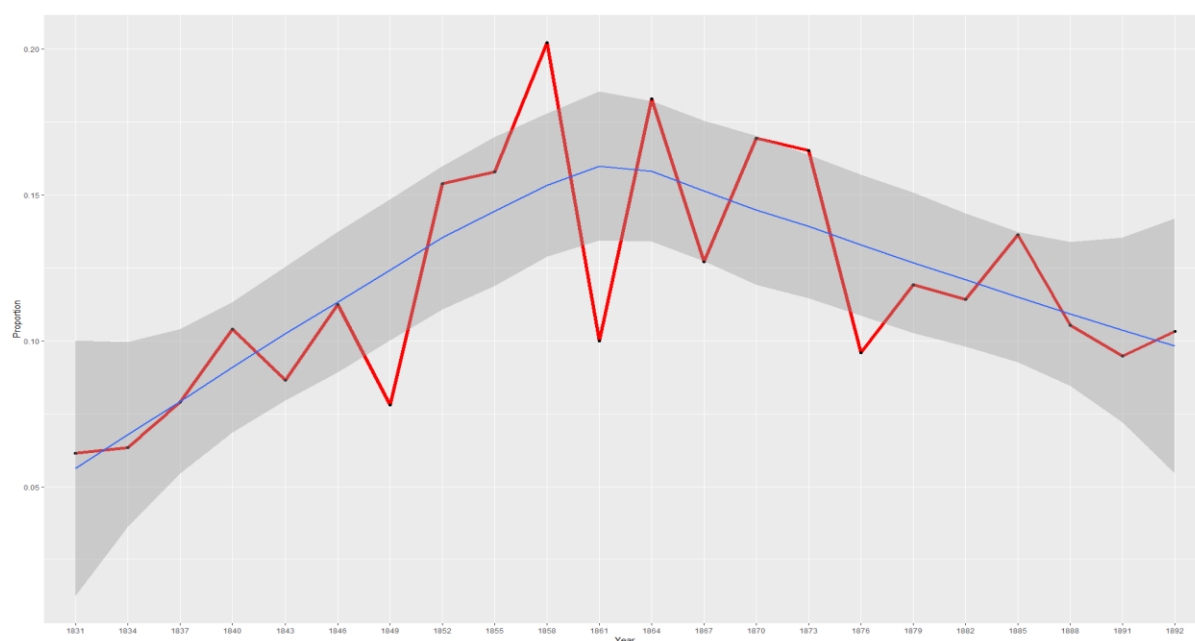
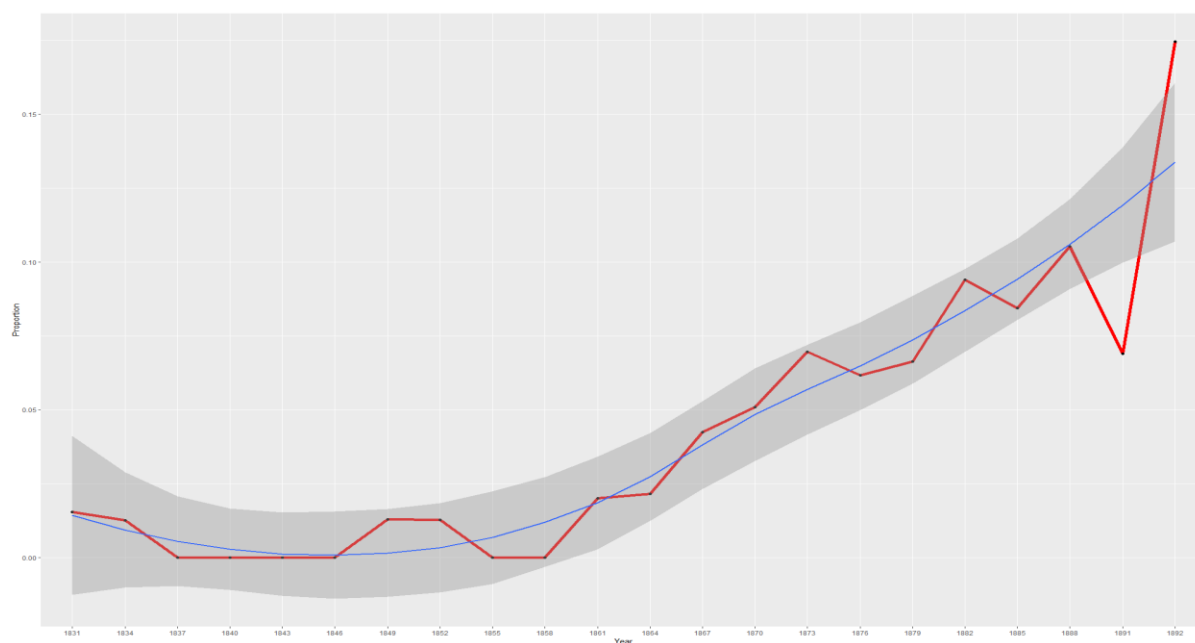


Figure 9 shows the electoral performance of the very rich, excluding the noble and the core families. The list was obtained by extracting all surnames of the list of wealthiest individuals formulated by Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna in 1882 and removing those associated to the nobility or one of the 30 most central surnames in the network. The result is a rough sample of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie: prosperous but new. Exemplars of this category are families like the Edwards, the Matte, the Besa, the Urmeneta, the Cousiño, and the Gallo.²⁷

Figure 10: Electoral trajectory in Congress of individuals with British or German surnames



²⁷ For a qualitative review of the emergence of this new bourgeoisie, see Nazer (2002).

Another piece of evidence reflecting the gradual incorporation of new groups in Congress is the number of parliamentarians with non-Hispanic surnames. Figure 10 shows the proportion of individuals with English and German surnames. The trend does not change for the first thirty years of our period, but it increases linearly from 1861 onward. Remarkably, whereas the Balmacedist Congress of 1891 experienced the first significant drop of individuals with a foreign surname, the opposition Congress of 1891 incorporated many. This trend lends partial support to the Dependence interpretation of the civil war of 1891, which identifies the Congressist opposition to sectors linked to English capitalism.

Ansell and Samuels (2014) say the new bourgeoisie pushed for democracy as a way of entering the state and stopping it from taxing them heavily. The Chilean state, however, had an almost negligible capacity of taxing its citizenry before the 1880s, yet democratisation still occurred. I see the impact of the bourgeoisie on democratisation differently: they mitigated the centrality of networks in organising politics. Traditionally, individuals progressed in politics via their networks, especially kinship. The expansion of the economy and the subsequent emergence of the bourgeoisie challenged this logic, as it expanded the number of unconnected but wealthy individuals. Further, these wealthy outsiders were often promoted by rulers wanting to centralise the state. The pluralisation of politics forced power holders to rationalise the mechanisms of political promotion.

Restrained conflict

The Chilean elites fought four civil wars and had plenty of other, smaller clashes. However, compared to their Latin American counterparts, they coexisted in relative peace. After spending a few months in Chile in 1909, the North American political scientist Paul Reinsch wrote: “though split up into numerous parties, which carry on lively political warfare, its solidarity as a society nevertheless comes out again and again at times of political crises” (Reinsch 1909). The reason for the lack of constant conflict among the Chilean elites was their familial density. The elites shared economic interests and basic ideas about how to govern. More importantly, network density made conflict tamer than conflict in countries with fragmented elites. This point matters, because one of the preconditions of Liberal democracy is that the losers of any given conflict are treated well and have the chance to keep competing in subsequent encounters. The Chilean experience shows that parties on the losing end of elections often had their comeback in subsequent elections. Even factions on the losing end of civil wars were re-incorporated into normal politics shortly after their defeat.

From 1814 to 1932, the Chilean government issued 20 laws of amnesty. These included a pardon in 1842 targeted at “Chileans in exile” who fought on the Liberal side in the 1829 civil war; one in 1857 directed to “all individuals that partook in the political events of 1851”; one in 1861 targeted at “all individuals who are subject to be judged under political crimes since 1851”; and one in 1891 forgiving “all individuals who could be subject to laws against political crimes from January the 1st until August the 29th of 1891” (B. Loveman & Lira, 2000, Appendix I). In other words, the losing sides of 1829,

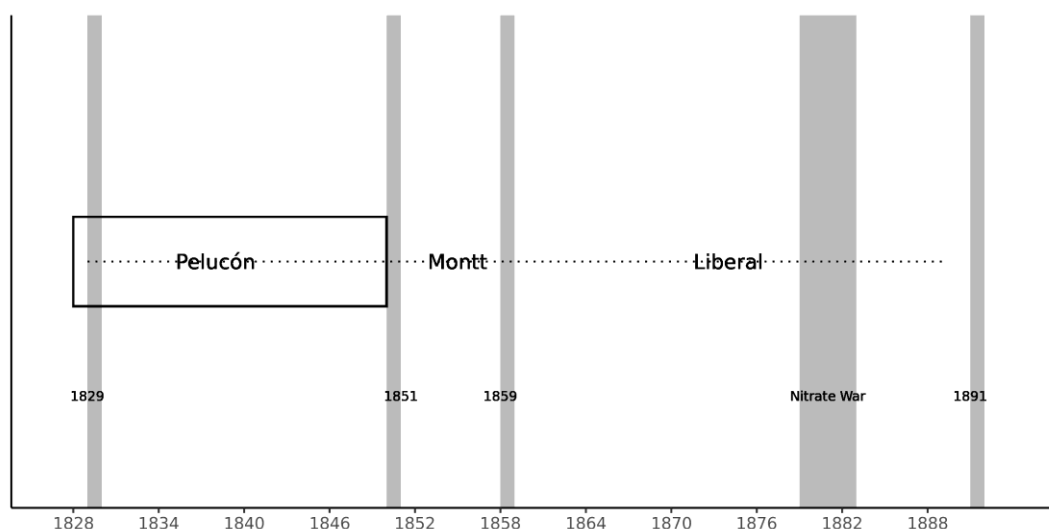
1851, 1859, and 1891 were back in the political scene shortly after their defeat. Moreover, the losing party of the 1891 civil war won the second-largest majority in the parliamentary elections of 1894 (J. S. Valenzuela, 2012, p. 64).

Consider an accusation targeted at Ramón Francisco Vicuña – the defeated head of state of 1829 – two years after his demise from power. In 1832, a woman named Margarita Fernández, whose husband was killed under the Pipiolo regime, sued Vicuña. Congress forced Vicuña to stay in Santiago while it examined the case, but Vicuña's relative, deputy Juan Antonio Guerrero Gayón de Celis, paid 25.000 pesos for his liberty (Barros Arana, 2000, p. 197). The trial took place on 15 October 1832. The Senate committee was formed by Diego Antonio Barros Fernandez, Fernando Errázuriz Aldunate, Diego Antonio Elizondo, Fernando Antonio Elizalde, Mariano Egaña, Manuel José Gandarillas, José Antonio Huici, Manuel Frutos Rodríguez, Pedro Ovalle Landa, Juan Francisco Meneses. They were all ideologically opposed to Vicuña's government, but some were close to him in the family network. Fernando Errázuriz was cousins with Vicuña's son in law – Francisco Javier Ovalle Errázuriz – and Pedro Ovalle Landa was cousins with another of Vicuña's sons-in-law – Pedro Felipe Iñiguez Landa. Vicuña was absolved by the same party that had defeated him in a civil war just two years earlier. "A respectful silence had taken over," recounts Barros Arana (2000, p. 200), whose father presided the session, "Don Francisco Ramón Vicuña Larraín, standing up and deeply moved, thanked the Senate." The trial against Vicuña left a precedent. Old Pipiolo rivals were excluded from power but not punished harshly – at least the ones that were well-connected. "Even among the military of the old army," says Barros Arana (2000, p. 202), "the most prestigious removed leaders, generals Pinto, Borgoño, Las Heras and Lastra, did not ask anything from the government and kept distant from politics."

Presidents did not secure the prominence of their family groups after they passed power over to their successors, even when the latter were hand-picked. The transition between Federico Errázuriz and Aníbal Pinto in 1876 illustrates this point. The Liberal convention that nominated Aníbal Pinto was criticised by Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna (1931 [1880]) as a deal between the Errázuriz and Pinto families. Moreover, the historiographical literature often portrays Errázuriz as dominant and Pinto as weak (Zegers 1969). At face-value, this picture seems like a case of behind-the-scenes control by Errázuriz to secure the position of this family. However, the data shows that members of the Errázuriz group dropped their share of Congress seats in 1876 and the following two elections, only recovering after the civil war of 1891. A similar pattern occurred in the presidential transitions of 1851, 1861, and 1871. The oligarchy exerted control over politics in nineteenth-century Chile, but within it, the balance of familial power was more fluid than what is acknowledged in the literature.

3. Pipiolos versus Pelucones (1828-1849)

This chapter discusses the familial cleavages that emerged in Chile in the first decades after independence. In the 1810s and early 1820s, the leading families competing for power were the Carrera and the so-called “Ottoman” branch of the Larraín family. The expulsion of the Spaniards in 1818 and the subsequent rise of General Bernardo O’Higgins to power marked the victory of the Larraín. However, O’Higgins aimed to centralise control and several prominent families of Santiago – including the Larraín – forced his abdication. The first sizeable civil war in Chilean history occurred in 1829, which pitted the Liberal *Pipiolos* and the Conservative *Pelucones*.²⁸ The oligarchic core of this conflict involved three distinct familial clusters: a group of families associated with the Vicuña, including the Ottomans; another group of interrelated families belonging to the Santiago aristocracy (Irrázaval, Eyzaguirre, Portales, etc.); and a third cluster formed around the Vial family, which was partially based in Concepción. The first cluster fought on the defeated Pipiolo side and the other two on the victorious Pelucón camp. The Pelucón coalition did not cohere entirely after capturing power. The Santiago aristocrats, led by Diego Portales, became the dominant faction within the regime. The cluster organised around the Vial and the Errázuriz families formed an intra-regime opposition referred to as *Filópita* by contemporaries.



The first familial cleavage: 1810-1823

“The revolution in Chile,” wrote Amunátegui and Vicuña Mackenna (1917, p. 41), “was in its origin a purely aristocratic movement. Its promoters were (...) the heads of the country’s great families: the Larraín, the Errázuriz, and the Eyzaguirre.” Once in power, these families started competing. The first familial cleavage in Chilean politics was that between the Larraín and the Carrera. Here I discuss the work of Mary Felstiner (1970, 1976) and Sarah Chambers (2015), who studied the Larraín family in

²⁸ The *Pipiolos* and *Pelucón* words have class connotation. The former referred to non-wealthy and unexperienced people; the latter – “big wigs” – referred to wealthy people.

the period of independence and its conflict with the Carrera. This opposition will introduce us to some of the families that played a role in politics throughout the nineteenth century. Besides, it will set the background against which to evaluate subsequent changes in the importance of kinship networks in structuring political factions.

The last Spanish governor of Chile – Francisco Antonio García Carrasco – described the new junta that formed in Chile in 1810 as “governed by the turbulent genius of the Larraín clan” (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 124). The Larraíns he was referring to was the so-called *Ottoman* branch. The other branch – the so-called *Marquises* – were royalists. As indicated in the previous chapter, the Marquises were the older, nobler branch of the Larraín, which descended from Santiago Larraín Vicuña (arrived in Chile in 1685). The Ottomans descended from his nephew, Martín José Larraín Vicuña. They were not as wealthy as the Marquises nor had nobility titles, but they were numerous and well represented in the colonial administration. This section focuses on the Ottoman branch because they were vital in the first period of Independence. Royalist priest Joaquín Rodríguez Zorrilla described them in the following terms:

A party has formed which does nothing but what the canon [Vicente] Larraín and his brother Fray Joaquin want; they relay the message of what must be done to their brother-in-law Perez, their brother don Diego, their nephew Ramirez and to the mayors Eyzaguirre and Cerda, who are at their call.²⁹

The weeks before the establishment of the first governing junta in Chile, interim governor Mateo de Toro Zambrano received several visits from members of this family. On September 10, 1810, Diego Larraín Salas, Fernando Errázuriz Aldunate, and Agustín Eyzaguirre Arechavala (married with a Larraín) made a first visit to the governor. It followed a second visit composed of José Antonio Pérez – brother-in-law of the Larraín (Ottoman branch) – Agustín Eyzaguirre, José Nicolás Cerda Concha and José Miguel Infante Rojas. Mateo de Toro Zambrano finally accepted the request of holding an open council representing the notables of Santiago. The public council took place on September 18, 1810. Now the task was to make sure that it decided to form a governing junta. The day before it took place, on September 17, one hundred patriots met to decide on a list of candidates. Vicente Larraín Salas presided at the meeting, and the names that he proposed were accepted. The Irish officer Juan Mackenna, brother-in-law of the Larraín, was promoted in the army. On the day after, the open council approved the list proposed by Vicente Larraín the day before. These were Mateo de Toro Zambrano, José Antonio Aldunate Garcés (bishop), Ignacio de la Carrera Cuevas, Fernando Marquez de la Plata Orozco (Spaniard), Juan Martínez de Rozas, Francisco Javier de Reina, Juan Enrique Rosales Fuentes, José Gregorio Argomedo Montero, and Gaspar Marín Esquivel. Of the open council participants, twelve

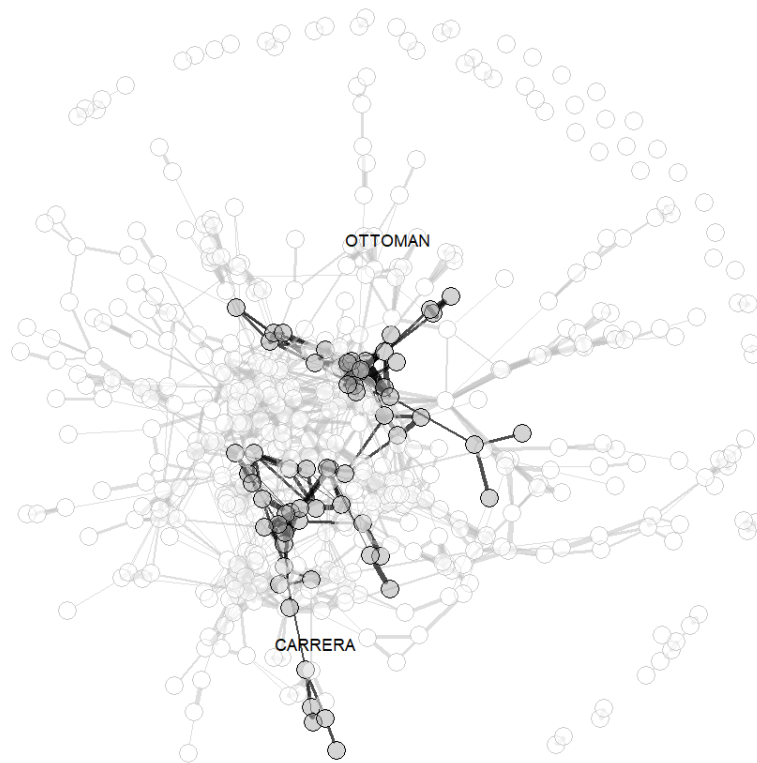
²⁹ Quoted in Felstiner (1970, p. 124).

signed the letter confirming this junta, five out of which were related to the Ochocientos clan (Felstiner 1970, p. 126).

On May 6, 1811, a national Congress formed and the Junta – the main leverage of power of the Larraín – ceased to exist. Contrary to the wishes of the Larraín, the dominant faction within those elected for Congress were the moderates, who wanted some freedom from Spain but not total independence. Indeed, of the 40 members, only 12 were patriots, some of them allies of the Larraín: Juan Martínez de Rozas, Juan Pablo Fretes, Manuel de Salas, José Santos Mascayano (Felstiner 1970, p. 138). To obtain a majority in the new Congress, the Ottomans recruited the Carreras to plot a coup. José Miguel Carrera refused to cooperate initially, but then he accepted (Felstiner 1970, p. 138). On September 4, 1811, one hundred troops under Juan José and José Miguel Carrera surrounded Congress. The Conservative members were ousted, the Ottomans occupied the empty places, and Ignacio Carrera Cuevas took the top military post. His son, José Miguel Carrera, wrote in his diary: the coup “was the work of the Ottoman House, it placed the Government in its house, the Congress in its house, and all to its desire and taste” (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 140). A new Junta was formed, with an Ottoman-dominated membership: Juan Enrique Rosales, Juan Martinez de Rozas, Juan Mackenna, José Gaspar Marín Esquivel, and as secretaries the allies Gregorio Argomedo and Agustín Vial Santelices (Felstiner 1970, p. 140). Members of the Ottoman clan and their friends seized many other offices. On September 20, 1811, Joaquín Larraín Salas was named the President of Congress.

Figure 11: The Ottoman and Carrera clusters

The Ottoman and Carrera clusters



Note: The graph was made using parliamentarians from the period 1828-186, and the highlighted Carrera and Ottoman clusters were identified using the fast-greedy community detection algorithm.

José Miguel Carrera felt that he had not been rewarded enough for his family's involvement in the coup. Carrera wrote in his diary: "We expected... to see our country made the patrimony of that family" (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 150). This was when his conversation with Joaquín Larraín which opens this thesis took place: "[The Larraín] have all the important seats," said Larraín to Carrera. "And who is the President of the bayonets?" he responded (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 150). On 15 November 1811, Carrera and two of his brothers conducted a second coup-d'état explicitly intended to exclude the Larraíns from power. In his diaries, Carrera wrote: "to destroy the Family it was necessary to destroy the Congress" (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 154). The new authorities put under arrest members of the Larraín family. It sent Gabriel Larraín to Combarbalá for two years; Juan Mackenna got three years of arrest at the hacienda of the Vicuña family; Francisco Ramón Vicuña Larraín took refuge in La Ligua for two years. The government exiled members of the related Huici family to the island of Juan Fernández. Carrera replaced the Congress of 1811 with a three-member Junta with himself at the top. This coup created the first familial cleavage in Chilean politics, that between the Ottoman Larraín and the Carrera family. The United States consul in Chile expressed:

... Unfortunately, this country has been divided into two sharp and irreconcilable factions by two powerful families, the Carreras and Larraíns, both equally anxious to liberate their country, and both using every mean in their power to obtain the command.³⁰

In March 1813, news reached Santiago of a Spanish expeditionary army advancing from Valdivia. Carrera, in control of the military, moved south to contain the enemy's advance over Santiago. His temporary absence produced a reshuffling of power. The Ottoman-related Francisco Pérez and Juan Mackenna became ascendant over the Junta, and expelled José Miguel and his brother Juan José Carrera of the army, arguing for "the necessity that all the armies not be located in one family" (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 155). As the Spanish army made successful progress toward Santiago, José Antonio Irisarri – an in-law of the Ottomans – took the reins of power in Santiago and established a military-style rule. He put Francisco Antonio Pérez in charge of organising the new government and promoted his distant-relative, Joaquín Echeverría Larraín, as Intendant General of the Army. Shortly after, the executive command of the state was passed over to Francisco de la Lastra Sotta, and Irisarri became Intendente of Santiago. As such, he had Ignacio Carrera Cuevas detained, after finding that his son José Miguel had escaped. Juan Mackenna urged Bernardo O'Higgins – the future hero of independence – to take over the army from the Carrera family, which he did. Indeed, O'Higgins had been an ally of the Larraín for some time. In a letter to Juan Mackenna, he criticised José Miguel Carrera in the following terms: "the conduct of [José Miguel Carrera] I find intolerable... he declaims incessantly against you and the honourable Larraín family" (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 158).

On July 22, 1814, Carrera conducted a new coup d'état with the support of several loyal soldiers and a crowd from the populace. Juan Mackenna, Irisarri, and Lastra took refuge in Mendoza; Joaquín Larraín and Francisco Ramón Vicuña were put under arrest in haciendas north of Santiago (Felstiner 1970, p. 165). When Bernardo O'Higgins – stationed with his army in Talca – found out, he marched to Santiago, and the two caudillos confronted each other in small-scale battles that produced no clear winner. The series of confrontations ended when the Spanish army marched north and defeated the battalion under O'Higgins in Rancagua. Carrera ordered his brigade to retreat to Coquimbo, but Gregorio de las Heras – married with a Larraín – refused to obey, leading his troops to Mendoza. The Spanish army marched over Santiago, and the Carreras escaped across the mountains. Now all the old enemies – Carreras and Larraíns – joined in Mendoza. Luis Carrera challenged Juan Mackenna to a duel, arguing that Mackenna had "insulted the honour of [his] family" (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 168). Mackenna died at the first shot. The governor of Argentina Martín Pueyrredón wrote in 1816 that "[t]he division of Chile into two powerful parties is notorious... one of the Carrera family and the other of the Larraín family" (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 175).

³⁰ Quoted in Felstiner (1970, p. 149)

Over the following years and upon the recovery of independence in 1817, this conflict produced a clear winner: the Larraín. In the ten-member Senate nominated by Bernardo O'Higgins in 1818, two members – Francisco Antonio Pérez Salas and Joaquín Larraín Salas – were part of the Ottoman clan, and two other – Francisco Javier Errázuriz Aldunate and Manuel de Salas Corvalán – were members of the closely related Errázuriz clan. While Bernardo O'Higgins put members of the Larraín extended family in high positions, the three Carrera brothers were arrested in Argentina and killed. In Chile, Miguel Ureta Carrera fled to Córdoba, Rosa Valdivieso – the mother-in-law of José Miguel Carrera – was exiled in Mendoza, and Ana María Cotapos de la Lastra – the wife of Juan José Carrera – was exiled to Barraza, in the north of Chile (Amunátegui and Vicuña Mackenna 1917, p. 252).

Felstiner indicates that both the Larraín and the Carrera families wished to “translate the family system to the independent state of Chile” (Felstiner 1970, p. 180). Indeed, both families were part of the colonial elite. However, their basis of support was different. Irisarri claimed that “[t]he party opposing the Carreras was that of all the families of Chile, among which was the Larraín family, which as the most numerous, always made itself the most notable. The Carreras supported themselves on force alone” (quoted in Felstiner 1970, p. 181). This pattern recurred over the nineteenth century. The political competition originated at the core of the oligarchy, but the sources of power of different families varied. Some families relied on networks of influence within the powerful; others on the military or the administration. Here is the reason why traditional historiography so often sees times of conflict as structured by the competition between the oligarchy and the state. Felstiner refers to this opposition as the rule of the family versus the rule of the military:

The lesson for revolutionary families was clear: the army could not be controlled the way the cabildo could, the way Congress could—by manipulation, by nepotism, by family alliances. It was necessary to give Chile a form of government which offered the family system a chance to work against the pressures of military power³¹

O'Higgins, as the commander of a victorious army, was able to govern with relative independence from any oligarchic family, including the Ottomans. Members of the traditional elites conspired to oust him, a group that included the Senators Agustín Eyzaguirre Arechavala and José Ignacio Cienfuegos Arteaga, together with the Carrera supporter Ramón Novoa López (Amunátegui and Vicuña Mackenna 1917, p. 253). The authorities uncovered this conspiracy and arrested some of its agents. However, the anti-O'Higgins opposition increased. On 7 May 1822, he called for a convention formed by his supporters. The convention issued a new constitution and confirmed him as head of state.

Contrary to the Senate of 1818, few of the 32 Deputies elected in 1822 were members of established families. Importantly, this Congress had no Ottoman representative, except for Francisco de Paula

³¹ Felstiner (1970, p. 183).

Caldera Fontecilla, who was married to Micaela Mascayano Larraín. It is telling that, during the debates of the assembly, Caldera was one of the few dissident voices against the authoritarian tendencies of O'Higgins (Amunátegui and Vicuña Mackenna 1917, p. 336). By November 1822, a small opposition started forming within the assembly, which included – together with Caldera – Fernando Errázuriz Aldunate and José Miguel Irrázaval Alcalde (Amunátegui and Vicuña Mackenna 1917, p. 338), among the purest representatives of the Santiago oligarchy.

Concepción – led by its governor Ramón Freire Serrano – began an armed rebellion in November 1822. Valdivia, under the orders of Jorge Beauchef, followed suit, as did La Serena and Illapel under the leadership of Miguel Irrázaval Solar (Amunátegui and Vicuña Mackenna 1917, p. 355). O'Higgins could still count on key army officials – e.g. José Joaquín Prieto Vial and José María de la Cruz Prieto (Amunátegui and Vicuña Mackenna 1917, p. 366) – but the opposition was strong. Members of the Santiago oligarchy met in an open council on January 28, 1823, to decide on a course of action. Fernando Errázuriz Aldunate and José Miguel Infante Rojas were commissioned to ask O'Higgins to listen to the demands of the assembly, but the ruler declined. It took the mediation of Luis de la Cruz Goyeneche – father of José María de la Cruz and a close friend of O'Higgins – for the latter to accept. O'Higgins resigned and decided to leave for Peru. In his pass to Valparaíso, he stayed in the house of his friend José Ignacio Zenteno Pozo, who would occupy essential posts in the Pelucón period. In Santiago, a new governing junta was elected, composed of Agustín Eyzaguirre Arechavala, Fernando Errázuriz Aldunate, and José Miguel Infante Rojas (Amunátegui and Vicuña Mackenna 1917, p. 385).

Felstiner argues that the Ottoman family declined politically after the fall of O'Higgins. However, the data on the membership of Congress suggests otherwise. The Ottomans had a strong representation in the start of O'Higgins' rule with two members – Joaquín Larraín Salas and Francisco Antonio Pérez Salas – partaking in the Conservative Senate of 1818. However, in the election of the constitutional convention of 1822 – a much larger body – the Ottomans nearly disappeared. The apparent exclusion of the Ottomans suggests that O'Higgins now counted on others to govern. While the Ottomans were not prominent in the movement to oust O'Higgins, they did have a comeback right after his demise. For instance, José Joaquín Vicuña Larraín formed part of the Provincial Assembly of Coquimbo that challenged O'Higgins at the end of 1822; Francisco Antonio Pérez Salas was named counsellor in the State Council of January 1823, and Joaquín Larraín Salas was elected Deputy in the Congress of 1823. Further, in 1824, Francisco Ramón Vicuña Larraín became Minister of Interior of President Ramón Freire (Valencia Avaria 1986). The rise of family members suggests that the old alliance between O'Higgins and the Ottomans broke apart in the second part of the former's rule.

After the fall of O'Higgins, the old Larraín/Carrera conflict disappeared. The Ottomans – especially its Vicuña branch – gained ascendancy and compromised with the old Carrerista enemies. The Vicuña-dominated Congresses of 1828 and 1829, included the Carreristas Manuel Antonio Araoz Carrera,

Miguel Ureta Carrera, and Carlos Rodríguez Erdoyza. In 1826, the government took over the tobacco monopoly from a group of merchants. This exclusion pushed Diego Portales – a member of the most aristocratic segment of the Santiago oligarchy – to the opposition. The *O'Higginistas* – those who supported O'Higgins until his end – also passed to the opposition. This group included the Prieto-Vial family and others like José Antonio Rodríguez Aldea. The Vial-Prieto O'Higginistas entered an alliance with the noble segment of the Santiago oligarchy. The next chapter describes how Ottomans and Carreristas fought the O'Higginistas and the aristocrats during the civil war of 1829.

The civil war of 1829

In the elections of 1829, people knew that the incumbent President, the Liberal Francisco Antonio Pinto, would be re-elected. However, as Pedro Félix Vicuña (1943) indicates in his memoirs, all parties thought of him as weak and likely to resign his office due to his poor health. The real stakes were at the vice-presidency level. Liberals initially favoured Francisco Ruiz-Tagle Portales, an aristocrat from Santiago. Ruiz-Tagle, however, who was cousins with anti-government plotter Diego Portales, switched sides. Liberals then supported Joaquín Vicuña Larraín, the brother of Francisco Ramón Vicuña, who was the head of the Senate. The Liberals were disorganised and could not discipline the votes of their following on time for the election. As a result, the party's votes spread among different candidates. The opposition to the Liberals consisted of two groups: the *Estanqueros* and the *O'Higginistas*. The *Estanqueros*, led by Diego Portales, were merchants from Santiago, mostly of aristocratic origin. They voted for their social kin, Francisco Ruiz Tagle. O'Higginistas were military men, mainly from the southern city of Concepción, who supported the return of the former military hero, Bernardo O'Higgins, now in exile in Peru.

In the North, Coquimbo and Aconcagua voted overwhelmingly for Vicuña. Santiago voters split their ballots evenly but with a slight majority for Ruiz-Tagle. An example of the inability of the Liberals to discipline all votes around one candidate was Colchagua, whose Liberal governor, Jose Gregorio Argomedo, promoted himself his own candidacy despite not having chances of winning. Maule and Concepción, in turn, voted overwhelmingly for Prieto. As expected, the elections of September 1829 made Pinto President but did not produce an absolute majority for the vice-presidency. How to choose a new vice-President? The opposition – a minority – argued for selecting one among the candidates with the most votes after Pinto, Ruiz-Tagle and Prieto. The formula seemed consistent with the spirit of the 1828 Constitution – which admittedly was not entirely explicit. Liberals, however, wanted Vicuña for the office, and they were the majority. The Liberal-dominated Congress decided that all candidates had the same chance in the tie-break, and – unsurprisingly – Joaquín Vicuña got elected as vice-President. The weight of this decision augmented when, on September 17, 1829, Francisco Antonio Pinto announced that he would not accept the presidency, due to his poor health. A Vicuña (Francisco Ramón) became the country's vice-President, and another Vicuña (Joaquín), was soon to succeed him.

On December 1828, the Pope had nominated Manuel Vicuña Larraín – the brother of Francisco Ramón and Joaquín Vicuña – as Bishop of Santiago. This decision was controversial because the Chilean government had not proposed the name. On October 22, 1829, Congress accepted Manuel Vicuña as Bishop of Santiago. The Vicuña family was at its peak. Let us remember that the Vicuñas were a branch of the larger *Ottomans* clan, a family descending from early eighteenth-century Basque migrant Martín José Larraín, and referred to as “Ottomans” during the time of independence. The Ottoman clan had been at the height of their influence in 1811, when Joaquín Larraín Salas commented to José Miguel Carrera, “all the highest offices belong to us: I am President of Congress, my brother-in-law is President of the Executive, my nephew (Francisco Antonio Perez) is President of the Audiencia. What else can we wish for?” (Amunátegui Solar 1901). This power did not last much, because in 1814 José Miguel Carrera staged a coup that removed the Ottomans from positions of power and sent Joaquín Larraín into exile. However, in 1829, the offspring of the Ottomans were back in charge. In his memoirs about the pre-civil war period, Pedro Félix Vicuña – the great-nephew of Joaquín Larraín Salas – writes. “My father in the supreme magistracy and my uncle expected to be his successor; my uncle Don Manuel was named Bishop” (Vicuña Aguirre, 1943, p. 58).

The 1820s takeover of government by the Liberals and the Vicuña brothers produced a strong reaction on the part of the opposition. As it happened in 1811, the fortune of the Ottomans reversed quickly after their peak. “It seemed that fortune was filling us with favours,” continues Vicuña Aguirre, “to subsequently makes us fall in nullity and political exclusion that now has lasted for 23 years. People fear [the family’s] virtues and extensive connections” (Vicuña Aguirre, 1943, p. 58). The remainder of this section describes how the reaction to the Vicuña Larraín brothers developed during the civil war of 1829-1830.

In Concepción, things were already tense before the elections for vice-President. The provincial assembly of Concepción had elected Jose Antonio Rodríguez Aldea – an O’Higginista – to represent Concepción as Senator, but Congress did not accept him due to minor details in the conduct of his nomination. The Concepción assembly – rightly so – thought the decision was politically motivated. The local elites split among the governor – Juan de Dios Rivera Freire, a relative of Ramón Freire – and the Provincial Assembly dominated by the Vial-Prieto extended family. Rivera Freire resigned as governor. New names needed to be proposed by the Provincial Assembly and ratified by the government. To the annoyance of the Concepción assembly, Francisco Ramón Vicuña delayed his decision, which worsened the relations between the assembly and the government.

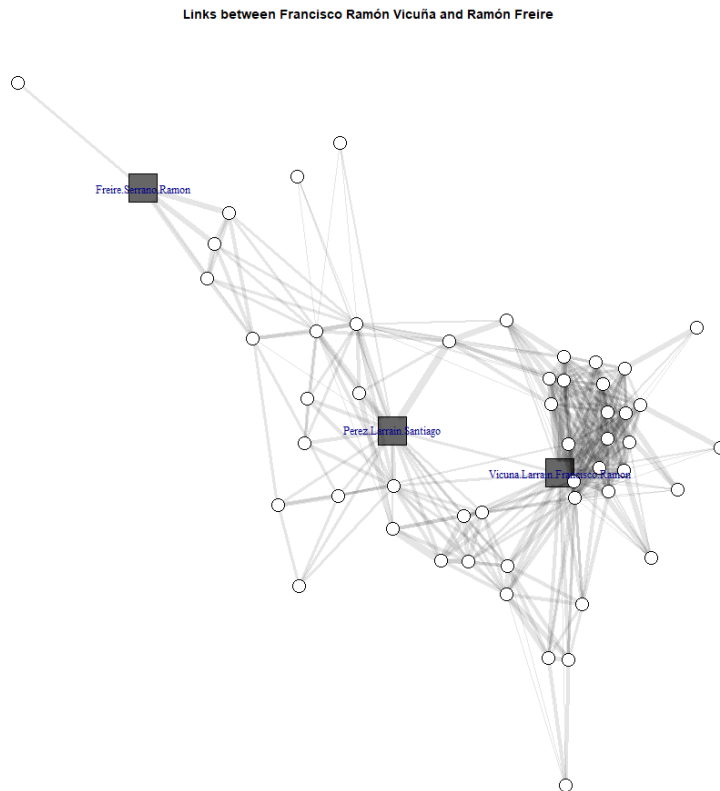
The arrival in Concepción of a letter signed on the 17th of September 1829, which proclaimed Joaquín Vicuña as vice-President, made the rebellion explode. The Assembly – headed by José María de la Cruz – did not recognise this decision, and received support from the military division headed by José Joaquín Prieto (the uncle of Cruz) and the Provincial Assembly of Maule. The Assembly of Concepción rapidly

made José Joaquín Prieto Governor of Concepción and Manuel Bulnes Prieto its commander of arms. As said before, the head of the Assembly was José María de la Cruz Prieto. In other words, this was a rebellion in the hands of the Vial-Prieto extended family. Another member of the clan playing an active role in the revolution was José Antonio Alemparte Vial, who conducted the communications with the Santiago opposition.

Prieto had a regiment based in Chillán, and his nephew, Manuel Bulnes Prieto had cavalry in Rancagua, just 90 kilometres south of Santiago. Their troops added around 1,000 men (Barros Arana 2000a). Not all went easy for the revolutionaries in Concepción, as internal elements of the Liberal party fought to stop the revolution from gaining momentum. The brothers Felix Antonio and José María Novoa gained the allegiance of some military leader in the Mapuche frontier against the Prietos. However, the opinion in south Chile was with the revolution, and they did not have the sway they hoped they would. A few months later, they would have a second chance.

Joaquín Vicuña resigned as vice-President on October 26, 1829, but the revolution was already in motion. Liberals asked Francisco Ramón Vicuña to convince military caudillo, Ramón Freire, to take control of the country. Vicuña was a friend and a *relative* of Freire, Liberals thought, and would be able to convince him to support their cause. Vicuña sent his son, Pedro Félix, to accomplish this mission. When Pedro Félix Vicuña arrived at Freire's house, the latter was having lunch with Vicuña's cousins, Manuela and Mercedes Caldera Larraín, and the husband of Mercedes, Santiago Pérez. Vicuña indicated: "Prieto will take revenge on you for the humiliations you made him suffer. He belongs to a faction that you defeated" (Vicuña Aguirre, 1943, p. 64). He referred to Freire's victory over O'Higgins in 1823, and therefore his victory over O'Higgistas such as the Prietos. The wife and in-laws of Freire supported the idea. "Tell your father to accept the presidency," responded Freire. "I will lead the army, and we will end this civil war" (Vicuña Aguirre, 1943, p. 64).

Figure 12: Links between Francisco Ramón Vicuña and Ramón Freire



However, as a military caudillo, Freire could serve the cause of different political factions, and the opposition also tried to win him over. José Antonio Rodríguez Aldea, Manuel José Gandarillas, and Diego José Benavente met Freire at his house and offered him to be head of state (Salazar 2005). Freire accepted parts of the proposal, which put him in opposition to Vicuña and, by extension, the family of his wife, Manuela Caldera – an Ottoman, as mentioned before. “There was a fight in his house,” recounts Rodríguez Aldea (cited by Barros Arana, 2000a, p. 294), “there were glasses and bottles broken in the table that day, the wife cried and cursed Benavente, Gandarillas, and I.”³² On November 7, 1829, an Assembly of the neighbours of Santiago met to depose Vicuña and proclaim a new temporary Junta composed by Ramón Freire, Juan Agustín Alcalde, and Francisco Ruiz Tagle (Santiago (Chile) and Vial Santelices 1829). Most persons that signed the act deposing Vicuña became active members of the post-conflict Pelucón regime.³³ On November 9, 1829, the opposition met again. Participants in this meeting doubled down in their condemnation of Francisco Ramón Vicuña and called for his forcible resignation. About 400 prominent neighbours of Santiago signed this letter, including a young instructor at the Instituto Nacional, Manuel Montt. A crowd stormed the house of Vicuña, and he decided to move the government to Valparaíso.

³² Rodríguez Aldea, Gandarillas, and Benavente were part of the Prieto-Vial network.

³³ Agustín Vial Santelices, José María Rosas, Mariano Aristía, José María Tocornal, Juan de Dios Correa, Diego Guzmán Ibañez, Antonio Mendiburu, José Manuel Barros, Miguel Francisco de Trucíos, Santiago Salas, Miguel Valdés, Agustín Larraín Rojas.

Meanwhile, in Santiago, the Liberal governor Pedro Jose Prado Montaner summoned the Asamblea Provincial of Santiago as well as the Cabildo to discuss the implications of the revolt. The decision was to stand by Vicuña. On November 12, an army division led by José Rondizzoni occupied Santiago to stop the opposition from gathering. In the main square of the city, the heads of the military decided on the future course of action. Rondizzoni, Tupper, Viel, and other generals gave Freire the control of the army, but not the presidency, as the opposition in Santiago wanted. Freire did not accept. On November 13, the army met again. They renewed their allegiance to the constitutional government of Francisco Ramón Vicuña and condemned Freire's disloyalty. 13 heads of the military signed the document, including Benjamín Viel, José Rondizzoni, and Guillermo Tupper.³⁴ Freire tried to gain the troops to his side, but Guillermo Tupper impeded it. This made Freire gave up his pretensions and, for the time being, he stayed out of the conflict (Barros Arana, 2000a, pp. 307-8). Francisco de la Lastra Sotta became the general commander of the army.

The revolution gained momentum in places near Santiago. The city councils of Melipilla and Aconcagua turned their allegiance to the revolutionary Junta. The government of Vicuña attempted to negotiate with Prieto through his Minister of Interior, José Nicolás Cerda Concha. The messenger, Pedro Godoy, was stopped by Manuel Bulnes in Rancagua and he could not reach Prieto. By this point, the sides of the conflict crystallised, and things started to come down to a military showdown. Bulnes, who had stayed in Rancagua for some time, now moved north to the hacienda Viluco, owned by the Marques branch of the Larraín family. Members of the opposition in Santiago – Manuel Rengifo, José Antonio Rodríguez Aldea, and Diego Portales – visited Prieto often. Bulnes' troops had funded the march from Chillán almost exclusively by looting, but this strategy was not suited for Santiago, where the reputation of the revolution could be damaged. Prominent members of the Santiago opposition contributed around forty thousand pesos to the cause (Barros Arana, 2000a, pp. 308). Following the suggestion of José Antonio Alemparte, Bulnes crossed the Maipo river and settled his troops in the fields of the Ochagavía Errázuriz family, some miles south of Santiago.

The government tried to negotiate again. One commission was formed by Agustín López, Miguel Collao, Pedro Francisco Lira Argomedo, José Joaquín Ramírez Velasco, and Francisco Javier Rosales Larraín – the last two parts of the Ottomans branch of the Larraín family. On another occasion, representing the government were José Manuel Borgoño and Carlos Rodríguez Erdoíza. All negotiations failed, and on December 8, 1829, Lastra printed a communication saying, “there are no means other than force”, while Prieto's communication announced, “Soldiers! Let us go in help of the oppressed” (Barros Arana, 2000a, pp. 315).

The next step for the revolutionaries was to capture Valparaíso, and hopefully Vicuña, who was still there. Bulnes sent a military detachment of 150 troops led by Pablo Silva and his Spanish agent in

³⁴ The secretary of this meeting was Pedro Godoy, father of the minister of José Manuel Balmaceda during the civil war of 1891.

Valparaíso Victorino Garrido. On November 31, the company took over the small town of Casablanca and imprisoned the two Congress members that represented it. Next, they settled in the immediacies of Valparaíso and stayed there for a few days. The Cabildo of Valparaíso – alarmed – distributed weapons among the population and told them to be prepared for a fight. However, within one week, Silva and Garrido succeeded in subverting a sizeable proportion of citizens in Valparaíso, who organised a “popular assembly” – like the one in Santiago – to show support for the revolution. The Cabildo, on the contrary, remained firmly in support of the government, thus creating a dual power situation that lasted for days and would be solved only with the resolution of the conflict in Santiago. Valparaíso, therefore, was not a safe place anymore. On December 8, 1829, Vicuña and his associates left for Coquimbo. This city was a natural place for them to go. The Vicuñas were part of the Santiago elites, but they had extensive business and familial relations with the provinces of the north. Not only Joaquín Vicuña was the governor there; the Vicuñas were relatives with local notables like Francisco Bascuñán Guerrero and Ramón Subercaseaux Mercado, wealthy miners based in La Serena. Further, Pedro Felix Vicuña and his brother Ignacio had mines near the town of Cobija in the Atacama Desert.

However, things there did not turn out as Vicuña expected. The days before Vicuña’s arrival, supporters of the revolution in La Serena had pressed the city council to call for elections, under the threat of a general revolt. The opposition leader Francisco Sainz de la Peña became head of the provisional junta of Coquimbo, and the former Liberal governor Joaquín Vicuña was forced to hand over control. The new authorities of Coquimbo arrested Francisco Ramón Vicuña when his ship arrived from Valparaíso. A military officer named Rafael Varela led an attempt of counterrevolution that brought together some hacendados and former military together with around 700 troops. The reaction was able to fight for a few days but failed. Sainz de la Peña asserted his control over La Serena (Barros Arana, 2000a, pp. 344).

In Santiago, the army of Francisco de la Lastra camped in the South-West part of the city, in what now is Calle Dieciocho. It counted about 1,500 troops. Prieto camped further south, in the Chacra de Ochagavía. His army was inferior in numbers and preparation, so he did not dare to fight any time soon. On December 14, Lastra went for him, with around 6,000 neighbours of Santiago as witnesses. Prieto realised that he could not win that fight and offered a treaty. There would be an armistice of 48 hours, followed by the realisation of a more formal round of negotiations. On December 16, representatives of Lastra and Prieto met at the main square of Santiago. Representing Lastra were Santiago Antonio Pérez (an Ottomans) and José Manuel Borgoño, and representing Prieto were his cousin Agustín Vial and Ramón Freire. Manuel Rengifo (brother-in-law of the Vials) for Prieto and Pedro Godoy (father of a future minister of Balmaceda) for Lastra were the secretaries. The representatives agreed to form a new governing Junta led by Ramón Freire in control of the army. Prieto and Lastra accepted the terms and recognised Freire as the new head of the military and government (Barros Arana, 2000a, p. 333).

The treaty brought some calm, but it also transferred power from the Liberals over to the Conservatives. To conduct the elections of a new governing junta, Freire named José Tomás Ovalle, José María Rozas, and Santiago Echevers – all Pelucones. Around 3,000 letters were printed and distributed among the people of Santiago, mostly adherents to the Pelucón side. The Pipiolos refused to participate in this election. On December 22, 1829, 1,788 electors voted, and unsurprisingly the ones elected were Pelucones: Jose Tomás Ovalle Bezanilla, Isidoro Errázuriz Aldunate, and Pedro Trujillo Zañartu. The latter did not accept the position due to health reasons. A recast of the votes made José María Guzmán Ibáñez the third junta member. The first act of the junta was to name a governor for Santiago: José Ángel Ortúzar Formas, member of the Vial-Prieto network.

Pipiolos were rightly angry with Freire. He presented himself as an impartial arbiter of the conflict, but he opened the doors for Pelucones to take power. For example, Freire removed the troops that had been under Lastra to towns outside Santiago, while permitting Prieto's troops to stay in the Chacra Ochagavía right at the margins of the city.

Like in Coquimbo, some Liberals also attempted a counterrevolution in Concepción. The attempt was ultimately defeated, but it turned out to be consequential for the developments in Santiago. Félix Antonio Novoa and associates gathered a small army that took over Concepción. On January 13, Novoa arrested José María de la Cruz and offered the Intendencia to Juan de Dios Rivera Freire. In a sense, the power struggle in Concepción mirrored that in Santiago and followed family lines, as Cruz was the nephew of Prieto and Rivera the cousin of Freire. The Vial family initially established in Concepción in the eighteenth century, but a part of it moved to Santiago in the early republican period. As an extended family with a foot in Santiago and the other in Concepción, the Vials were in an excellent position to broker a power arrangement between the two cities. What is less known is that Ramón Freire also had roots in Concepción via his Serrano mother. He moved to Concepción upon the death of his father, when Freire was 16, and at the time of independence, he started his military career there. It was from his position as Intendente of Concepción that he began the armed rebellion that led to the fall of O'Higgins in 1823. In the years after, Freire left his cousin Juan de Dios Rivera Freire as Intendente of Concepción. So, Vials and Freires were fighting each other both in Santiago and Concepción.

However, the Liberal reaction in Concepción would not last for long. Soon after the news reached Santiago, Prieto instructed troops stationed in Santiago to move South. Freire – the nominal head of the army – gave his support to his cousin, but Prieto did not listen. The forces repressed the counterrevolution in Concepción efficiently, but this meant a rupture between Prieto and Freire (Barros Arana, 2000a, p. 347). In addition to the increasing tension with Prieto, Freire's relatives on his wife side – Liberals of the Ottoman clan – lured him to their party (Barros Arana, 2000a, p. 349). On January 17, Prieto entered Santiago with his troops. He gave Freire a letter asserting his military autonomy. Freire responded the day after by firing Prieto. The latter did not accept his dismissal, and the two

caudillos ended an alliance that looked awkward from the beginning. The governing junta supported Prieto and instructed all troops to recognise him as the new commanding in chief.

On January 18, Freire left Santiago for Valparaíso in secret. He was able to bring under his command the three battalions that had been previously under Lastra, including those of Guillermo Tupper. He also gained the support of troops stationed in Aconcagua under Ramon Varela. Freire then instructed all his forces to congregate in Valparaíso. On January 23, the soldiers of Rondizzoni quickly took over the port city of Valparaíso from the military rulers Ramón Cavareda and José María Benavente. Since the time he was in power in Santiago, Freire had been receiving letters from Liberals in that region complaining about the treatment that they received from the Conservative governor of the city, Sainz de la Peña. Freire decided to send troops under the command of Rondizzoni, but this plan was interrupted after his breakup with Prieto. Now in Valparaíso, Freire decided his next step was Coquimbo, something Barros Arana considers a grave military error (Barros Arana, 2000a, p. 359). He did take over the city easily when he got there, on January 31, but governor Sainz de la Peña, who knew of Freire's arrival, had fled with some troops. Freire stayed there for two weeks and then decided to go back south with very little achieved.

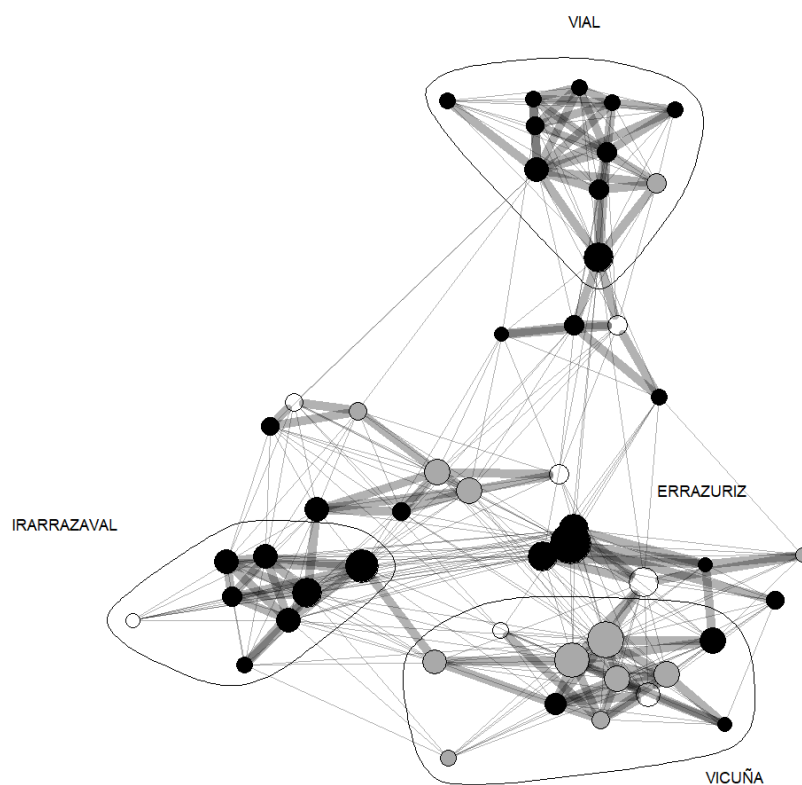
In Santiago, the governing junta tried to establish the institutional infrastructure of their regime as soon as possible. They asked every province to name a representative to develop the basis for the new government. The governing junta made a call to the regions on January 7, and within one month most representatives were elected, except for those of Valdivia and Chiloé (Barros Arana, 2000a, p. 359). Pipiolos had abstained from voting, and all representatives were supporters of the new regime. For Santiago, the representatives were Fernando Errázuriz Aldunate and Joaquín Tocornal. On February 17, the Congress of Plenipotentiaries voted for Francisco Ruiz Tagle (cousin of Diego Portales) as President and José Tomás Ovalle as vice-President. José María Benavente was named Minister of War and the former royalist Juan Francisco Meneses was appointed Minister of Interior.

In Aconcagua and Concepción, the new authorities suppressed a few revolts quickly, but Concepción was a more significant challenge. The Liberal Juan Esteban Manzano de la Sotta – distant relative of Francisco Lastra de la Sotta – organised the resistance among Mapuche on the other side of the Bio-Bio river. Also, Freire had shipped around 200 troops with Viel and Tupper to land in Concepción. It had passed no more than a week since José María de la Cruz had taken the Intendencia of Concepción back from Juan de Dios Rivera Freire, and now he had to flee, to Chillán. Manzano became Intendente, and when Viel and Tupper reached the shores of Concepción, they found themselves in friendly territory.

Meanwhile, in Santiago, the interim President Francisco Ruiz Tagle resigned his office after disagreements with the Congress of Plenipotentiaries. José Tomas Ovalle assumed the role of interim President and brought along Diego Portales as his minister.

The decisive battle took place near Talca. The troops of Freire and Viel landed on the shores of the Maule river. On April 17, 1830, the armies of Prieto and Freire fought the decisive battle, 1750 troops, with the former and 2000 with the latter. Prieto won this battle, the largest of the 1829-1830 civil war. His men imprisoned Freire and killed Guillermo Tupper. However, general Viel escaped alive and went on to regroup their forces and move north. In Coquimbo, a Liberal stronghold, Pedro Uriarte had taken La Serena, and the defeated generals of Maule went to his encounter in Illapel. There they encountered the superior forces of Pelucón general José Santiago Aldunate, who had been sent by Diego Portales. The few remaining Pipiolo troops led by Viel were forced to sign a treaty of defeat.

Figure 13: Membership in pre- and post-conflict Congresses



Note: edge width represents the direct (thick) versus two-walk (thin) ties.

The civil war of 1829 consisted of three power blocks. The Pipiolo side, at its core, was formed by the network around the Larraín Salas extended family, especially its Vicuña branch. This network had extensive relations in Coquimbo. Joaquín Vicuña Larraín was the governor of Coquimbo for part of the 1820s, and he married into the Solar, a local elite family. Subercaseaux and Guerrero are two other notable Coquimbo families tied to the Santiago Ottomans. The Pelucón side was a strategic alliance between two differentiated family and regional blocks. On the one hand, the tightly interconnected Santiago Conservative cluster built around the Marqués Larraín, Irrazával, and García Huidobro. This block of families was royalist during the wars of independence. They enjoyed with the support of the

Santiago-based Errázuriz family, which kinship-wise was closer to the Vicuñas, but became an essential pillar of the Pelucones. The other significant family cluster that fought on the Pelucón side was that formed around the Vial family, which included the Concepción-based Prieto, Bulnes, Cruz families, together with the Santiago-based Gandarillas and Rengifo. This basic setup in three large clusters defined the internal conflicts during the subsequent Pelucón regime and the emergence of the Liberal and Conservative party in the 1850s.

The Filópita-Portales split

José Joaquín Prieto Vial was a military officer from Concepción, part of the influential Vial family. A supporter of independence hero Bernardo O'Higgins, he commanded the Pelucón army in the 1829-1830 civil war and became a natural candidate to become President upon his victory. Diego Portales' clique favoured José Tomás Ovalle Bezanilla, someone closer to the Santiago elite circles. Ovalle's early death, however, precluded this option, and Prieto was soon elected President. What the Concepción cluster within the victorious coalition wanted was the reincorporation of the old supreme director Bernardo O'Higgins. Barros Arana (2000, p. 32) claims this is the reason why the revolution had such strong support in the provinces of the South, and in particular among generals Prieto, Bulnes, and Cruz. However, as explained in the previous section, Concepción was not a unified block. Ramón Freire also had his base of power in that city. Thus, the Chilean civil war of 1829 was also an internal conflict between local power blocks.

The Congress of 1831 was almost entirely *Pelucón* (Barros Arana, 2000, p. 31). The exception was a few seats in the northern provinces occupied by *Pipiolos*, including Pedro Félix Vicuña Aguirre, the son of the deposed President Francisco Ramón Vicuña Larraín. Another Pipiolo was Juan Antonio Guerrero Gayón, a wealthy miner who was son-in-law to ex-vice President Vicuña. So, this was a *Pelucón* dominated Congress, but with the Liberals having a foot in the door.

The government was not a monolithic block, and the dominant player, Diego Portales, was good at creating enemies within. José María de la Cruz Prieto – a native from Concepción³⁵ and relative of Prieto – occupied the ministry of war but resigned after a few months. Cruz' unsuccessful advance in the administrative circles of Santiago, however, shows that the Prietos and Vials were not given a free pass to power. "Disgusted with the dominion of Portales in government councils," recounts Barros Arana (2000, p. 22-3), "Cruz resigned his office." In 1832, Portales opposed Cruz' promotion in the military hierarchy, although he failed. These were the first breaks of Cruz and the Santiago circles, a break that would explode 20 years later in the civil war of 1851.

Even within the Santiago elites in government, Portales found foes. Minister of Interior Ramón Errázuriz Aldunate – brother of the ex-President and senator Fernando Errázuriz – did not agree with

³⁵ Penquistas are persons from the city of Concepción.

Portales' strong positions on repression and became increasingly vocal. To undermine Errázuriz, Portales supported a newspaper called *El Hurón* that criticised the mildness of the government in repressing the opposition. Eventually, Errázuriz lost the support of large swath of the dominant party, and after a problematic episode with the church, he resigned. A month passed in which the country had no Minister of Interior. The favourite of Portales and the clerical segments of the Conservative party was Joaquín Tocornal Jiménez. However, the Errázuriz family was powerful, and some persons within Portales' clique worried about the Errázuriz-Tocornal transition. Finance minister Manuel Rengifo Cárdenas – who at this time was a friend of Portales but years later would break away – wrote a letter to Portales expressing his worries about antagonising the Errázuriz family. The fall of Ramón Errázuriz, he said, was promoted by Tocornal; “making him his successor would augment their humiliation... thus turning [the Errázuriz] into enemies” (Barros Arana, 2000, p. 105). President Prieto was not happy with the harshness of the regime and would have preferred a moderate Minister of Interior. He also wanted to gain autonomy from Portales. However, either because he did not find the man or because he felt that he would lose the support of the dominant faction, he ended choosing Tocornal, the person more closely aligned with Portales. This move, indeed, seems to have antagonised the Errázuriz family, because in a bill on secret spending that the government sent to Congress in 1832, Fernando Errázuriz Aldunate – the brother of Ramón – was the only senator to vote no (Barros Arana, 2000, p. 190).

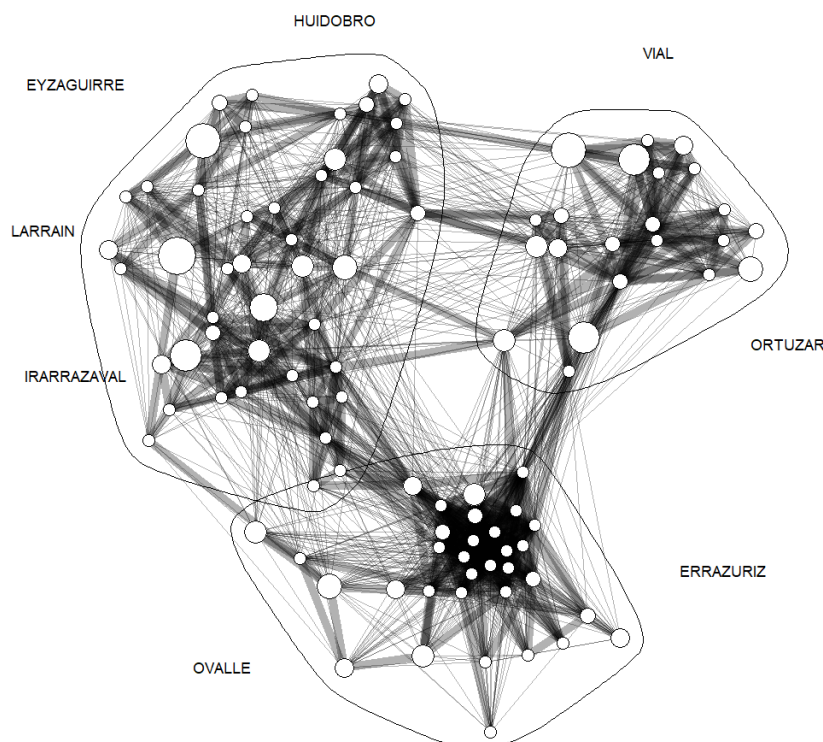
Manuel José Gandarillas Guzmán and Manuel Rengifo Cárdenas eventually also distanced themselves from Portales' inner circle and from the repressive direction in which the regime was heading. When Portales decided to resign from the ministry, and the government issued a bill to honour his services, Gandarillas was the only one to vote against it (Barros Arana, 2000, p. 170). A third person within the circles of power to distance himself from Portales was the Concepción-born senator Diego José Benavente Bustamante. Benavente paid a fee to liberate the Pipilo general, José Manuel Borgoño, from reclusion, something that irritated Portales (Barros Arana, 2000, p. 60). In later years, Gandarillas, Rengifo, Benavente, and others were to form an opposition group named the *Filopitas*. What they had in common was not belonging to the cluster of interrelated families that formed the Santiago base of the Pelucón regime, to which Portales belonged. Instead, Benavente, Gandarillas, and Rengifo were part of the Vial-Prieto familial neighbourhood. Isidoro Errázuriz (1935) indicates that Ramón Errázuriz Aldunate was also part of the Filópita block.

Another contentious matter was O'Higgins, exiled in Peru. He had strong ties among Concepción and military circles, including President Prieto, but Portales opposed him. A personal letter written by general José Ignacio Zenteno to O'Higgins, reveals the influence of Portales over President Prieto. Zenteno wrote: “I supplicate that you do not wait one more moment for your return... The friend that rules (Prieto) is a bit weak; he finds himself almost isolated... You would strengthen and give him validity” (Barros Arana, 2000, p. 169).

While Zenteno described Prieto as “weak” and “isolated”, Portales’ clout only grew with time. “His dominion over the public administration,” says Barros Arana (Barros Arana, 2000, p. 170), “was exerted effectively, but seemingly without showing desires to intervene in them. State ministers consulted with him the measures they were considering and every appointment... From behind his desk in Valparaíso, he was the real director of politics. All public officials who wished to move out from Portales’ influence, even minister Errázuriz, were defeated by his moral supremacy.”³⁶

In summary, two groups dominated the 1830s. On the one hand, a Conservative faction of Santiago elites coalesced around Diego Portales. On the other hand, the Concepción-based Vial family, which had a military component in President José Joaquín Prieto, Manuel Bulnes, and José María de la Cruz, but also a civilian wing in their Vial cousins, the Rengifo, and the Gandarillas. The block around Portales, however, was the dominant element of the regime. *Pipiolos* left power, yet their punishment was not as strong as that of lower-level supporters of the old government. Upper-class *Pipiolos* seemed to have plenty of strings to pull even among Conservatives. Finally, even within the Santiago core of the dominant block, the regime appears to have been good at producing its internal opposition to the Portales block. The Errázuriz family would distance itself from Portales, as well as people like Rengifo, Gandarillas, and Benavente, who were to form the *Filopita* party.

Figure 14: Backbone of Pelucón clusters



³⁶ Compare Portales’ apparently disinterested attitude towards politics with Cosimo de Medici’s, according to Padgett’s account.

Note: edge width represents direct (thick) versus two-walk (thin) ties. Vertex size represents the number of legislative terms served by the Congress-members. Only vertices over with coreness over 15 were included in the plot, in order to visualise the most central nodes.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of core Pelucón clusters

Cluster	Members	Terms
Aristocratic	45	2.8
Vial	22	4.1
Errázuriz	33	2.6

During the War against the Confederation (1836-1839), Prieto issued new laws of amnesty, partly to strengthen Chile's war capacity by adding former Pipiolo military men. José Manuel Borgoño, Francisco Antonio Pinto, Francisco de la Lastra, and Benjamín Viel Gometz were rehabilitated (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 108). Victory smoothed hostilities within the elites even more. A decree pardoned all "generals, leaders, and officers separated of service as a result of the decrees by the Congress of May 7th and April 15th 1830" (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 107).

The parliamentary elections of 1840 were on the horizon. The Civic Guards were the card up the government's sleeves. The government could manipulate their vote, and, in Santiago alone, civic guards counted as 2,000 votes out of a total voting population of 4,200 (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 135). The 1833 constitution stipulated that starting in 1840, only literate males could vote. This rule became a potential problem during the 1840 elections because most of the guardsmen were illiterate, and their exclusion would discount a vast number of pro-government voters. The government hastily put together schools to teach guardsmen to read. It did not work. The government proceeded by issuing a law establishing that the literacy conditions applied only to newly registered voters (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 135-6).

Despite this move, the parliamentary elections of 1840 were freer than the previous three. Nine government opponents were elected, most in the north and one in Chiloé (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 137).³⁷ The Senate remained untouched by the opposition. In fact, because of the way elections for Senators worked, no opposition candidate would ever make it to the Senate before the 1874 electoral reforms (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 73).

On 25 June 1840, Prieto changed Tocornal to the Ministry of Finance and Exterior and put Manuel Montt Torres as Minister of Interior. Tocornal's fall from the President's circle would affect his family's success in the 1843 parliamentary elections. Whereas the 1834 and 1837 Congresses counted his brothers Gabriel José in the Senate and José María in the chamber, and the Congress of 1840 counted his brother Gabriel José and his son Joaquín Tocornal Grez, no Tocornal got elected in 1843. The familial entourage of the new prime minister, Manuel Montt, on the contrary, skyrocketed in 1843, as

³⁷ These were: Juan Manuel Cobo Gutiérrez for Petorca, Melchor Concha Cerda for Ovalle, José Francisco Gana López for Elqui, Mariano Elías Sánchez Bravo and Ignacio Vicuña Aguirre for Quillota, José Fermín Solar Marín for La Serena, and José Santiago Velasquez Gómez for Ancud.

we will see. For the first time, Montt and the Catholic Conservatives represented by Tocornal diverged – a tension that would explode in 1857.

The literature often describes Montt as a self-made outsider, who built his career out of the sheer force of his administrative record. There is a degree of truth in this claim. When Prieto called him to be Minister of Interior, Montt – who was 31 – had already been rector of the *Instituto Nacional*, professor of Roman Law, minister of the *Corte Suprema*, *Subsecretario* of Interior, and President of the Chamber of Deputies (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 165). However, Montt's rise has a familial link that is not mentioned often. The person who introduced Montt to Prieto was Diego Portales (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 165), and Montt and Portales were close in the family chain. Montt's cousin, José Santiago Montt Irarrázaval, and Portales' cousin, Santiago Irarrázaval Palazuelos, were nephew and uncle. Montt's cousin had been a Deputy in 1834 and 1837 and a long-time member of the Supreme Court. In 1837, this cousin became a court seat holder in property – the same year that Montt entered the court. It is not unreasonable to suspect that his cousin arranged Montt's entry to the court and attracting Portales' attention may not have been a substantial additional step.

Next came the Presidential election of 1841. The government candidate was Manuel Bulnes. Many thought of him as unrefined and worried that the Prieto-Bulnes-Vial family would create a dynasty. As head of the army, opponents claimed, Bulnes would militarise government. Further, most governors and *Intendentes* of the interior – often large landholders and known as despots – were aligned with Bulnes, which in case of victory would make Bulnes tolerate and reward them, thus making it unbearable for people (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 186-7). Despite the criticism, Bulnes' recent success in the War against the Confederation made him a strong candidate. Joaquín Tocornal represented the old Conservative guard and the church (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 168). A few proposed José Santiago Aldunate Toro, but most Liberals backed Pinto. Liberals had less money and connections than the ultra-Conservatives, but they had a greater acceptance in the public opinion and so a more substantial chance to challenge Bulnes in the elections (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 188). A few Conservatives and Liberals initiated conversations to create a common front against Bulnes (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 188), just like they would do in 1857 to oppose the Montt government.

The potential Conservative-Liberal alliance worried the government. To prevent it, Bulnes' circle began negotiations with Pinto to form a coalition. Generals Manuel Blanco Encalada, José Santiago Aldunate and especially Manuel Rengifo mediated the conversations (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 190). The meetings between the two bands, which aggregated up to 60 persons, took place at Rengifo's house and counted ministers Ramón Irarrázaval and Manuel Montt. On May 21, 1840, after several conferences, the sides reached an agreement: the parties would compete independently, and the government promised to respect free elections. Regardless of the results, the parties would align after the elections. The new government – whichever that was – would issue a general amnesty to reincorporate all previously

removed officers. Men were exultant and hugged each other (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 191). A few days later, it became publicly known that general Manuel Bulnes had committed to marriage to Enriqueta Pinto Garmendia, daughter of his new ally.

Bulnes won by a landslide, and Liberals celebrated with effusion. Masses of supporters celebrated outside Bulnes' house and shortly after moved outside Pinto's, where they exclaimed: "*¡Viva el general Bulnes!*", "*¡Viva el general Pinto!*", "*¡Viva la unión!*" Liberals indeed had reasons to celebrate. Ten years after their military defeat, not only had Pinto and other fellow-Liberals an amnesty, they had also become part of the circles of power. Pinto's family block increased its share of Congress seats significantly through the 1840s.

Just a few months before Bulnes' takeover, Prieto reshuffled the cabinet. Ramón Irarrázaval took Interior from his brother José Miguel, Montt went to Justice. Shortly after Bulnes assumed office, Rengifo went to Finance and José Santiago Aldunate to War. The Irarrázaval-Rengifo tandem would prove conciliatory. Rengifo accepted the post, conditional on the government following a tolerant attitude toward Liberals. In a letter to Bulnes, Rengifo wrote that the inclusion of Liberals, including those removed from the military in 1830, ought to be made thoroughly or not made at all (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 220). In 1841, ministers Irarrázaval and Rengifo offered an amnesty and the restoration of former military degrees. They found some resistance in the Senate but ended prevailing. These measures benefited generals Freire, San Martín, and O'Higgins (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 221).

Few provinces organised the opposition to the official lists in the parliamentary elections of 1843. A good number of Liberal were elected, but as part of the official lists (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 292). Barros Arana says that Montt – a hard-liner – was influential in the formulation of these lists, but the final result seems to have been a balance between him and minister Irarrázaval, who favoured the inclusion of Liberals (Barros Arana, 2003, p. 293). The distance between the two ministers increased with time. In 1845, Ramón Luis Irarrázaval left the Ministry of Interior. Manuel Rengifo had died, so Finance was also free. Montt went to Interior, and the 28-years-old Antonio Varas went to Justice. Varas had held the same offices that Montt had: inspector, vice-rector and rector of the Instituto Nacional, and now Minister of Justice. Like Montt, he was also looked-down-upon due to his modest, provincial background (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 15). In the elections of 1846, the Montt-Varas list of candidates included people with little connections with the political elites. Only three government opponents had their way (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 73).

Bulnes' second term election came a few months after the parliamentary elections. An association called *Sociedad del Orden* was organised to support his candidacy. Presided over by Ramón Errázuriz Aldunate and held at the house of Santiago Salas Palazuelos (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 56-7). The support of Errázuriz and Salas – who were relatives – seems to have been compensated by the government.

Indeed, in the elections of 1846, the Errázuriz block (which included the Salas family), together with the Vials, took the most substantial proportion of seats in Congress.

Conclusion

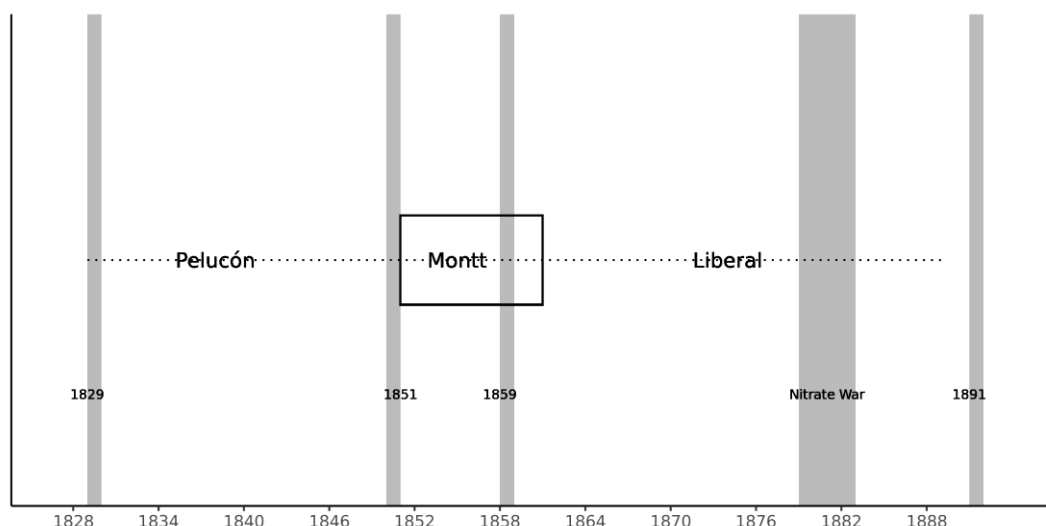
It is understood in Chilean historiography that the period 1831-1851 – the so-called Portalian state – represents the successful establishment of a robust, centralised state in Chile, at a time when most countries in Latin America were still rife with civil wars. Mainstream historiography (e.g. Edwards 1928) credits this early success to the leadership of Diego Portales. Revisionist accounts portray the Portalian state as an expression of the overwhelming power of the Santiago aristocracy over the rest of the country. This chapter, in contrast, has revealed previously unknown familial dynamics that helped consolidate the Chilean state at an early period. The winning side of the 1829 civil war was composed by two very distinct familial clusters, one based in Santiago and the other in Concepción. This alliance gave the Portalian state a stability because it reduced regional tensions. But it also produced the basic fault line of within-regime competition upon the establishment of the Pelucón regime. By the end of the 1840s, the alliance of 1829 broke apart. This rupture produced two civil wars and the emergence of the Liberal and Conservative parties. This will be the topic of the next chapter.

4. Liberals versus Conservatives (1849-1861)

The previous chapter described the familial foundations of the intra-regime competition between the Santiago aristocrats and the Filópitás. This chapter discusses the civil wars of 1851 and 1859, as well as the formation of the Liberal and Conservative parties. The Liberal party was formed after the expulsion from the cabinet of former Filópita Manuel Camilo Vial, and his subsequent alliance with the Errázuriz, Ottoman Larraín, and Vicuña families.³⁸ The civil war of 1851 – which was won by the government – started as an intra-regime competition between the core blocks of the Pelucón establishment. It pitted the newly cohered Liberals against the government, which was supported by the remaining elements of the Pelucón faction of 1829, namely the Santiago aristocrats. Another group that supported the government were a cohort of newly wealthy business people, which I refer to as the bourgeoisie. In 1857, the aristocrats abandoned the government to form the Conservative party. Current interpretations of the break overemphasise the religious cleavage dividing the clericalist Conservatives and the secularist government (Scully 1992). I show, however, the importance of the aristocratic/bourgeois division. Through the 1850s, it was the bourgeoisie – not the aristocrats – who increased their clout in Congress, and this shift was openly resented. In the civil war of 1859, most of the oligarchy, both Conservative and Liberal, opposed Montt.

Mainstream Chilean historiography sees the civil wars of the 1850s as a continuation of that of 1829, and emphasise the conflict between Santiago and the provinces (Fernández Abara 2017; Salazar 2015). This chapter shows, instead, the discontinuity between the two historical cycles. While the civil wars of 1828 and 1851 can be loosely defined as struggles between Liberals and Conservatives, the familial factions forming the camps on both occasions differed. Further, the civil war of 1851 had little in common with that of 1859. Whereas the former – like 1829 – could be characterised as a conflict between families located at the very core of the oligarchy, the latter pitted the whole oligarchic heart against the newcomers that had arisen under the Montt administration: the bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats. Thus, whereas standard accounts of the Chilean civil wars emphasise ideological cleavages, I emphasise the intra-oligarchy familial fractures and the insider/outsider cleavage.

³⁸ The most active Pipiolo leaders were Bruno Larraín Aguirre and Pedro Félix Vicuña Aguirre (Encina, 1949, p. 140) – who were first cousins on their mothers' side and members of the Ottoman clan on their fathers' side.



The formation of the Liberal Party

The cabinet was reshuffled shortly after the start of Bulnes' second term. Manuel Camilo Vial went to Interior, Salvador Sanfuentes to Justice, and Jose Manuel Borgoño to the Ministry of War (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 105). Sanfuentes could not occupy his seat for some time, so Borgoño replaced him. Vial took Finance, also as a temporary replacement, but he ended spending two years in the role (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 106). Vial was related to both Bulnes and Prieto and had been naming relatives to several public offices. Opponents accused Bulnes of nepotism and newspapers published how much did the Vial family cost to the state (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 176). In November 1848, Vial became an officer of the Supreme Court (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 187). Bulnes' brother was Intendente of Concepción until his death in 1846; José María Cruz was Intendente of Valparaíso; a brother of Vial was Intendente of Talca, and another one worked in the Finance Ministry. In command of the presidency, the ministries, key *intendencias*, and Congress, 1846-1849 was the apex of the Vial cluster.

Within government, the Cabinet split into two factions: the supporters of Manuel Montt and the supporters of Manuel Camilo Vial. In the parliamentary elections of 1849, Montt and Vial formulated separate lists of candidates. Vial's list ended winning. Data collected by Estefane and Ossa (2017) shows that, in 1849, 24 Liberal Deputies entered Congress for the first time, but only 8 Conservatives. The surge of Liberals in 1849 corresponds with the growing opposition to President Bulnes' Conservative government. Camilo Vial brought together some old *Pipiolos*, the internal opposition within Conservative ranks, and new generations of intellectuals. This move laid the foundations for the creation of the Liberal Party (Estefane and Ossa 2017). Next is a detailed account of the 1849 elections.

Barros Arana indicates that the government intervened the 1849 elections more so than on other occasions. Vial's list of candidates included loyalists, relatives, and young intellectuals, together with individuals who had been rather neutral in previous Congresses. He added only two opponents in the

lists: Manuel Montt and José Joaquín Pérez, both for Santiago. However, Vial did not include natural candidates Manuel Antonio Tocornal, Antonio García Reyes, and Antonio Varas (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 195).

The results of the 1849 elections were overwhelmingly pro-Vial. Only four government opponents succeeded: Miguel Gallo Goyenechea (a relative of Montt) and José Joaquín Vallejos won in Copiapó, where the government traditionally had a hard time controlling politics. In San Fernando and Curicó, Antonio García Reyes and Antonio Varas could not compete against the government's electoral machine, which had Domingo Santa María as governor. However, García Reyes also competed in La Ligua and won. The fourth victorious opponent was Manuel Antonio Tocornal, in Valparaíso, something that created great disappointment in Vial's circle (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 196-7). Together with these three opponents, the 1849 Congress also contained men that formed part of Montt's circle but were included in the official lists: José Joaquín Pérez Mascayano, Angel Ortúzar Formas, Miguel Gallo Vergara, José Tomás Urmeneta García, and Domingo Matte Messía (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 303).

What happened in Valparaíso? Fernando Urizar Garfias, the administrator of customs, was the person in charge of securing the official victory. Urizar Garfias assured the government that the victory was secure: two-thirds of the electors were members of the civic guards and fiscal employees (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 197). Urizar himself commanded one of the battalions and had numerous employees in the office of customs. Urizar planned to lock up the civic guard soldiers on election day, and free only those with ballots. The commanders were to witness the voting process next to the ballot boxes and troops would be stationed outside (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 197). The problem was that the governor of Valparaíso Manuel Blanco Encalada told the guards to vote however they wished. Manuel Antonio Tocornal won Valparaíso (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 198).³⁹

Despite this small set back, Vial had the Congress he wanted. However, criticism on the part of the press increased. *El Corsario* – a pro-Montt periodical – wrote two offensive articles against the Governor of Santiago, Juan María Egaña. The government sued *El Corsario* and won, initially. However, the Supreme Court overturned the sentence, which produced a conflict between the government and the court (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 201-2). Vial tried to reshuffle the Supreme Court to have his way and suggested his protégé, Pedro Ugarte Ramírez, as court minister.⁴⁰ At this point, president Bulnes did not back his minister. Vial also had asked Bulnes to explicitly adhere to a more Liberal line in the inaugural address of the new Congress, and Bulnes said no (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 205). On May 29, 1849, Vial left the ministry. Commentators expected that thought that Bulnes would call Senator Ramón Errázuriz Aldunate to organise the new cabinet. The latter was Vial's friend and a fellow Filópita, so his incorporation would have represented a change of names but not of faction. But

³⁹ On the people that composed this congress, see also (Lastarria and Santa María 1861)

⁴⁰ Ugarte was the same person who issued the initial sentence against *El Corsario*. Ugarte was also the maternal uncle of Vial's nephew on his brother's side.

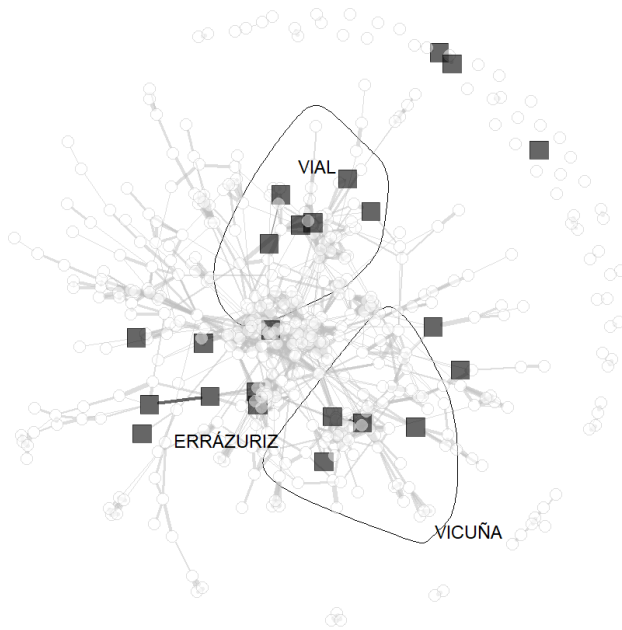
Errázuriz did not accept the position (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 360). Bulnes now had to reach beyond the social entourage of the Filópitás. The ball passed to José Joaquín Pérez Mascayano – a member of the traditionally Liberal Pérez branch of the Ottoman family, but who adhered to the Pelucón faction. Manuel Antonio Tocornal was appointed to Justice, Antonio García Reyes to Finance, and Pedro Nolasco Videla to War. During the next ministerial rotation of April 1850, the tide moved further away from the Liberals and squarely in the hands of Montt's circle. Antonio Varas was appointed in Interior, Jerónimo Urmeneta García in Finance, Máximo Mujica Echaurren in Justice, and Pedro Nolasco Vidal remained in War.

The creation of the Liberal Party was a direct result of Vial's fall from power. In his diaries, José Victorino Lastarria recounts that he tried reaching a Congress-cabinet agreement with Finance Minister Antonio García Reyes – an old friend of his – and Minister Tocornal, but the negotiations failed. “From that point, I committed to organise and strengthen our party,” Lastarria (1969) wrote in his diary. “For this, we had many elements,” he continued: “the majority in the Chamber, influenced by [Manuel Camilo] Vial, (...) the many friends of the fallen Cabinet, and many individuals that started feeling uncomfortable by the Cabinet of June. Such were the foundations of (...) the new Progressist party” (Lastarria, 1969, p. 29-30). A new generation of intellectuals nourished the emerging faction, many of whom had become Vial's protégés: Juan Bello Dunn, Marcial González Ibieta, Federico Errázuriz Zañartu, Cristóbal Valdés, Vicente Sanfuentes, and Pedro Ugarte (Barros Arana, 2003b, p. 203). “The ideas of liberty and reform,” indicates Isidoro Errázuriz (1935), “(...) incarnated in the old group of Filópitás and the young Pelucones that sought support in the Ministry headed by Manuel Camilo Vial for their rebellion within the dominant party.”

Old Pipiolos still had an identity of their own and did not participate in the formation of the new Liberal party – at least initially (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 332). Deputy Bruno Larraín Aguirre – “the Pipiolo most capable of conceiving and implementing a plan” (Lastarria, 1969, p. 44) – was one of the first to join. Lastarria indicates in his diary that the name of Ramón Errázuriz Aldunate as the Liberal candidate came up in conversations with Larraín. The latter and Lastarria decided to have a convention in the house of Manuel Camilo Vial to obtain the consent of the old Pipiolo caudillo, Ramón Freire. The latter was not happy with the Errázuriz candidacy, but he gave his approval (Lastarria, 1969, p. 45). With the Ottoman clan leader Bruno Larraín Aguirre and caudillo Ramón Freire on board, the new Liberal coalition now had the full support of the old Pipiolo party. Soon former Pipiolos Melchor Concha Cerda and Bernardo Jose Toro Guzman also adhered (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 361). Pedro Félix Vicuña Aguirre gave his support to the Errázuriz candidacy in September 1849 (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 362). The basic familial structure of the Liberal party was set. It included the losers of 1829: The Ottoman Larraín and the Vicuñas; the Vial clan that won in 1829 but had been side-lined; and part of the Errázuriz family, former Pelucones but closer to the Ottomans in the kinship network.

Figure 15: The familial entourage of the founders of the Liberal party, 1849-1851

Liberal leaders 1849-1851



Note: Black nodes are individuals identified by Barros Arana (2003b), Vicuña Mackenna (1878), Errázuriz (1935), or Lastarria (1969) as being active promoters of the foundation of the Liberal party in 1849 or the Liberal uprising of 1851. The semi-transparent background corresponds to the kinship network of all connected parliamentarians of the period 1828-1861. The family clusters highlighted are the Errázuriz, the Vial, the Ottoman and their closely related Vicuña. The nodes coloured black are Godoy Palacios Pedro Javier, Laso Castillo José Joaquín, Laso Castillo Miguel, Recabarren Rencoret Manuel Martín, Lastarria Santander José Victorino, Cruz Prieto José María, Alemparte Vial José Antonio, Arteaga Cuevas Justo, Sanfuentes Torres Vicente, González Ibieta Marcial, Eyzaguirre Portales José Ignacio Víctor, Carrera Fontecilla José Miguel, Ugarte Ramírez Pedro, Urizar Garfias Fernando, Vial Formas Rafael, Vial Formas Manuel Camilo, Bello Dunn Juan, Urriola Albontín Pedro Alcántara, Ovalle Urriola Luis, Larraín Plaza Ramon, Larraín Aguirre Bruno, Vicuña Aguirre Pedro Félix, Vicuña Mackenna Benjamín, Mackenna Vicuña Félix, Guerrero Prado José Manuel, Caldera Mascayano Máximo, Freire Serrano Ramon, Errazuriz Aldunate Ramon, Errazuriz Zañartu Federico, Santa María González Domingo, Vicuña Solar Francisco, Toro Guzmán Bernardo, Concha Cerda Melchor.

The new Liberal coalition formed an organisation called the *Sociedad de la Reforma*, which met in a building rented from Mariano Ariztía Astaburuaga (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 79). The Larraín Aguirre family – with Bruno as a leader, together with his brothers Vicente, Antonio, Ignacio, and Nicolás and his nephews – often were a majority in the gatherings (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 26).⁴¹ On November 6, 1850, a government newspaper characterised the club as formed uniquely by the Larraín Aguirre family (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 244). What later became the “Junta Central del Partido Progresista” met alternately in the houses of Federico Errázuriz Zañartu, Bruno Larraín Aguirre, and the Vial Formas family (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 217). These venues reflect how coalitional politics had changed since 1829. The losers of 1829 – the Ottomans – were back in the game by partnering with the former Pelucones that had been excluded from the new regime’s power

⁴¹ Vicuña Mackenna (1878, p. 26-27) indicates that Pedro Godoy Palacios and the Larraín Aguirre family were part of the same family. Probably he was referring to the fact that Godoy’s maternal grandmother and Bruno Larraín Aguirre’s maternal grandfather were siblings, both part of the Aguirre marquis family. This makes Godoy and Larraín second degree cousins.

arrangement: the Vials and the Errázuriz (Encina, 1949, p. 139).⁴² This arrangement must have been awkward for some. Bruno Larraín Aguirre wrote to his cousin, Pedro Félix Vicuña Aguirre: “I do not know what it will happen: I do not really know the hearts of my *new* comrades” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. XCI) (emphasis added).

Some Liberals were not enthusiastic with the Errázuriz candidacy and searched elsewhere for a leader. Pedro Javier Godoy Palacios favoured the old Pipiolo general Ramón Freire. In a letter to Pedro Félix Vicuña, Godoy claimed that many members of the opposition had contributed money for a pro-Freire event that he was organising – “except for the Larraíns and the Vials,” he wrote (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. lxxxv). Jacinto Chacón Barri and Francisco Vicuña Solar wrote a flyer favouring Francisco Antonio Pinto (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 177).⁴³ Pinto did not accept, however (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 447).

The failure of Liberals to reach an agreement with Bulnes made the likelihood of an armed resolution of the conflict more likely (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 448). In September 1850, the newspaper *El Progreso* predicted, “another misstep on the part of the authorities, will make the civil war blow up” (quoted in Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 179). The incarceration of a Liberal journalist in Aconcagua increased the hostilities between the government and the opposition. Fernando Urízar Garfias – representative of that province in the Chamber of Deputies – initiated a campaign for the journalist’s liberation. “Aconcagua is being left with only two options: kissing its chains or breaking them with its own hands,” said Urízar Garfias. “I assure the Chamber, that if the moment of making that decision arrives, I would advise them for the second option” (quoted in Errázuriz, 1935, p. 473). On August 5, 1850, the Liberals in Congress lost the presidency of the Chamber of Deputies by one vote (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 471). Losing the institutional battle for power led Liberals to reach beyond their traditional circles of influence and establish an alliance with the Sociedad de la Igualdad (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 386).⁴⁴

The Sociedad de la Igualdad was founded in the fall of 1850, when Santiago Arcos, during a meeting of the Club de la Reforma, suggested reaching out to workers. Francisco Bilbao had just arrived from Europe and, inspired by the French socialism of 1848, helped set the organisation up. The Sociedad de la Igualdad was successful in bringing workers and activists together but initially remained neutral in Congressional politics. Repression changed this. On August 19, 1850, thugs attacked a large gathering. The uproar generated by the attack produced a three-fold increase in the organisation’s membership in three days (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 444). The attack also made several parliamentarians join the organisation: Fernando Urízar Garfias, Juan Bello Dunn, Luis Ovalle Urriola, Bruno Larraín Aguirre, Federico Errázuriz Zañartu, and Marcial González Ibieta (Errázuriz, 1935, p. 444). The Liberal judge

⁴² Encina indicates the following reasons explaining the revolution of 1851: 1) the re-emergence of the old Pipiolo; 2) the transition from military to civil governments; 3) the influence of the French 1848; 4) the dismissal of the Vial and Errázuriz families from the Pelucón block of power (Encina, 1949, p. 139).

⁴³ Remember that Pinto was father-in-law of Bulnes.

⁴⁴ “Sociedad de la Igualdad” means “Society of Equality.”

Pedro Ugarte Ramírez prosecuted those responsible for the attacks but was dismissed by Mariano Bernal Urmeneta, his superior in the Supreme Court and second cousins with the new minister of Finance Jerónimo Urmeneta García (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 192).

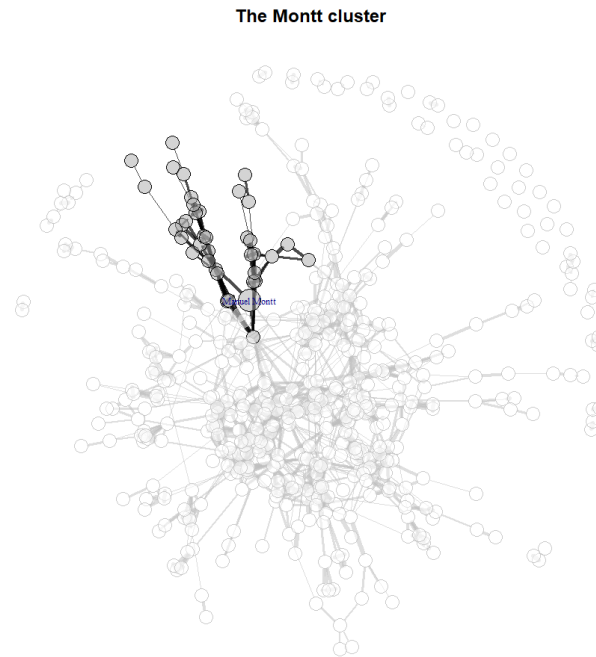
The sequence of events so far reveals a substantial oligarchic component of the Sociedad de la Igualdad. Its initial set up was suggested by Santiago Arcos and Francisco Bilbao, two wealthy young men. More importantly, the organisation received a considerable boost when parliamentarians of the opposition – most of them core oligarchs – failed at gaining the allegiance of president Bulnes and holding to the majority at the Chamber of Deputies. Theirs was an intra-elite fight but were left with little recourse other than reaching out to the popular classes. The next section will show that, when it came to the civil war of 1851, the principal agents dictating the revolutionary movement were the oligarchs.

The Civil War of 1851

In September 1850, a group of old Pipiolos, including Martín Orjera and the Lazo Castillo brothers (José Joaquín and Miguel), started fabricating ammunitions to fuel an insurrection in San Felipe (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 193). The government discovered the plan – which also involved Deputy Fernando Urizar Garfias – and intensified its campaign of repression, focussing primarily on the Sociedad de la Igualdad.⁴⁵ The tenth and last general meeting of this society, held on 28 October 1850, had 258 persons (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 217). Once finished, the group marched along the *Alameda*, the main street of Santiago. The government issued hefty fines on those participating. In response, the opposition held a meeting in the house of Federico Errázuriz Zañartu, in which participated Pedro Ugarte Ramírez, Victorino Lastarria, Domingo Santa María, Joaquín Lazo Castillo, Félix Mackenna Vicuña, Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, Bruno Larraín Aguirre, his four brothers, and Luis Ovalle Urriola, Rafael Vial Formas, José Antonio Alemparte Vial, and José Miguel Carrera Fontecilla (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 233-234). The gathering sent a legation to the Governor of Santiago – Matías Ovalle Errázuriz – challenging the legality of the fine. The delegation accomplished its mission, and Ovalle retracted the exactions (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 217). During a discussion over the fine between opposition member Vicente Sanfuentes Torres and Ovalle, Sanfuentes spat on the latter's face. Ovalle arrested Sanfuentes. A group of Liberals fought back, and after a few days Sanfuentes went to jail (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 240).

Figure 16: The Montt cluster

⁴⁵ Former Pipiolo leader Pedro Félix Vicuña Aguirre directed the opposition in Valparaíso. Vicuña Aguirre had had some tough years since the political fall of his family in 1829. "The ravages of the [1829] revolution were uncountable," recounts Vicuña Aguirre (1943) in his memoirs, "(...) the capital accrued in four years of brilliant dealings disappeared." Vicuña and his brother Ignacio had mines in Cobija, near Antofagasta. After the Pelucón takeover, the government prohibited the imports of mineral from Cobija, which may have been intended to undermine Pipiolo families with mining interests like the Vicuñas. By 1850, Pedro Félix Vicuña worked in shipping small scale goods from Valparaíso (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 200). Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna (1878, p. 199) recounts that he found a letter in the desk of his father (Pedro Félix) where the directory member of the Sociedad de la Igualdad Manuel Guerrero Prado encouraged prominent general José Manuel Pinto Arias to support a revolution (Pinto Arias did not accept). A similar letter was written by José Antonio Alemparte Vial, former agent of the Concepción rebels in the civil war of 1829. On September 15, 1850, authorities arrested Pedro Félix Vicuña. Before leaving the house, he told his sons: "Go to Aguirre's house, tell him to storm whichever jail they put me in and initiate the [revolutionary] movement" (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 200). Finding no evidence to incriminate him, Vicuña Aguirre was released.



Note: The graph was made using parliamentarians from the period 1828-186, and the highlighted Montt cluster was identified using the fast-greedy community detection algorithm. Manuel Montt is the labelled, slightly larger node.

On November 3, 1850, Liberals of San Felipe stormed a jail to free two coreligionists, Ramón Lara and Benigno Caldera Mascayano (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 259), who was a member of the Ottoman clan via his maternal grandmother. For a few days, the Liberals formed a provisional junta. On November 7, 1850, troops from Santiago restored the government's authority, then prosecuted and sentenced to death a number of the leaders (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 268). On the same 7th, the government declared Aconcagua and Santiago in a state of emergency, together with ordering the arrest of the following Liberal leaders, some of which I classify by their familial clusters: Federico Errázuriz Zañartu (Errázuriz), José Antonio Alemparte Vial (Vial), Pedro Ugarte Ramírez, Bruno Larraín Aguirre (Ottoman), José Victorino Lastarria, José Zapiola, Rafael Vial Formas (Vial), Francisco Bilbao, Luciano Piña, Eusebio Lillo, Manuel Guerrero Prado, Ramón Mondaca, and N. Larrechea (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 259). On November 9, 1850, the Sociedad de la Igualdad was outlawed (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 290). José Victorino Lastarria was exiled in Perú; Federico Errázuriz and Bruno Larraín Aguirre, who were wealthy, paid 6000 pesos to reduce their punishment (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 303). José Miguel Carrera Fontecilla, Francisco Bilbao, and Manuel Recabarren escaped to the Hacienda Las Palmas (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 307), rented by Carrera from Diego Antonio Ovalle Fontecilla, a distant relative of his and one of the largest landowners of Chile at the time (Chile, Oficina de Estadística 1875).

From this point on, it all came down to a military showdown between the government and the Liberal opposition. Nicolás Larraín Aguirre, Ignacio Eyzaguirre Portales, and José Antonio Alemparte Vial

contributed substantial sums of money in support of the rebels (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 321). On November 9, 1850, Liberal deputy Luis Ovalle Urriola met his uncle, colonel Pedro Alcántara Urriola Balbontín, to invite him to initiate a revolution (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 320). Urriola did not accept. Urriola was asked again on November 10, 1850, by Pedro Ugarte Ramírez and on November 17, 1850, by Félix Mackenna Vicuña (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 324). The colonel finally accepted (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 340), partly because of José Miguel Carrera Fontecilla's participation in the plot. During the War of Independence, Urriola fought under the orders of Carrera's father and uncles, who were killed by the decision of Bernardo O'Higgins. As Vicuña Mackenna (1878, p. 346) puts it, Urriola wanted to see the return of the Carreras to power. Pedro Ugarte Ramírez then moved to the house next to Urriola (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 347). Another military officer that the Liberals recruited was José Manuel Figueroa Vela, who did not want to participate but was dragged in by his family ties to the Vials, via his marriage to Pilar Vial Formas (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 349). The recruitment of Urriola and Vela – being the uncle and the brother-in-law of active instigators of the revolution – illustrates a recurring theme in this narration: that political mobilisation often operates via familial networks.

The next turning point occurred in Concepción. On February 10, 1851, 113 citizens of that city signed a letter proclaiming José María de la Cruz Prieto as their presidential candidate (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 347). Cruz was the Governor of Concepción, the commander of the army of the South, and a vital figure of the civil war of 1829. This was a direct challenge to Bulnes, who now had a candidate. Important fact: Cruz was connected by two-walks to president Bulnes (they were second cousins). The conflict between two relatives appears counter-intuitive at first, but, in reality, Cruz positioned himself as a typical member of the Vial cluster, against the government. In fact, he was also connected to Manuel Camilo Vial by two-walks.

Now the Liberals had to decide whether to align with Cruz. General Francisco Calderón Zumelzu – a former Pipiolo from Concepción – told Pedro Javier Godoy: “No one will support the assassins of Lircay” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. LXXXVIII). José Victorino Lastarria defended the Cruz option, but Pedro Ugarte Ramírez did not. “Everyone doubts,” wrote Vicuña Mackenna in his diary, “no one wants Cruz but for hatred of Montt” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 377). On February 25, 1851, Liberals Manuel Camilo Vial, Vicente Larraín Plaza, and Víctor Ignacio Eyzaguirre⁴⁶ travelled to Concepción to explore an alliance with Cruz (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 380). Before the three emissaries returned to Santiago, a letter of Cruz to Justo Arteaga Cuevas – fellow Southerner, and member of the Vial cluster – offered an alliance (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 381). On 9 April 1850, Ramón Errázuriz

⁴⁶ A Vial, an Ottoman, and an aristocrat, respectively. Eyzaguirre was one of the very few aristocrats supporting the new Liberal camp.

Aldunate dropped his candidacy, and, on the same day, the Liberal party of Santiago met in the house of the Vial Formas family. The Cruz-Liberal alliance was sealed (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 385).⁴⁷

Conservatives upheld the candidacy of Montt, Vicuña Mackenna says, because they needed a strong-hand candidate to repress the Sociedad de la Igualdad. Montt also represented a convenient link between the new plutocracy of Copiapó⁴⁸ and the aristocracy of Santiago. Through his wife and cousin, Rosario Montt Goyenechea, he was related to the wealthy Goyenechea family of Copiapó, and through his cousin, Santiago Montt Irrarrázaval, he was linked to the Santiago aristocracy. This bridging position in the kinship network gave Montt a transversal base of support. That said, Ramón Luis Irrarrázaval Alcalde – an insider of the aristocratic cluster and a relative of Portales through his father – was a more natural Pelucón candidate (Vicuña Mackenna 1878, p. 94). “[T]he nobles and the landed of Santiago dismissed the son of a Marquis [Irrarrázaval] (...) for the crew member with (...) the most robust arms” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 95). Montt’s candidature was a direct reaction to the radicalisation of the Liberal party, now in alliance with the Sociedad de la Igualdad.

On April 12, 1851, the Liberals of Santiago decided that, if the time to fight came, they would have to disperse across the country to promote a revolution. Pedro Urriola would remain in Santiago; Domingo Santa María and Juan Bello Dunn chose Aconcagua; Marcial González Ibieta and Rafael Vial Formas said Concepción; José Victorino Lastarria and José Miguel Carrera Fontecilla opted for Valparaíso; while Francisco Bilbao chose Arauco (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 448).

The Santiago revolt took place the week after, in the early morning of April 20, 1851. Only 11 men knew about it beforehand: Pedro Urriola, Pedro Ugarte, Domingo Santa María, Joaquín Lazo, Manuel Recabarren, Francisco Bilbao, Luis Ovalle Urriola, Felix Mackenna Vicuña, Vicente Larraín Aguirre, and Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna. Most of the other Liberals had their suspicions but did not know of the plan (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 460). On the night before, Pedro Urriola had drafted a letter to President Bulnes, demanding a ministerial change presided by Pedro Ugarte and a new state council formed by Bruno Larraín Aguirre, Manuel Eyzaguirre, José Miguel Carrera Fontecilla, Federico Errázuriz Zañartu, and Domingo Santa María (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 476). This council never materialised, but reflects the familial composition of the revolutionaries, with representatives of the Ottomans Larraín, their related Errázuriz family, and the Carrera clan. This formula did not include the Vials, but they were represented by general Cruz, who some months later conducted the most formidable thrust of the 1851 civil war, described below.

⁴⁷ The committee elected that night to promote the Cruz candidacy was composed of Justo Arteaga Cuevas, Pedro Urriola, Salvador Sanfuentes, Marcial González Ibieta, Manuel Eyzaguirre, and Domingo Santa María. The secretary of the committee was Ángel Prieto Cruz, nephew of former president José Joaquín Prieto Vial and of the new Liberal candidate José María de la Cruz, as well as son-in-law of Pedro Urriola Albontín, who would lead the Santiago insurrection of April 1851.

⁴⁸ The mining magnates of Copiapó – the Gallo, Goyenechea, and Matta families – supported the Montt government. Indeed, they signed a letter condemning the revolution and put together 2,000 pesos to defend the province against the revolutionaries (Encina, 1949, p. 102). Copiapó’s elite support of Montt is contrary to Zeitlin’s account of the alignments of 1851. He says that the elite of Copiapó was hostile to Montt.

The failed revolt of April 20 – led by colonel Pedro Urriola – occurred as follows. At 2h30, Urriola, in command of part of the *Valdivia* battalion, occupied the main square of Santiago and waited there until 6h30 for the *Chacabuco* battalion to arrive. But the latter did not come. Francisco Bilbao and the *Igualitarios* had promised a mass uprising of at least 5,000 people, but they barely gathered two bands of 10-15 in total (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 456). While Urriola waited in the main square, “[t]he ‘notables’ of both sides (...) remained in their balconies (...) asking for news from pedestrians” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. 531).⁴⁹ At 6h30, Urriola moved his troops to the *Alameda* of Santiago, and waited there for another two hours, expecting the government to surrender peacefully. On the other side of the fire line, President Bulnes learned about the riot at 03h30, and by 7h he had gathered a considerable number of troops. Santiago Prado Bustamante and Pedro León Gallo Goyenechea, a relative of Montt, were put in charge of securing the Moneda Palace.⁵⁰ By 9h it had become clear to some of the Liberal plotters that Pedro Urriola was not fit for the job, as he was unwilling to conduct an attack. Pedro Ugarte asked colonel Justo Arteaga Cuevas to take charge. However, Bulnes already had a considerable force, and after a brief battle, the uprising was put down.

The most significant threat to the government would come from the south eight months later. José María de la Cruz – who had lost the Presidential election – started a civil war that ultimately was defeated in the Battle of Loncomilla, which left around 4,000 dead (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 18). Joaquín Campino Salamanca, in a letter to Pedro Félix Vicuña, suggested the government was too strong for an armed rebellion. “I see (...) difficulties in the revolution that you announce,” indicated Campino: “First, three million pesos distributed as salaries across the country” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1878, p. XCIV).

The Montt coalition breaks apart

Montt started his second Presidential term, in 1856, with Francisco Javier Ovalle Bezanilla – son of former Pelucón President José Tomás Ovalle – as Minister of Interior, Alejandro Vial Guzmán in Finance, José Francisco Gana López in War, and Waldo Silva Algue in Justice. “The new cabinet has been received badly,” reported Aníbal Pinto (ex-President Pinto’s son and himself a future President) to his father-in-law, General Cruz; Silva’s appointment, he noted, was proof of Montt’s policy of promoting “people from the lower spheres” (quoted in Collier 2003, p. 199). Indeed, the social standing of Montt’s circle was a theme among the opposition. The newspaper *El Conservador* indicated that “Montt surrounded himself with adulators, instead of truly enlightened men, respectable for their social position” (quoted in Collier, 2003, p. 207). Lastarria and Santa María (1861, p. 97) recount that,

⁴⁹ Individuals directly involved in the operations or that made presence in the main square that morning: Pedro Urriola, Pedro Ugarte, Félix Mackenna (treasurer), Domingo Santa María, Luis Ovalle Urriola, Vicente Larraín Aguirre, Federico Errázuriz, Manuel Eyzaguirre, José Miguel Carrera Fontecilla, Francisco Bilbao, Eusebio Lillo, Manuel Recabarren, Nicolás Figueroa Brito, Joaquín Lazo, Miguel Lazo, Victorino Lastarria, Federico Errázuriz, Justo Arteaga Cuevas, Nicolás Figueroa Brito, Benjamín Videla Pinochet. In the morning of April 20, 1851, Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna knocked the windows of Victorino Lastarria, Pedro Ugarte, the Vial Formas family, and the Larraín Aguirre.

⁵⁰ This point matters because Gallo, in the civil war of 1859, would be Montt’s worst enemy.

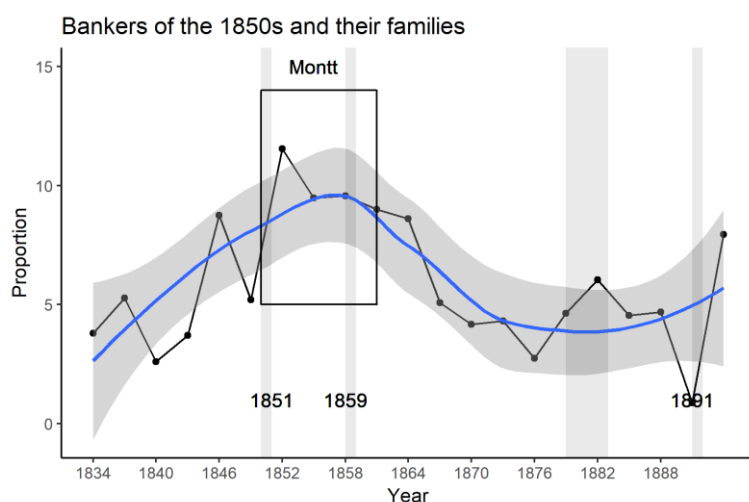
“whenever denounced for employing incapable men in his administration, Montt appeared to believe that they referred to their obscure birth and feigned being outraged against the aristocrats.”

Collier (2003, p. 211-212) indicates that the base of support of Montt were 1) some prominent families; 2) public administrators; 3) new politicians that had been raised thanks to Montt and Varas; and 4) new, wealthy businesspeople. A pro-National newspaper wrote that Nationals wanted individuals, “whatever their class,” to raise themselves by merit, and not to fawn on “those who call themselves ‘gentlemen’ with no other claim but their parchments of nobility” (quoted in Collier, 2003, p. 214).

The bankers were particularly supportive of Montt. Before the establishment of the law of banks of 1860, three banks were formed in Chile.⁵¹ 1) The Banco Edwards was founded by Agustín Edwards Ossandón, the richest Chilean of the second half of the nineteenth century. Edwards sat in Congress only once in his life, in 1861-1864, a pro-Montt Congress (Lastarria and Santa María 1861). Santiago Edwards, a brother of Agustín, participated actively in the pro-government faction of Copiapó in the 1850s (Fernández Abara 2016). Further, the son of Edwards, Agustín Edwards Ross, eventually became a leader of the pro-Montt National Party. 2) The Bezanilla, Mac Clure & Cia Bank was founded by Domingo Matte Messía, Matías Cousiño, José Tomás Urmeneta, Santiago Salas Palazuelos, and Carlos Mac Clure. Like Edwards, Carlos Mac Clure held a parliamentary seat only once in his life, in 1861, the most pro-Montt Congress during Montt’s tenure. Santiago Salas was made a senator in 1852; Domingo Matte, José Tomás Urmeneta, and Matías Cousiño were made senators in 1855 – all under Montt. José Tomás Urmeneta was a minister of Montt and a National party presidential candidate in 1871. 3) Finally, the largest stock-holders of the Valparaíso bank were Agustín Edwards and Matías Cousiño, the political allegiance of whom have been discussed. The Valparaíso bank was directed by José Cerveró and José Guillermo Waddington. Cerveró never sat in Congress so I cannot infer his allegiance. Waddington probably supported Montt. The only occasion in which he sat in Congress – except for 1882 – was in 1852, under Montt.

Figure 17: Bankers of the 1850s and their families

⁵¹ See Salazar (2015, p. 608) for a description of the founding.



Note: The individuals included as bankers are the following: Bezanilla Bezanilla José Domingo, Cousiño Jorquera Matías, Edwards Ossandón Agustín, MacClure Ossandón Carlos, Matte Messía Domingo, Salas Palazuelos Santiago, Urmeneta García José Tomas, Waddington Urrutia José Guillermo. The relatives of the bankers were: Ariztía Astaburuaga Mariano, Ariztía Urmeneta Mariano, Ariztía Urmeneta Ricardo, Barros Fernández Diego Antonio, Bascuñán Salas Manuel Ramon, Cousiño Jorquera Buenaventura, Cousiño Squella Luis, Eastman Quiroga Adolfo, Edwards Argandoña Alberto, Edwards Argandoña Antonio, Edwards Garriga Benjamín, Edwards Garriga Eduardo, Edwards Brown Jorge, Edwards Ross Agustín, Edwards Ross Arturo, Errazuriz Salas Agustín, Errazuriz Salas Ignacio, Errazuriz Sotomayor Fernando, Errazuriz Sotomayor Francisco Javier, Errazuriz Sotomayor José Manuel, Errazuriz Sotomayor Pedro, Errazuriz Urmeneta Guillermo, Errazuriz Urmeneta Rafael, Errazuriz Valdivieso Maximiano, Guerrero Vergara Adolfo, Irrázaval Palazuelos Galo, Izquierdo Jaraquemada José Vicente, Izquierdo Urmeneta Samuel, Izquierdo Urmeneta Vicente, MacClure Ossandón Eduardo, Matte Aldunate Juan M, Matte Pérez Augusto, Matte Pérez Claudio, Matte Pérez Eduardo, Matte Pérez Enrique, Matte Pérez Ricardo, Muñoz Bezanilla José Santiago, Ovalle Bezanilla José Tomas, Ovalle Bezanilla Francisco Javier, Ovalle Bezanilla Joaquín, Ovalle Bezanilla Rafael, Palazuelos Astaburuaga José Antonio, Palazuelos Astaburuaga Pedro, Palazuelos Ramírez Juan Agustín, Portales Palazuelos Manuel, Portales Palazuelos Diego, Ross Edwards Agustín, Salas Corbalán Manuel, Salas Errazuriz José Agustín, Salas Errazuriz Bernardo, Salas Errazuriz Javier, Salas Errazuriz Marcelo, Solar Marín Bernardo, Squella Lopetegui Eusebio, Tocornal Tocornal Ismael, Urmeneta García Jerónimo, Waddington Echiburu Carlos, Waddington Echiburu Ricardo, Pérez Montt Clemente.

Per expectations, Figure 17 shows that bankers and their families obtained a high proportion of seats in Congress during the Montt administration.

State-led enterprises were an excellent way of buying the support of capitalists outside finance. Part of the Errázuriz family benefited handsomely from Montt's policies. The contractor that won the bidding to resume the construction of the Santiago-Valparaíso railways was Minister of Finance, Matías Ovalle Errázuriz (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 221). Minister José Tomás Urmeneta and his son-in-law, Maximiano Errázuriz Valdivieso, won the bidding to create the Gas Company of Santiago in 1858.

Together with the social standing of government officials, the two other points of contention between Montt and the opposition were Church-State relations and Montt's refusal to issue an amnesty law favouring the defeated party of 1851 (Collier, 2003, p. 196). Let us discuss these points next.

In January 1856, the son of a sacristan broke the window of the cathedral of Santiago and invited his friends to drink the wine of communion. The sacristan was fired when his son's misdeed was discovered, but the cathedral chapter overruled the decision. The issue produced a division among church authorities. Canon Juan Francisco Meneses – the former Pelucón priest of 1829 – supported the overruling but archbishop Rafael Valentín Valdivieso Zañartu endorsed the decision of firing the sacristan. Meneses took recourse with the Supreme Court. The latter, upon former minister Manuel Camilo Vial's advice, favoured canon Meneses, and the government agreed. Archbishop Valdivieso, however, did not recognise the jurisdiction of the secular court to rule over internal affairs of the church. Upon Meneses' insistence, the court pressed Valdivieso to comply with the ruling, threatening to banish him from Santiago. This created considerable controversy. While the pro-clerical segments of the Pelucones supported Valdivieso, the circle around Montt and Antonio Varas argued for the right of the state to rule over church affairs. The conflict ended with a settlement between Valdivieso and Meneses, but the division within the ruling camp did not disappear. In a letter to Manuel Blanco Encalada, Antonio Varas indicated that Chile might be facing “a religious division” between “new Catholic and non-Catholic parties” (Collier 2003).

Ideologically, the Liberals were closer to the government's position of subduing the church to the state. But from a tactical point of view, they and the pro-clericals together had a chance of bringing Montt down. The so-called Liberal-Conservative fusion was formed in 1857. Federico Errázuriz Zañartu was an ideal broker, as one of the foremost leaders of the Liberal party as well as the cousin of Archbishop Rafael Valdivieso Zañartu. The first thrust of the new partnership pushed for an amnesty benefiting the defeated party of 1851. Conservatives were now entirely behind this law. Fernando Lazcano Mujica, who supported Montt in 1851, now had turned to the clericalist opposition and was one of the strongest advocates of the amnesty in the Senate. But Congress was still heavily pro-government, and during the vote, “Lastarria, Tocornal, and Gallo could do nothing against a majority that was disciplined [behind the government] and composed in its majority by employees” (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 91). Deputy Evaristo del Campo Madariaga – in-law of Montt – said he welcomed the amnesty but could not vote against the government (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 90). The year after, in 1858, as the opposition against the government increased, Montt finally accepted the amnesty.

On August 10, 1857, the Senate forced Montt to reshuffle the cabinet under the threat of not sanctioning the budget for the year after (Lastarria and Santa María 1861, p. 98). The ensuing ministerial reorganisation led by Jerónimo Urmeneta involved José Joaquín Pérez in Finance, Álvaro Covarrubias Ortúzar in Justice, and Manuel García in War. However, after a fall out between Urmeneta and Montt, which involved exchanges in the press, this initial list was dissolved. Urmeneta remained as Minister of Interior, now joined by Francisco de Borja Solar Gorostizaga in Finance, Salvador Sanfuentes in Justice, and Manuel García in War. Sanfuentes and Solar were Liberals, but Montt accepted them; Manuel García was closer to the Conservatives. Liberals and Conservatives had Sanfuentes, Solar, and

García, and were happy with the new arrangement (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 103). Some months later, Sanfuentes and Solar quit after conflicts with Montt over the appointment of employees. In their place entered Matías Ovalle Errázuriz and Rafael Sotomayor Baeza – both loyal Montt supporters (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 108-9).

The ministerial change, together with the approaching of the 1858 legislative elections, made government-opposition more hostile. “A fraction of the party... that elected the current President in 1851 is now trying to thwart him,” reported the pro-government deputy Juan Esteban Rodríguez (quoted in Collier, 2003, p. 205). Antonio Varas analysed the parties as consisting of an ultra-Pelucón faction moving toward the suddenly reinvigorated Liberals, and the “Progressive-Conservative Party sticking with Montt.” (Collier, 2003, p. 205-206). The conventional wisdom of the Montt-Conservative break over-emphasises the religious cleavage.⁵² The rupture was, indeed, triggered by a conflict between the government and the bishop of Santiago. However, religious sentiment is not the ultimate explanation. More plausibly, the separation was produced by the demise that the aristocrats had experienced after 1852, that is, before the occurrence of any substantial conflict between the state and the church. Further, their newly found clericalism did not impede the Conservatives to form an anti-Montt alliance with the Liberals, some of whom were anti-clericalists.

In January 1858, Liberal and Conservative leaders met in the house of Ramón Subercaseaux Mercado. Manuel Antonio Tocornal, Rafael Larraín Moxó, and Francisco Ignacio Ossa represented the Conservatives. The Liberal committee was composed of Domingo Santa María, Federico Errázuriz, and Ángel Custodio Gallo (Collier, 2003, p. 210), who was a relative of Montt and had supported him in 1851. “Manuel A. Tocornal... is today united with Santa María...,” reported Diego Barros Arana in a letter; “the Gallos and the Vials are in the same party. This extreme miracle has been worked by Montt” (quoted in Collier, 2003, p. 212).

After losing the support of the Conservative party, Montt formed a party of his own: the *Partido Nacional*. Lastarria and Santa María (1861, p. 108-9) claim that the party was formed by all of Montt’s “employees.” Opponents called the National party a “usurer party” (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 110), probably referring to the prevailing prejudice against bankers. The executive did not heavy-handedly conduct the legislative elections of 1858, like on other occasions (Collier, 2003, p. 212). Opposition candidates won 15 seats in total – “the largest elected opposition contingent yet seen in Chile, and more than large enough to be disruptive” (Collier, 2003, p. 216).⁵³ In October 1858, the

⁵² See Timothy Scully (1992) and (Valenzuela 1985, p. 82)

⁵³ These were: Álvaro Covarrubias Ortúzar, Domingo Santa María González, Ángel Custodio Gallo Goyenechea, Rafael Correa de Saa Toro Zambrano, Alejandro Reyes Cotapos, Tomás Gallo Goyenechea, Nicómedes Ossa Cerda, Manuel Matta Goyenechea, Ignacio Ortúzar Castillo, Miguel Santa María Artigas, José del Carmen Stuardo, Francisco Vargas Fontecilla, Francisco Marín Recabarren, and Rafael de la Barra López (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 136).

opposition organised a large banquet where all the “old families of Santiago” were “represented,” reported a newspaper. “Almost all the great landowners were there” (quoted in Collier, 2003, p. 174).

By the end of 1858, a revolutionary committee was formed, with Domingo Santa María and Federico Errázuriz among its leading members. On December 11, 1858, Minister of Interior Jerónimo Urmeneta placed a note in the door of Congress announcing that the legislative sessions were cancelled. In response, on the same day, Guillermo Matta Goyenechea, Ángel Custodio Gallo Goyenechea, Isidoro Errázuriz, and Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna summoned the population to an assembly. The government repressed the 200-strong gathering and decreed a ninety-day state of siege (Collier, 2003, p. 221). While Isidoro Errázuriz paid a fine of 20,000 pesos and went into exile to Argentina, his consorts were expatriated to the United Kingdom (Collier, 2003, p. 224).

“It is difficult not to see December 1857 as one of the nodal points of Chilean history,” indicates Collier (2003), “marking the genesis of what would become, in time, the multiparty system that has been a key feature of Chile’s politics ever since.” Descriptively, Collier’s assessment is correct, as the Conservative and National parties were formed in the late 1850s. But from a structural point of view, the fractures that caused the emergence of the four parties were predictable from before. At its core, the Liberal party emerged from an alliance between the old Filópitás and the Pipiolo party of 1829. The Conservatives grew out of the aristocratic cluster of Santiago. The National and Radical parties, in turn, represented the emerging bourgeoisie, that is, the newly rich with few networks among the incumbent power holders. The clerical conflict was not an ultimate cause for the emergence of the Chilean parties, but a trigger.

Copiapó in the 1850s

The most significant threat to the government came from Copiapó, where the old-time supporter Pedro León Gallo Goyenechea poured his resources into creating a massive army of miners. Falling outside the control of the revolutionary committee of Santiago, Gallo was to 1859 what Cruz was to 1851 – a semi-independent caudillo with control over a considerable force. There is no definitive account of why the Copiapó elites – the Gallos and the Mattas, in particular – turned their backs on Montt. However, the change was a radical one: from staunch supporters of Montt in 1851 to the most radical wing of the Liberal party in 1859. A detour on the politics of this city in the 1850s is in order.

Copiapó had been a pro-government bastion up to the mid-1850s when it passed to the opposition. Joaquín Fernández Abara (2016) explains that this change of sides responded to a conflict between the government and the mining elite of Copiapó, initially over taxes. In 1852, the Mining Council of Copiapó – the corporative body of the mining elite of that city – asked the government to raise the taxes of small mine-owners so that they shared the cost of policing the city. The government, instead, issued a uniform tax on all mineral exports. This response seemed to have upset the mining elite, because,

during the elections for the Mining Council in 1855, they formulated a list of candidates that opposed the official list. The local miners won.

That same year, for the first time a substantial part of the Copiapó elites turned against the government in a legislative election. They promoted the candidacy of Manuel Antonio Matta Goyenechea and José Victorino Lastarria for Congress, which reflected a newly built alliance between sectors of the local mining elite and the Liberal party of Santiago (Fernández Abara 2016, p. 63). Joaquín Fernández Abara (2016, p. 65) identifies three families behind this campaign: the Matta Goyenechea, the Carvallo Matta, and the Mandiola. Diego Carvallo Matta had been a Pipiolo deputy in the 1820s, and in 1851 was one of the few members of the Copiapó elite to support the Liberal revolution. The Matta Goyenechea brothers (Francisco de Paula, Manuel Antonio, and Guillermo) had been close to the Liberal literary circles that formed in the 1840s in Santiago, but during the civil war of 1851, they supported the government. If these families were to beat the government in the elections, they needed the help of the people. They recruited the support of radical publicist José Nicolás Mujica, which gave the campaign of 1855 a populist overtone that previous elections had not had (Fernández Abara 2016, p. 68). This alliance between mining elites and the middle sectors illustrates a point that recurs in this thesis: when the elites break apart, at least one of the factions will reach beyond its usual boundaries to recruit the support of other social classes.

Another group of the Copiapó elites stayed loyal to the government. The official candidacy of Tomás Gallo Goyenechea and José Vicente Mira Íñiguez was acclaimed by an assembly composed of the Ossa, the Goyenechea, and the Gallo families. Luis Waddington – one of the wealthiest individuals of Chile – also attended the meeting. The elections were won by the opposition by a wide margin, turning Copiapó into one of the only provinces where the government failed to secure a victory.⁵⁴ Despite its legislative success, the opposition broke apart during the elections of the city council of 1855. Its oligarchic faction established an electoral alliance with the government, something that was criticised by the popular segments of the parliamentary campaign (Fernández Abara 2016, p. 63).

1855 represents a break between the Copiapó elites and the government, but still a mild one. In subsequent years, a sharper partition took place. After 1855 a crisis of the mining industry hit Copiapó: the most productive mines became depleted, international prices fell, and mid-scale miners became indebted. The government decided to intervene to temper the activities of some radical factions. On January 2, 1856, Intendente Juan Vicente Mira Íñiguez announced that the membership of the Mining Council would be reconfigured, and only those nominated by the government could vote for the new body. The new Mining Council excluded small-scale producers, and it included government supporters along with some members of the opposition that belonged to reputable elite families, such as the Matta,

⁵⁴ Federico Errázuriz Zañartu also scored a win for the opposition in Molina.

the Carvallo, and the Mandiola (Fernández Abara 2016, p. 107). This intervention polarised the legislative elections of 1858. The government aimed to gain the support of some of the notable families and limit the number of qualified voters. The wealthy Gallo Goyenechea family – long-standing supporters of the regime – were critical. “Rest assured,” wrote Intendente Mira to President Montt in 1858, “that I will attend to your recommendation of [maintaining good relations] with the Gallo family (...). I am aware of the intimate relations that link you to them.”⁵⁵ In a letter sent sometime after, Intendente Mira expressed optimism about winning over the Gallos: “If we could secure the support of the Gallo family... we can neutralise the evil.”⁵⁶ Mira’s optimism proved unwarranted. In January 1858, he reported: “I do not think an arrangement with the Gallo family is possible: they are youngsters of poor judgement.”⁵⁷

A local Copiapó newspaper explained: “The citizens who, with good intentions, had worked to promote the current President now are persuaded (...) that this administration is incapable of doing good (...) and have joined the Liberal party.”⁵⁸ It is not clear what made the Gallo family pass to the opposition. Fernández Abara (2016, p. 114) hypothesises that the change followed Montt’s decision to nationalise the construction of railroads from Santiago to Valparaíso, an enterprise in which the Gallos had invested handsomely. An alternative question is the following: Why did Montt not govern in the interests of the Gallo and the Copiapó elites, to which he was tied through his wife? In 1852, as described earlier, his administration not only dismissed the tax reform requested by the Copiapó Mining Council, but it issued a new tax that went in the opposite direction. Montt did not meet the historical demands of the mining sector and extracted resources from Copiapó to invest them in a railroad project that benefited the central provinces. Given Montt’s kinship ties to northern families, together with the support of Copiapó during the civil war of 1851, the way he distributed resources and favours is paradoxical. Here, unfortunately, I cannot resolve this problem.

In January 1858, the Gallo Goyenechea brothers met in an assembly with members of the Liberal opposition of 1855, which contained middle-class radicals and the elite families Matta and Carvallo (Fernández Abara 2016, p. 118). The cousins Tomás Gallo Goyenechea and Manuel Antonio Matta Goyenechea were chosen as candidates of the opposition, now called *fusionista* after the Liberal-Conservative fusion formed in Santiago. The government tried to contain the surge of the opposition by offering a consensual list, which maintained Gallo and Matta as the leading candidates, but it also included Manuel Valenzuela Castillo – a wealthy individual with extensive lands in Curicó – as the

⁵⁵ Quoted in Fernández Abara (2016, p. 109)

⁵⁶ Quoted in Fernández Abara (2016, p. 111)

⁵⁷ Quoted in Fernández Abara (2016, p. 112).

⁵⁸ Quoted in Fernández Abara (2016, p. 120).

alternate. The compromise failed, and the opposition won overwhelmingly. However, as it occurred in 1855, the local oligarchs and the radicals parted ways shortly after.

The government lost the municipal elections, but it is telling to learn who supported the government. In a pro-government campaign meeting held on April 17, 1858, the following participated: José María Cabezón, Santiago Edwards Ossandón, Antonio Escobar, Juan Agustín Fontanés, Fernando Mandiola, Eleodoro Gormaz Carrera, José Antonio Moreno, José Ramón de Ossa, his son Blas Ossa Varas, and others (Fernández Abara 2016, p. 145). These individuals were wealthy. The brother of Santiago Edwards – Agustín Edwards – was by far the wealthiest person of Chile, to the point that by the time of his death his wealth amounted to 4% of the Chilean GDP (Nazer 2000). Antonio Escobar, Eleodoro Gormaz, were cited by Vicuña Mackenna (1882) as being among the wealthiest individuals of Chile in the year 1882. José Ramón and his son Blas Ossa were among the most prosperous miners of Copiapó. Further, the Ossa family had large extensions of lands in the Central Valley of Chile and had three members in Vicuña Mackenna's 1882 list. Manuel Valenzuela Castillo – the name that the government had suggested to the opposition months earlier – was also included in the list of Vicuña Mackenna's list of richest Chileans. Montt relied not only on bureaucrats, as the conventional wisdom has it but also on extremely wealthy individuals with few connections among the traditional oligarchy. More on this point will be discussed below. Fernández Abara (2016, p. 146) indicates that Montt's Copiapó base – especially Edwards, Ossa, and Escobar – were financiers, whereas the opposition was tied to production. This intuition aligns with the data presented in the previous section, demonstrating the overrepresentation of bankers during Montt's tenure.

To summarise, from 1855 to 1858, Copiapó passed from being a Pelucón bastion to the opposition. This transition seems to have responded to Montt's centralising efforts. He was tied by kinship through his wife to some of the most influential families of Copiapó. However, his government was the least familial of the period studied in this thesis. The government not only raised taxes on wealthy miners, but it also intervened in the Mining Council, a corporative organ that traditionally had been autonomous. Why did Montt not govern in the interests of families to which he was connected? This question cannot be solved here. But the outcome was that Montt lost his grip over Copiapó. Some elements of the Copiapó elite did remain loyal: the Edwards Ossandón, the Ossa Varas, and others, which Fernández Abara links to the financial market. Whatever their sectoral interests, they were not part of the kinship networks that dominated the local opposition, i.e. the axis combining the Gallo Goyenechea, the Matta Goyenechea, and the Carvallo Matta families.

The Civil War of 1859

An essential difference between the civil wars of 1851 and 1859 is that, in the latter, the entire army remained loyal to Montt. The revolutionaries were left with their vast familial connections and wealth

but no soldiers. The civil war started as a series of urban insurrections and guerrilla bands in the countryside promoted by oligarchs and local elites (Collier, 2003, p. 224). On February 1859, San Felipe was seized by local rebels; 50 soldiers rioted in Santiago, and a guerrilla band led by the poet Guillermo Blest Gana took over Valparaíso. These revolts lasted less than a week. Other small-scale uprisings took place in Chillán, Talcahuano, and the Mapuche frontier. A more substantial one occurred in Talca, where a band led by a local landowner gained control of the city. The army led by Minister of War, Manuel García Banquedá, took the city back after one month of siege, imprisoning 300 rebels. Juan Antonio Pando and Pedro Ugarte Ramírez – the Liberal judge of 1851 – led bands that roamed the Central Valley with no ultimate success. In Colchagua, José Miguel Carrera Fontecilla – also an 1851 veteran – had a comparatively strong force but was finally beaten in May 1859.

Then came the civil war. On January 5, 1859, the governor of Copiapó closed a club where the opposition met. That night, a band took the gendarmerie with barely any resistance, and acclaimed Pedro León Gallo as the new governor (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 144). The government raised troops by forced recruitment. In March 1859, Gallo defeated the government in Coquimbo, but failed in the decisive battle of Cerro Grande (April 29), against an army twice as large (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 183). Gallo retired with 700 of his men to San Juan, Argentina; the revolution lasted four months and produced 5,000 deaths (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 189). The properties of Gallo were taken by the government to pay for the damages produced during the conflict. Lastarria and Santa María (1861, p. 220) claim that no one dared to buy them.

The pro-government coalition of 1859 was less aristocratic than that of 1851. “Unlike 1851,” claim Lastarria and Santa María (1861, p. 149), “no wealthy men were offering their services to the government, nor lawyers of distinction that marched along with the military divisions as counsellors. Things changed greatly in eight years; the hate of some and the indifference of others isolated the government to the point that it could not find supporters but for the price of gold.” The Conservatives not only formed an opposition from Congress, but they also commanded the armed revolt in San Felipe (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 164).

The forces challenging the government were wealthy and influential. However, the administrative apparatus of the state had a high degree of coherency. Lastarria and Santa María explain the state’s successful repression of the revolt in the following terms: “[The government’s] steamships were lords of the coast and could transport troops from one point to the other with incredible speed, cutting the communication lines of the adversaries. Its means of action, strengthened by the administrative practices of many years, gave [the government] resources in every step, and subservient men that profited from the state, anticipated government instructions to be rewarded by their work. The national

coffers offered abundant resources to confront the necessities of the situation” (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 171). Lastarria and Santa María (1861, p. 232) claim that the foundation of Montt’s power was to reward spies and collaborators, to provide civilian employment and military ranks, and to spend government resources.

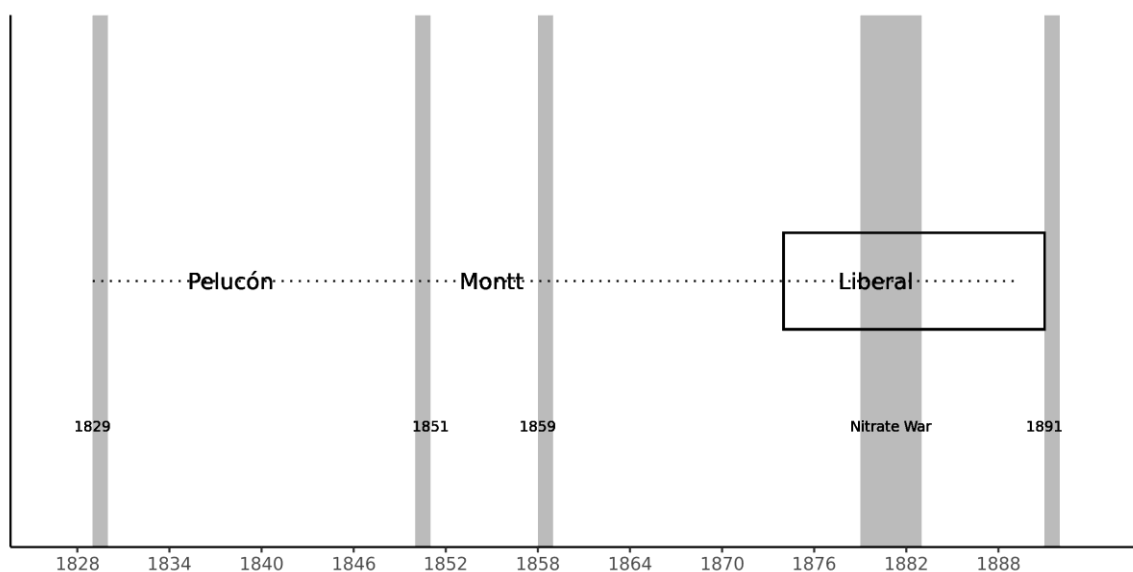
The government intervened in the 1861 parliamentary elections more than in 1858. The opposition accused the government of removing opponents from the electoral registry and artificially inflating the number of potential government supporters (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 221). Whereas those enrolled in Valparaíso in 1858 were 2,000; in 1860 this number rocketed to 6,000. Santiago had 800 more names in 1860 than in 1858 (Lastarria & Santa María González, 1861, p. 226). The Congress of 1861, wrote opposition-members Lastarria and Santa María (1861, p. 238), was formed by “employees of all levels, young men without intelligence and poor beggars without dignity.”

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the eventful 1850s from the standpoint of elite dynamics. Whereas standard views see the civil wars of 1851 and 1859 as pitting the provinces against Santiago (Fernández Abara 2017) or the productive classes of society against the oligarchy (Salazar 2015; Zeitlin 1984), I reveal a much narrower field of contention. Independent of the ideological justifications they gave, the most active agents on one side of the conflict or the other invariably belonged to the upper echelon of society. In 1851, the sides of the civil war represented competing familial networks, and in 1859 they represented old versus emergent elites. Chilean historiography often sees the 1850s as the last decade of the Pelucón regime, and Montt is often characterised as the purest expression of the Portalian ideal of robust presidential rule. An examination of the social composition of Congress during the Montt administration, however, reveals a different picture. Under Montt, the families that had founded the Pelucón regime declined and the emergent bourgeoisie rose. This new balance between the two groups perdured until he left office. The 1860s represented a return to Congress of the oligarchy, i.e. the families that Montt had, partially, dismissed. The next chapter will show that, instead of being the last of the Pelucón decades, the 1850s were a precedent of the 1880s, a period of intense bureaucratisation and accelerated elite turnover.

5. Balmacedists versus Congressists (1874-1894)

The previous chapters show two axes structuring political competition in nineteenth-century Chile: one pitting oligarchic families against one another and the other splitting oligarchs and newcomers. In the 1860s and 1870s, the core of the oligarchy recovered the power it had lost under Manuel Montt. In turn, the groups that rose under Montt began advocating for inclusion through reforming the electoral system. The reforms of 1874 were a significant turning point in the country's electoral democratisation. However, they did not have an immediate impact on the social composition of Congress, at least until the 1880s. In 1881, emerging elites within the Liberal party took control of the presidential convention, made Domingo Santa María president, and increased their representation in Congress in the ensuing elections. While the 1850s represent the first breakthrough of the bourgeoisie in Chilean politics, the 1880s represent their second breakthrough. Subsequent years witnessed a dramatic expansion of the state apparatus and a parallel parliamentarisation of political life. These contradictory developments culminated in the civil war of 1891, which pitted Congress against the presidency of José Manuel Balmaceda.



The electoral reforms of 1874

A gradual transition to institutionalised political parties began in 1861. Cabinets started reflecting coalitions and ministers became increasingly responsive to parties (Scully, 1992, p. 45). President José Joaquín Pérez Mascayano (1861-1871) surrounded himself with members of the Liberal-Conservative coalition soon after assuming power, but Congress and the bureaucracy were still dominated by the Nationals. “The National party... had the effective power, leaving the government under their shadows,” wrote Abraham König (1886, p. 5) two decades later. The parliamentary elections of March 1864 were of crucial importance in the balance of power between Nationals and the Liberal-Conservative coalition. “If the government won,” wrote Abraham König (1886, p. 5), “the Liberal-Conservative party would dominate... without counterweight; if, on the contrary, [the National party]

won, they would have to give up handcuffed to the Nationals.” Contra-König’s fear, the coalition took over Congress in 1864, and the former supporters of Manuel Montt passed to the opposition. 1864 represents a return of the old families to power. The bourgeois – as expressed in the National party – fell outside the inner circles of political power, again.

In the 1860s, members of the National and Radical parties formed the Club de la Reforma, a group that advocated for democratising the electoral system. Cristián Gazmuri (1992) lists the members of this club; let us look closer at its composition. 41% of the 41 individuals that attended the National-Radical presidential convention of 1871 (Palma 1871) were part of the Club de la Reforma. In turn, only 10% of those attending the Liberal conference of 1875 (Vicuña Mackenna 1875) and 0% of those attending the Conservative congress of 1878 (Partido Conservador 1947) had participated. These proportions suggest that the main impetus behind the reformist movement of the 1860s and the 1870s came from the same groups that had gained clout under Manuel Montt. These were the bourgeoisie and were affiliated, not exclusively but primarily to the National and Radical parties. The newly-adopted reformism on the part of the Nationals represents a major shift, given that the Montt administration had been one of the most repressive of the nineteenth century.

Gazmuri (1992, p. 110) indicates that the Club de la Reforma was a direct expression of the “culture of 1848,” the French-inspired ideals of liberty that promoted the failed revolution of 1851. Salazar (2015, p. 650) posits that it inherited the historical memory of the Pipiolos of 1828 and the Liberals of 1851, with the exception that now they opted for an electoral strategy, rather than an armed one. Further, Salazar indicates that the reformists’ antithesis was Manuel Montt. These propositions are problematic, insofar the members of the Club de la Reforma came overwhelmingly from the pro-Montt side of the conflict in 1851. Only a minority of the members of the Club de la Reforma had consistent Liberal trajectories; for the most part, the reformers had been Montt supporters in the past, including the Nationals but also Radicals such as the Mattas and the Gallos, who started their political careers as staunch Liberal opponents.⁵⁹

The pro-reform activism of the Club de la Reforma strengthened when the Conservative party abandoned the coalition they had with the Liberal party and joined the National-Radical opposition (Valenzuela 1985).⁶⁰ The government was now forced to negotiate and, in 1874, a series of electoral reforms were issued. The reforms of 1874 represent a turning point in Chilean electoral history. The changes expanded the franchise, made Senatorial seats subject to direct election, and increased the number of legislators. Local top-taxpayers replaced municipalities in administering the electoral registries. The reforms rendered the legislative elections accumulative, meaning that voters now could

⁵⁹ See (Fernández Abara 2016) for an hypothesis of why these families turned to the opposition in the second half of Montt’s administration.

⁶⁰ The Liberal/Conservative break was produced by disagreements of both parties on the role of the Catholic Church on education (Valenzuela 1985).

vote for a candidate as many times as slots available. For example, if a given locality elected three Deputies, the law now permitted voters to repeat a name three times, which favoured small parties.

The coalition that forced the reforms of 1874, *prima facie*, is a surprising one. We have seen that both Nationals and Radicals – the leading promoters of the Club de la Reforma – did not have strong past democratic credentials, as demonstrated in their role during the authoritarian administration of Manuel Montt. The Conservatives were also new in the business of promoting democratisation, as they had been the principal political force of the Pelucón regime, especially between 1830 and 1850. In an 1878 convention of the Conservative party, As the Conservative leader Abdón Cifuentes explained during an 1878 party convention, whereas past Conservatives had worked to strengthen state authority, the task now was to “devolve to citizens the fullness of their actions and restrict the excesses of power, scion of other eras and other circumstances” (Zegers, 1969, 37).⁶¹ The most plausible explanation for the Conservative (but also the National and, to a lesser extent, the Radical) promotion of electoral democracy is their distance to the inner circles of power. In the occasions when they were inside, these groups promoted an energetic government; when they fell outside, then they promoted the democratisation of the system.

Political entrepreneurs saw the new rules as an opportunity. During the convention of the newly formed Liberal-Democratic party, governor of Santiago Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna explained that the accumulative vote system would undermine the patronage network of government. “[H]ere gather independent men that fight (...) for their localities (...), moreover, for the first rehearsal of a democratic Congress allowed by (...) the accumulative vote system” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1876b, p. 21-22). Vicuña Mackenna recommended, “in the designation of Senators and Deputies, local people are to be preferred” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1876, p. 24). The parliamentary elections of March 1876 were among the freest of nineteenth-century Chile (Valenzuela 2012, p. 63). They gave a slight victory to the government, although a high number of parliamentarians could not be classified readily as either pro-government or opposition. The opposition at this point were the Conservatives and the Vicuñistas, who obtained excellent results in Valparaíso and Santiago (Zegers, 1969, p. 22). Figures 4 and 5 suggest that the Congress of 1876 was far less oligarchic than the previous congresses.

Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna’s candidacy was proclaimed on February 9, 1875, in Talcahuano. The campaign involved a substantial organisational effort. Cristián Zegers (1969, p. 23) describes Vicuña Mackenna’s routine during the campaign as follows. From 7 to 8 AM, he revised and signed mail written the night before by his assistants; from 8 to 10 AM he wrote telegraph messages to be followed by a short “Yankee style” lunch; from 11 AM to 1 PM he wrote newspaper articles; from 1 PM to 4 PM, he

⁶¹ Original Spanish: “devolviendo a los ciudadanos la plenitud de su acción y restringiendo las facultades excesivas del poder, hijas de otra época y de otras circunstancias”

received visitors; from 4 to 5 PM he received reports from the provinces; from 5 to 6 PM he received the agents of Santiago. After having dinner, he revised mail until past midnight.

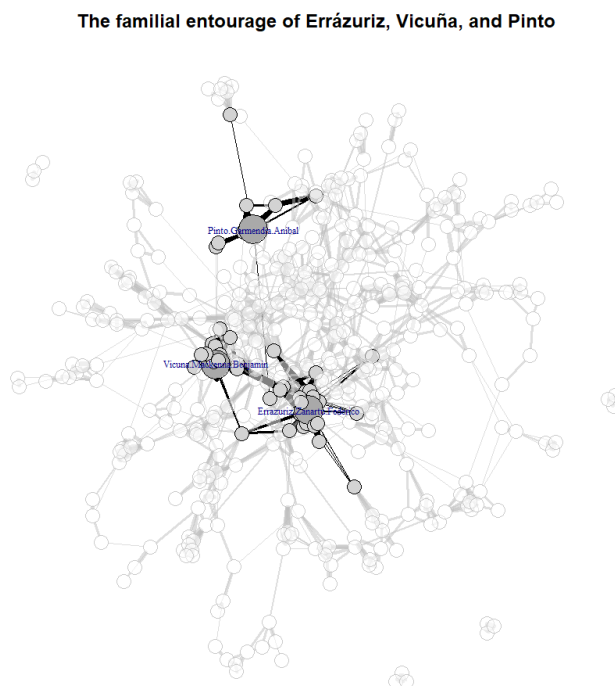
On March 7, 1875, Vicuña Mackenna had an audience with President Errázuriz, which made him feel that he could win. “The field is open to all the good ones,” Vicuña Mackenna said after the meeting. In September 1875, however, Errázuriz selected Anibal Pinto Garmendia as his candidate for President. To secure the election of Pinto, Errázuriz gained the adhesion of Radical party leader Manuel Antonio Matta and the National party around Antonio Varas. Errázuriz also won the adherence of Liberal strongmen Domingo Santa María and Miguel Luis Amunátegui.

Vicuña Mackenna conducted the first-ever presidential campaign that could be referred to as populist. He travelled extensively across the country and talked unfavourably against the oligarchy of Santiago. “The oligarchs of power,” claimed Vicuña Mackenna (1876b, p. 3) in a discourse, “have said Chile is not mature enough as a country, as a republic, as a democracy, for great popular innovations. Others have faith.” Vicuña Mackenna promised the “improvement of the dispossessed”. He remarked that his blood was “not entirely Spanish” and often highlighted the support he received from the working class. “[E]verything in my path I have done it myself,” he said, “and this is why I see glory in having been acclaimed by the working class” (Zegers 1969). In the pro-government newspaper *La República*, the followers of Vicuña Mackenna were called “ragged” (Zegers 1969). Vicuña Mackenna responded: the government “fears and envies them” (Zegers 1969). On the same evening, the artisan Fermín Vivaceta said: “A General Directory has been established today in the city of Santiago in the service of all those that want to promote the advancement of the working class” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1876, p. 88). Many in the audience hailed, “long live the working class!” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1876, p. 7).

Despite Vicuña Mackenna’s criticism of the oligarchs of Santiago, he and his family were no outsiders to power. Previous chapters discussed the central participation of the Vicuña family during Independence (1810-1814), the Pipiolo regime (1828-1830), and the formation of the Liberal party (1849-1851). In the post-Montt period, the Vicuñas and their allies increased their participation in Congress considerably. Under the Errázuriz administration, they were, together with the President’s family, the most represented in Congress. The fact that the Intendencia of Santiago was given to Vicuña Mackenna by President Errázuriz suggests that they were allies. It is not clear why Errázuriz chose Pinto to succeed him, or why the latter prevailed before Vicuña Mackenna, who had more ties to the elites. Chapter 4 identified the three principal families that founded the Liberal party in 1849-1851: The Ottomans, especially its Vicuña branch, the Errázuriz, and the Vial. The presidential race of 1876 was a struggle among these three clusters. Pinto was the son-in-law of the Vial-related challenger of 1851 General José María de la Cruz; Vicuña had been a mutineer during the revolts of that year; and Errázuriz had been one of the main organisers of the opposition within Congress.

The convention that elected Pinto as the Liberal candidate was composed of all former Deputies and Senators, teachers and professionals, together with the top taxpayers of the country. This last group, Zegers (1969, p. 14) says, determined the election of Pinto. 952 persons arrived at the newly built Palace of Congress. Radicals voted Pinto, except for the Valparaíso fraction led by José Francisco Vergara, who voted Amunátegui. All government Liberals, most Nationals, and the faction of Santa María (now on good terms with Errázuriz) voted Pinto (Zegers, 1969, p. 15). Pinto counted 523 votes versus 414 for Amunátegui (15 votes had other names). Pinto visited Amunátegui and agreed to form a common front.

Figure 18: The familial entourage of Vicuña Mackenna, Errázuriz, and Pinto



Note: The kinship of Vicuña Mackenna, Errázuriz, and Pinto. Only individuals adult in the 1870s were included in the graph.

With most political forces against him, Vicuña Mackenna quit the race for the presidency. In an open letter, he accused the Errázuriz-Pinto transition of nepotistic. He listed one by one the family members of the outgoing President Errázuriz, and the official candidate Pinto, that participated in the party Convention. The convention counted 26 family members of President Errázuriz, 29 family members of candidate Pinto, and 223 public employees that depended on the executive (Vicuña Mackenna 1931). Vicuña Mackenna also complained about the dominion of Santiago. “Now, about the participation of the provinces,” he wrote. “Oh! Who cares about that?... I ask you, before summoning only us, people from Santiago, have you spoken with at least one of the country’s provincial elements?” (Vicuña

Mackenna 1931).⁶² Despite his defence of the provincial elements, Vicuña Mackenna criticised the convention as an “invasion of the Huilliches,” referring to the massive attendance of southerners that supported Pinto, particularly the Zañartu family into which Pinto was married.⁶³

Upon Pinto’s assumption of power the Liberal party had a majority in Congress, but one divided around strong personalities: Miguel Luis Amunátegui, Domingo Santa María, Belisario Prats, José Victorino Lastarria, and José Manuel Balmaceda (Zegers, 1969, 40-1). The other two parties in the ruling coalition were the Radical and the National. The internal divisions of Liberals made Pinto pick ministers disproportionately among the minority parties (Zegers, 1969).

Conservatives were a minority but a cohesive one, which gave them disproportionate power in Congress (Sater 1979). “Given that Conservative sectors (...) partook actively in the electoral reforms,” Samuel Valenzuela (1985) writes, “they devoted themselves rapidly to the task of building a party organisation to capture the popular vote.” Moreover, he adds: “The importance of this event (...) has to be valued duly as one of the determinants of the subsequent democratic development in Chile. The stability of democracy depends in great measure on the existence of a right-wing party” (J. S. Valenzuela, 1985, p. 18). The heat of the clerical struggles had allowed them to mobilise religious sentiments to gain new adherents, resources, and more generally, to strengthen their organisational capacity (Zegers, 1969, p. 106).

Pinto’s government passed into history as a weak one, something some historians attribute to his personality (Zegers 1969) and others to a lax pre-war ethos (Góngora 1986). The two subsequent Liberal Presidents referred to the fragility of Pinto’s government to justify their assertive style of rule. Santa María said, “I do not want to be Pinto who lacked the character to impose himself to the barbarities of a Parliament in the hands of which I suffered myself” (Góngora 1986). Years later, in an 1891 speech to Congress, José Manuel Balmaceda justified his strong executive rule referring to the potential chaos of Pinto’s weak government. “If the 1879 war had not occurred,” said Balmaceda, “[the Pinto] administration would have terminated amid the disasters which were being prepared for it by events” (Balmaceda 1891).

The second bourgeois takeover (1881-1886)

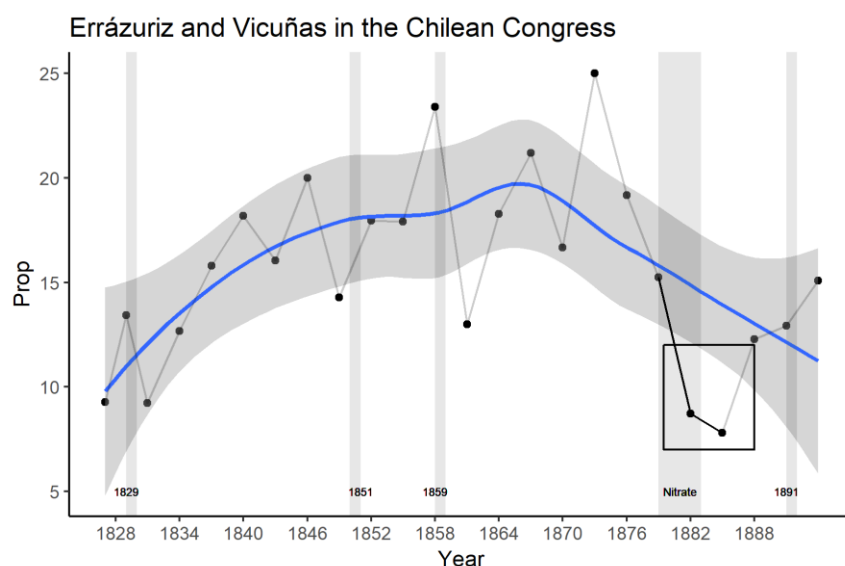
On January 2, 1881, a group of 42 Liberal members of Congress held a meeting to decide on the rules for a convention to nominate the party’s presidential candidate. A second set of Liberals convened a competing group in Valparaíso. “Santiago wanted a convention of notables, Valparaíso wanted a democratic convention,” reads the report of the latter (Partido Liberal 1881, p. 16), the one that ended establishing its ascendancy. The win of Valparaíso produced a substantial renewal inside the Liberal

⁶² “Y ahora con relación a la iniciativa o siquiera la participación de las provincias. Oh! ¿Quién se fija en eso?... os preguntamos, antes de citarnos únicamente a nosotros los santiaguinos, ¿os habéis puesto al habla con uno solo siquiera de los elementos provinciales del país?” (Vicuña Mackenna 1931).

⁶³ Huilliches are a native people from the South of Chile.

party. Of the 86 persons that attended the Valparaíso convention, only 13 were members of Congress; in turn, most incumbent Liberals did not participate in the Valparaíso meeting. 26 congressmen that participated in the Convention of 1875 and were congressmen in 1881 were not in Valparaíso. In other words, this was a takeover from outside Congress. Who were the Valparaíso challengers? Many were members of the National and Radical parties, who had entered an alliance with the Liberal party. Many were extremely wealthy. Indeed, the preparatory meetings were secretly held in the house of Federico Varela and were attended by Agustín Edwards Ross (Partido Liberal 1881, p. 5). The former was a Radical and the latter a National – both part of the top-10 wealthiest Chileans of the time (Vicuña Mackenna 1882).⁶⁴ Importantly, the traditional Liberal families, those that founded the party in the 1850s, were excluded from the new power arrangement, as is evident in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Legislative performance of familial entourage of the Vicuña and Errázuriz families



Note: All parliamentarians with surname Vicuña and Errázuriz were counted.

Valparaíso asked the provinces to put together assemblies and send delegates to a convention to be celebrated in April 1881. Domingo Santa María won the nomination. His contender in the Presidential elections was no other than Manuel Baquedano, the war hero who conducted the occupation of Lima during the War of the Pacific (1879-1883). Carlos Walker Martínez, a leader of the Conservative party, claimed that “almost all the country’s press indicated him as the successor of Pinto; and the hopes grew to great heights when he entered triumphant, in front of the army, in the *Alameda* of Santiago, among

⁶⁴ Other individuals who attended the Valparaíso convention of 1881 as well as being listed by Vicuña Mackenna as part of the 80 richest individuals of Chile were the following: José Manuel Balmaceda (his father was listed in Vicuña Mackenna’s list), Manuel Cerda Concha, Pedro Leon Gallo, Diego Ovalle, Manuel Valenzuela Castillo, Jose Francisco Vergara. Of the top-ten richest Chileans of 1882, seven were either close to the National or Radical parties. Juana Ross de Edwards (related to Nationals), Agustín Edwards Ross (National), Arturo Edwards Ross (related to Nationals), Isidora Goyenechea de Cousiño (related to Nationals), Matte brothers (originally Nationals, then transferred to the Liberal party), Federico Varela Cortés Monroy (Radical), Carmen Quiroga de Urmeneta (related to Nationals). The other three top-ten richest individuals were Manuel José Irrázaval Larraín (Conservative), Francisco Subercaseaux Vicuña (related to Liberals and Conservatives), Maximiano Errázuriz Valdivieso (related to Liberals and Conservatives).

the most splendid ovation that Chile has witnessed... Another candidate was not possible” (Walker Martínez 1888).

The expectation of the time was not that Baquedano would win the contest against the candidate of the Liberal party, but that he would be the official nominee to represent the party. Walker Martínez expressed his surprise at Santa María’s nomination. “[Baquedano’s nomination] was in the public consciousness,” wrote Walker Martínez (1888), “when from night to morning a rumour saying that Domingo Santa María would be the official candidate circulated like a spark. What had motivated such resolution from the *Moneda*?” After this unexpected turn, Baquedano passed to the opposition, supported by the Conservatives and some Liberals. Radicals and Nationals went for Santa María. However, the government’s electoral manipulation was pervasive. The local election boards which decided who qualified to vote was formed by the top taxpayers of each locality (Walker Martínez 1888). “The spirit of this law,” says Walker Martínez (1888), “was to keep the government’s electoral manipulation at bay.” However, the government found ways of circumnavigating all impediments. Pinto’s administration instructed municipal authorities to change the list of top contributors to form election boards amicable to its interests. “... [I]ndustrialists and capitalists that no one knew grew out of the land and the contributions of major effective taxpayers were reduced to zero” (Walker Martínez 1888).

Baquedano decided to quit the contest. In his resignation letter, he wrote: “Since the authorities interfered improperly in acts that should be and are outside... the legal terrain... I have resolved to... resign irrevocably the candidacy that the distinguished and honourable representatives of all political parties offered me” (Walker Martínez 1888). The losing side in Congress denounced the government’s electoral manipulation, but they were not able to turn things around. The opposition dwindled as many of the Liberals that had supported Baquedano now turned to the government’s side, as Walker Martínez (1888) puts it, “to adore the rising sun.”

The context could not be better when Santa María assumed power. “We found ourselves overnight as owners of large and wealthy territories,” recounts Walker Martínez (1888), “victorious in [the War of the Pacific], and masters of the capital of our enemies.” However, on the domestic front cracks between the executive and the Congress started to show. Santa María undertook a considerable effort to centralise power, and many resented his authoritarian style. “[T]he President did everything,” recalls Walker Martínez (1888), “he intervened in everything, and he named all public employees, from the bosses to the office porters, and, lastly, he made crucial decisions without consulting or listening to the opinion of his Ministers at all.” Ramón Subercaseaux Vicuña (1936, p. 401), another Conservative, recalls that Santa María “governed without challenge, because his Conservative enemies had eclipsed, first voluntarily to avoid divisions during the war, and then by the force of electoral frauds.”

Subercaseaux Vicuña (1936, p. 402) recounted an episode when Santa María told a diplomat, “I manage the country, from Tacna to Punta Arenas, like this, with the little finger.”

Santa María himself recognised his “interventionist” tendencies: “People have called me intervenor,” he wrote, to then respond, “I am.”

I am part of the old school and if I intervene is because I want a parliament that is efficient, disciplined, and that collaborates with the government’s aims of the public good. I have the experience, and I know my direction. I cannot let theorists undo what Portales, Bulnes, Montt, and Errázuriz did. I do not want to be Pinto, who lacked the character to impose himself over the barbarities of a parliament of which I was a victim myself when I was minister, during the days of the war with Peru and Bolivia. [The war] was a time when I learned to command without delay, to be obeyed without a response, to impose myself without contradictions, and to impose my authority... If I had not surpassed Pinto during the war, do not doubt that we would have gone straight to defeat (Góngora 1986).

The first break between the executive and Congress happened the year after Santa María assumed power, during the highly manipulated parliamentary elections of 1882. The Minister of Interior, José Francisco Vergara, urged Miguel Luis Amunátegui, the President of the Congress, to punish deputy Luis Urzúa Vergara after he expressed criticism toward Santa María for electoral manipulation. In defending the autonomy of Congress, Amunátegui – a Liberal – refused (Walker Martínez 1888). A three-week long debate about the prerogatives of Congress ensued. Both parties mobilised as many supporters as possible: The Liberals – excepting Valentín Letelier, Alejandro Reyes, and Matte – as well as the Nationals, applauded the ministers. The Radicals did not vote, not to antagonise the executive. The Conservatives defended Amunátegui, even if they were opposed to him in every other respect. The Chamber voted 17 for and 48 against Amunátegui.⁶⁵ The latter promptly vacated his seat as president of the chamber of Deputies once the votes were announced (Walker Martínez 1888).

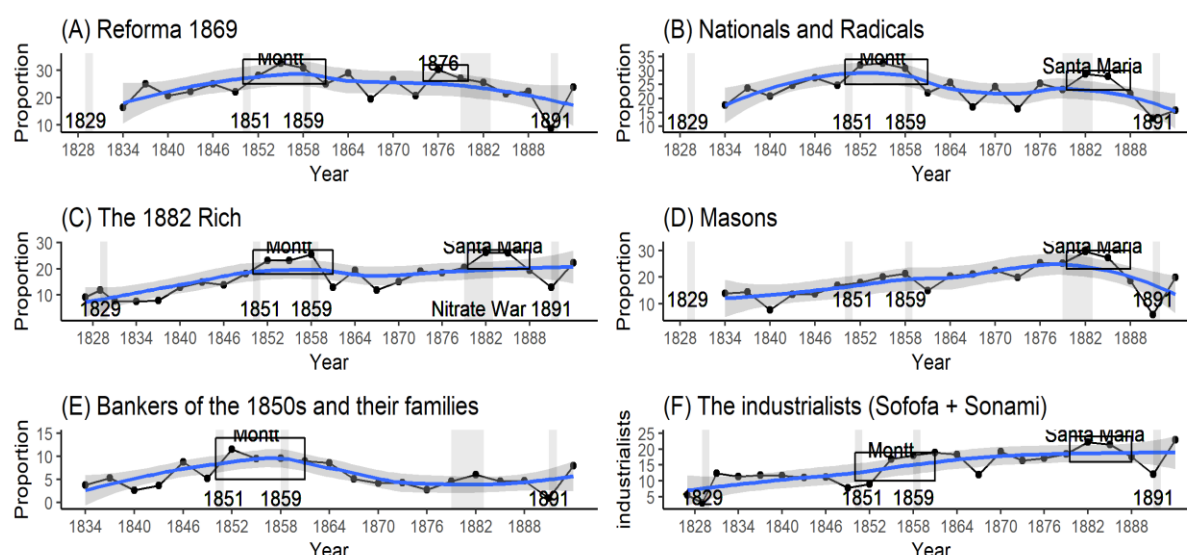
The executive concentrated unprecedented power under Santa María’s administration. Its first cabinet included those that had been the most active promoters of his candidacy, including José Francisco Vergara, Luis Aldunate Carrera, and José Manuel Balmaceda (Bañados Espinosa 1894). Conservatives abstained from running for elections in 1882 and won only nine seats in the Chamber of Deputies in

⁶⁵ **Pro:** Barros Valdes Lauro, Beauchef Manso Jorge, Fabres Fernandez Jose Clemente, García de la Huerta Izquierdo Pedro, Letelier Silva Ricardo, Matte Pérez Augusto, Matte Pérez Eduardo, Matte Pérez Enrique, Orrego González Juan Antonio, Reyes Palazuelos Vicente, Solar Avaria Bernardo, Tocornal Grez Enrique, Toro Herrera Domingo, Urzua Vergara Luis, Vicuña Ángel Custodio, Walker Martínez Carlos, Walker Martínez Joaquín. **Against:** Allendes Álvarez Eulogio, Allende Padín Ramon, Carvallo Elizalde Francisco, Concha Toro Enrique, Cuadra Luque Pedro Lucio, Davila Larrain Juan Domingo, Echavarría Barriga Tomas, Echeverría Cotapos Jose Rafael, Edwards Ross Agustín, Elizondo Urzua Diego Antonio, Errazuriz Zanartu Dositeo, Errazuriz Errazuriz Isidoro, Errazuriz Echaurren Federico, Fierro Perez Alejandro, Fierro Luis, Gaete Julio, Gandarillas Luco Francisco, García de la Huerta Perez Manuel, Gonzalez Julio Nicolas, Huneeus Zegers Jorge, Irarrazaval Vera Ramon Luis, Letelier Madariaga Valentin, MacIver Rodriguez Enrique, Mackenna Astorga Juan Eduardo, Montt Montt Pedro, Navarro Juan de Dios, Novoa Somoza Manuel, Puelma Castillo Francisco, Puga Borne Federico, Rioseco Rivera Matias, Rivas Cruz Juan Francisco, Rodriguez Segura Juan Esteban, Rodriguez Rozas Joaquín, Rojas Bravo Nicanor, Sanchez Fontecilla Evaristo, Serrano Vasquez Manuel, Tagle Arrate Jose Antonio, Valenzuela Prieto Juan Guillermo, Valenzuela Valenzuela Manuel Francisco, Vergara Albano Aniceto, Vial Guzman Juan de Dios, Videla Hidalgo Pedro Nolasco, Yavar Jimenez Ramon, Zegers Samaniego Julio.

1885. However, it was among its ranks – Liberals, Radicals, and Nationals – that Santa María’s centralising efforts proved the most consequential. As Walker Martínez describes, Santa María identified individuals wielding considerable influence in their districts and then nominated them as candidates in faraway provinces. “This way,” Walker Martínez (1888, p. 48) suggested, “they would know that they owed the election to him.” “An influential person in Coquimbo, [Santa María] would take him to Maule... moreover, one in Chiloé he would bring to Colchagua. [Santa María] created great disruption among his ranks and they all raged with anger... however, they accepted the seats!” (Walker Martínez 1888). Santa María excluded congressional leaders from participating in the formulation of electoral lists (Terrie, 2013, p. 176). One group affected were those around Minister of Interior José Francisco Vergara. Santa María argued that Vergara’s candidates for the elections of 1882 were too young and discarded his list. Vergara resigned, and a new cabinet was formed, with Manuel José Balmaceda in Interior (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 32).

The Congress of 1882 witnessed a substantial renewal of the political elites. The older oligarchy decreased its participation – not only the Conservative but also the Liberal oligarchy – and a new cohort took their place. The people that rose with Santa María tended to be bourgeois, in the sense of being recently wealthy, and were associated with the Club de la Reforma of 1869, the National and Radical parties, and the masonry.

Figure 20: proportion of Congress occupied by individuals related to the bourgeoisie



Note: Figures A-F represent the proportion of the Chilean Congress occupied by individuals related to the bourgeoisie. Figure A represents the members of the Club de la Reforma of 1869, as identified by Gazmuri (1992), and their relatives; Figure B represents the attendants of the National-Radical convention of 1871 (Palma 1871) and their relatives; Figure C represents the top-80 richest Chileans of 1882 and their relatives, but excluding individuals belonging to the core of the network (i.e. structural cohesion levels 5 and 6); Figure D represents the masons and their relatives, as identified by Gazmuri (1992); Figure E represents the directory members of the first three Chilean banks created in the 1850s and their relatives (Salazar 2015); and Figure F represents the members of SOFOFA and SONAMI in the 1880s and their relatives.

Figures 20 A-F show the proportion of Congress by period occupied by groups linked to the National and Radical parties and to what could be referred to as the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie. Gazmuri (1992, p. 157) refers to members of the Club de la Reforma and Masons (A and D) as people belonging to the “bourgeois culture,” and Collier (2003) indicates that the National and Radical parties (B) represented the newly-rich. Figure C includes the top-80 richest Chileans that did not belong to the core of the kinship network (see Data & Methods); and E-F includes the bankers of 1850s and the industrialists of the 1880s. An essential insight of Figures A-F is that the groups that rose with Santa María were the same ones that had gained clout during the Manuel Montt administration in the 1850s. In this sense, the 1880s represent a definitive entrance of the bourgeoisie into the Chilean political elites. The elite renewal of the 1880s will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

In the parliamentary elections of 1885, Conservatives obtained less than a sixth of the Chamber of Deputies and almost no representation in the Senate (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 62). The Liberal majority of Congress was composed of four groups: government Liberals, Radicals, Nationals, and Liberal dissidents (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 69). Bañados Espinosa indicates that the Congress of 1885 was the real beginning of the 1891 civil war, as minority groups in Congress started resisting the executive in areas like not sanctioning the implementation of taxes (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 70).

The preparations for the presidential succession of 1886 produced a new division within the Liberal party. One group advocated for an “assembly of notables” and the other for a broader convention. The official candidate – José Manuel Balmaceda – favoured the latter. In a letter to the outgoing president, Balmaceda argued:

[T]heir assembly of notables ties us to the unpredictable and to the intrigues of a few. The popular assembly gives the Head of State – who has prestige and popularity across the country – an amount of influence and effective control.⁶⁶

As is evident in the quote, Balmaceda did not want a convention of notables because it could not be controlled (Sagredo 2001, p. 119). Managing “the people” was more accessible than controlling fellow oligarchs.⁶⁷ The central Liberal convention took place on January 17, 1886, in Valparaíso. It was formed by government Liberals, the Nationals, and the Radicals that supported the government. Each conglomerate conducted an internal meeting to decide what candidate to back, to then meet in the general convention. Balmaceda won the contest by an ample margin. While words such as “popular,” “people,” and “democratic” were used liberally to describe the convention that elected Balmaceda, the participants of this reunion were – other than the usual politicians – likely to be employees of the state.

⁶⁶ Sagredo (2001, p. 121)

⁶⁷ A newspaper celebrated the Liberal convention that nominated Balmaceda as a democratic reunion that countered the “predominance of the aristocratic and feudal tendencies of the [Liberal] *caudillos*” (Sagredo 2001, p. 127).

To the opponents of Balmaceda, the assembly was formed by “governors and commanders of the police” (Sagredo 2001, p. 129).

Balmaceda’s distant attitude toward members of his own class is commonplace in the historiography on him. Most analysts, however, focus on his personality. Salazar (2015), for example, treats Balmaceda as a traitor of his social class, the only member of the Club de la Reforma of 1869 who remained loyal to the ideas of his youth. But Balmaceda’s quote above suggests that he had more rational motivations. As Bourdieu (2004) explained, in certain circumstances, it is only reasonable for rulers to restrict the access to power of fellow class members (or family members, in Bourdieu’s illustration) and promote people from the lower spheres. The reason is that the latter can be controlled more easily. In the next chapter, I will give another, family-based reason of why the personalist interpretation of Balmaceda is not warranted.

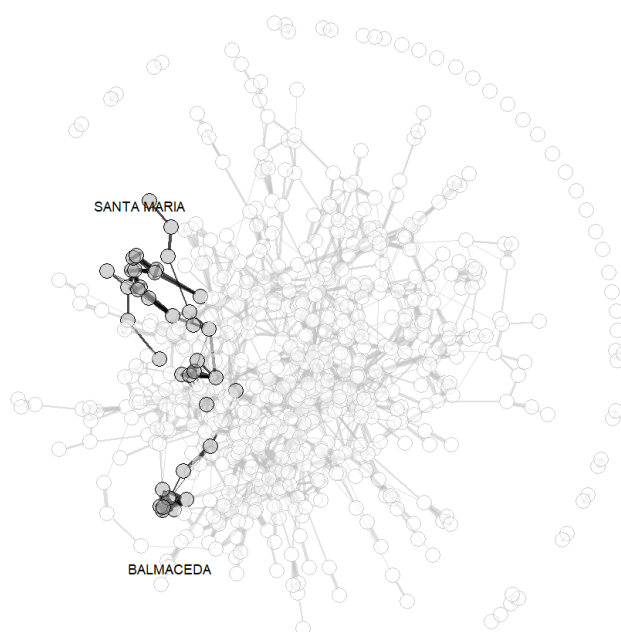
The dissident Liberals, together with part of the Radicals, conducted a presidential convention on January 2, 1886. Manuel Antonio Matta, Luis Aldunate Carrera, and José Francisco Vergara obtained most preferences. Matta and Aldunate resigned after the first and second round, respectively, and made Vergara the winner (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 83). The Conservative party offered its support to Vergara but conditional on him accepting retracting some of the secular laws established during the Santa María administration. The Radicals did not agree, and the Conservatives remained neutral. On May 1886, Vergara desisted from competing in the general election, and in June 1886, Balmaceda became President-elect.

Balmaceda’s presidency

Upon Balmaceda’s rise as president, the political field looked as follows. An alliance composed of the Liberals, the Nationals and part of the Radical party backed the government. In the opposition were a group called the Dissident Liberals, part of the Radical party, together with the Conservative party (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 97). Manuel Rivas Vicuña claimed that Balmaceda alternated his support between the Matte Pérez brothers (dissidents within the Liberal party) and the Nationals, directed by José Besa Infantas, Augusto Edwards Ross, and Pedro Montt (Salazar 2015, pp. 660-661). In line with this view, Bañados Espinosa indicates that the cleavage of conflict at the beginning of the Balmaceda administration was between Nationals and Dissidents, who wanted to remove the Nationals from the circles of power. While small in numbers, the Nationals were wealthy and well organised (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 111).

Figure 21: The Santa María and Balmaceda clusters

The Santa María and Balmaceda clusters



Note: The graph was made only with connected parliamentarians of the period 1864-1891; the Santa María and Balmaceda clusters were identified using the Louvain community detection algorithm

The political programme of Balmaceda had two key points. 1) reuniting the Liberal alliance under one banner, and 2) using the wealth from the nitrates to develop the country's infrastructure. The first of these objectives had political costs. "In his desire to unite the Liberal currents," indicates Bañados Espinosa (1894, p. 113), "he lost little by little his influence [over his core supporters]." Upon Balmaceda's election, for example, a group of his supporters organised a banquet to celebrate his victory.⁶⁸ Balmaceda, in a public letter, refused the invitation. "I would like to keep the trust of the fellow Chileans that voted for me," he wrote back (quoted in Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 93). In doing so, Bañados Espinosa (1894, p. 97) says, he hurt the trust of his supporters while giving signs of weakness to his opponents.

Balmaceda's goal of uniting the Liberal coalition influenced how he built his cabinets. Eusebio Lillo, Joaquín Godoy Cruz, Evaristo Sánchez Fontecilla, Pedro Montt, and Agustín Edwards composed the first one. The first three, who were Liberals, had been neutral in all the internal conflicts of the previous administration. Montt and Edwards were part of the National party, but Edwards also had links to the Radical opposition, and his nomination was a way of reaching out to them (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 116). The peace created by the coalitional cabinet did not last long. In June 1886 elections for Deputies and municipal authorities were conducted in Santiago and Putaendo. The opposition won the elections

⁶⁸ The signers of the letter of invitation were the following: Ranión Rozas Mendiburu, Aniceto Versara Albano, Adolfo Blanco Gana, Pablo Silva, Hernán Echeverría, Isidoro Dolarea, Manuel Zamora, Estanislao Izquierdo, Robustiano Vera, Manuel Modesto Soza, Ricardo Pérez Eastman, José María Benítez, Pascual Lazarte, Gregorio Letelier, Ignacio Zañartu (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 93).

but the Court of Justice – controlled by the pro-government Fructuoso Cousiño, Marcial González Ibieta, and Manuel Valenzuela Castillo – dictated that they were invalid. The opposition criticised Balmaceda. Elections conducted again in November that year gave a victory to the dissident-Conservative coalition (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 120).

Problems within the block that supported Balmaceda came initially from the overrepresentation of Nationals. As indicated before, the first cabinet of Balmaceda's tenure had two Nationals, and the Liberals he chose were not his core supporters during the presidential campaign. The core supporters tried blocking the election of Jovino Novoa Vidal – a National – as president of the Chamber of Deputies and, instead, elect Zenón Freire Caldera, the son of the Pipiolo general of 1829. The attempt failed, but it created enough controversy to make Balmaceda's first cabinet resign.

In November 1886, Carlos Antunez – a Liberal – was appointed as Minister of Interior. The other ministers were Francisco Freire (Liberal) in Exterior, Adolfo Valderrama (National) in Justice, Agustín Edwards (National) in Finance, and Nicolas Peña Vicuña (Liberal) in War. The inclusion of the two Nationals was conditional on their dissolution as a distinct party within the Liberal coalition (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 130). A third cabinet formed in June 1887, even broader in its inclusion of all Liberal factions. Balmaceda gave two ministries to the government Liberals (Aníbal Zañartu and Pedro Lucio Cuadra); two to the Nationals (Agustín Edwards and Pedro Montt), and – here is the novelty – two to the Liberal-Radical dissidents: Manuel García de la Huerta and Miguel Luis Amunátegui (who died in January 1888 and was replaced by the also dissident Augusto Matte Pérez) (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 167). To Bañados Espinosa, the problem of this new cabinet was the same as that with the two previous ones: it overreached to the margins of the Liberal coalition without compensating enough the core supporters of Balmaceda. However, for the time being, this temporary alliance produced a short period of stability.

During the legislative elections of 1888, the union of all Liberal parties obtained a substantial majority. The government Liberals got 76 Deputies and 16 Senators; the Nationals got 18 Deputies and 7 Senators, the Radicals got 7 Deputies and 1 Senator, and the Liberal Dissidents got 8 Deputies and 4 Senators. The Conservatives, in turn, got 14 Deputies and one Senator (Manuel José Irrázaval Larraín) (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 191).

In April 1888, Aníbal Zañartu resigned from Interior. The Zañartu resignation began a non-ending series of ministerial rotations. Indeed, the Balmaceda's was the administration with – by far – the most ministers since 1830. Whereas the mean number of ministers per government starting in 1831 was 16, 71 individuals sat in the cabinet at some point of the Balmaceda administration. The erosion of family networks as a way of mediating political appointments may have been one of the causes. Remember that the familial density of Congress and oligarchic representation dropped sharply after 1882. As the political elites diversified and kinship became less of a mediating force, the mechanisms of political

promotion became more contentious. The formal mechanisms that came to replace the old forms were fought over vigorously. Another reason for the constant ministerial rotations was the progressive weakening of presidential power. In the 1880s, a broad anti-presidential coalition consolidated, and now the president had to agree the composition of cabinets with the main factions in Congress, and a stable equilibrium was hard to achieve.

Pedro Lucio Cuadra became the minister of Interior in April 1888. The Ministry of Justice was hotly fought over; it corresponded to a member of the Liberal majority, but within that group, some were closer to the Nationals and others were closer to the Liberal Dissidents. The fight was between National ministers Montt and Edwards and Dissident ministers Matte and García de la Huerta (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 202). Notice that the struggle here was not fought over party lines, but by informal groups within the Liberal majority. Balmaceda opted to form a cabinet that excluded both Dissidents and Nationals to the benefit of the governing Liberals. The cabinet of April 12, 1888 was formed by Pedro Lucio Cuadra (Interior), Demetrio Lastarria (Exterior), Federico Puga Borne (Justice), Enrique Salvador Sanfuentes (Finance), Evaristo Sánchez Fontecilla (War), and Vicente Dávila Larraín (Public Works).

Dissidents, Radicals, and part of the government Liberals supported the new configuration; the losers in this ministerial rotation were the Nationals (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 208). In expectation of the outcome of the Liberal internecine struggles, the Conservatives declared neutrality. The next round of conflict focused on the presidency of the Chamber of Deputies, now that chair Demetrio Lastarria accepted the ministry. The Nationals and their supporters among the Liberal majority favoured Gabriel Vidal Rodríguez; the anti-national segment of the Liberals together with the Dissidents favoured Ramón Barros Luco. The cabinet backed the latter, and Barros Luco won 61 votes to 54 (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 212). The definitive break of the Nationals from the Liberal coalition happened a few months later, during a general meeting of the Liberal alliance: among the 62 attendants no National was to be found: they had not been invited (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 224). A few members of the Liberal majority – Ladislao Errázuriz, Gregorio Pinochet, Francisco Carvallo Elizalde, and Vicente Grez Yávar – protested the exclusion by leaving the meeting (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 226). Bañados Espinosa would later call this small subgroup “Nationalised,” due to their support of the National party.

In October 1888, Vicente Dávila Larraín resigned as Minister of Public Works. Enrique Salvador Sanfuentes replaced him, and Justiniano Sotomayor Guzmán went to Finance.⁶⁹ This reconfiguration did not produce conflict within the coalition. What turned out to be relevant some months later was the suspicion on the part of segments of the Liberal coalition that Balmaceda had a Presidential candidate in mind: Enrique Salvador Sanfuentes (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 281), who resigned to his ministry in May 1889, to attenuate the criticism. Balmaceda formed a new cabinet under pressures from the

⁶⁹ Businessman with mining interests, linked to the Errázuriz clan.

Nationals, Radicals, and Dissidents. In May 1889, entered the government Liberals José Miguel Valdés Carrera and Jorge Riesco, together with Dissident Mariano Sánchez Fontecilla. However, this configuration was short-lived due to pressures on the part of the Nationals. In June 1889, Balmaceda formed an entirely new cabinet with the government Liberals, Dissidents, and Radicals: Demetrio Lastarria (Liberal) in Interior, Eduardo Matte (Dissident) in Exterior, Federico Puga Borne (Liberal) in Justice, Juan de Dios Vial Guzmán (Dissident) in Finance, and Abraham König (Radical) in War.

Up to 1889, the central conflict in Chilean politics was that between factions of the Liberal coalition. Balmaceda's term began with the pre-eminence of the Nationals as the junior partner in the alliance to the partial detriment of the Radicals. However, the balance gradually moved in the direction of the Radicals and Liberal dissidents. In a debate over whether Nationals were apt allies in the Liberal coalition, Minister of Exterior Eduardo Matte – a Dissident – indicated: “I am one of the most ardent supporters of the resistance [against Nationals forming part of the coalition]” (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 298). After 1889, however, the Liberal factions began coalescing against Balmaceda, and the opposition discussed whether the Chilean political system ought to be parliamentary or presidential. Whereas groups outside Balmaceda's trusted circle favoured a parliamentary interpretation of the constitution of 1833, the government argued for a presidential interpretation of the Constitution. It would not take long before Balmaceda's circle started promoting a constitutional reform to clarify the prerogatives of Congress vis-à-vis the executive. The debate absorbed two out of the three months of the regular Congressional term of 1889 (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 294).

In October 1889, Balmaceda dismissed the cabinet led by Demetrio Lastarria and Eduardo Matte due to political disagreements with the latter. By this point, the Liberal coalition was divided evenly between the governing Liberals and the other four Liberal factions – Nationals, pro-National party Liberals, Dissident Liberals, and Radicals (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 344). The new cabinet was to be negotiated between these two blocks. Julio Zegers represented the government and Pedro Eulogio Altamirano the four junior factions of the Liberal coalition. On October 20, 1889, Altamirano informed Zegers that all the junior parties agreed on a solution offered by the President: four ministries were for the junior parties; the pro-government faction to keep Interior and the presidency of the Chamber of Deputies (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 347). The Talca-born Liberal Ramón Donoso Vergara led the new cabinet. Donoso himself and Altamirano negotiated the other four members of the cabinet. Juan Castellón (Radical) went to Exterior, Isidoro Errázuriz (pro-National Liberal, or “Nationalised”) to Justice, Ismael Valdés to War, and Ramón Barros Luco (government Liberal) to Public Works. Now the numbers of the Liberal factions in Congress were as follow. Senate: Government Liberals 16, Liberal factions 20. Chamber of Deputies: Liberals 73, junior parties 64 (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 360). Government Liberals still had a majority overall but not in the Senate, where the combined numbers of the Liberal factions overpowered Balmaceda's circle.

In the volatile political context of 1889, small events could lead to ministerial changes. Such a situation occurred shortly after the formation of the so-called Cabinet of October led by Vergara. A discrepancy between the President and Ismael Valdés made the latter resign to the Ministry of War, and Ramón Donoso Vergara and Ramón Barros Luco followed his example. A new cabinet was formed using the same political formula of the previous cabinet, i.e. four ministries for the junior members of the coalition and two for the Liberal party, including the Ministry of Interior. The new ministers of November 7, 1889, were the following: Mariano Sánchez Fontecilla (Liberal) in Interior, Juan Castellón (Radical) remained in Exterior, Isidoro Errázuriz (Nationalised) remained in Justice, Pedro Montt (National) remained in Finance, Luis Barros Borgoño (Dissident) in War, and José Miguel Valdés Carrera (Liberal) obtained Public Works.

Meanwhile, a new split was developing within the Liberal party. A group led by Julio Zegers opposed the presidential candidacy of Enrique Salvador Sanfuentes and insisted on the realisation of a convention. On January 13, 1890, the newspaper *La Libertad Electoral* reported: “The terms of the convention have been agreed upon by the different groups of the Liberal party (...). The document has been signed by a considerable number of Senators and Deputies that form a majority of both chambers” (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 396-7). The “Conventionalists” – as Bañados Espinosa called them – wanted a convention to be composed of all individuals subscribed to the Liberal party that had been members of Congress at some point, together with members of the University of Chile, selected professionals, electors of President in the elections of 1886, and committee members of Societies of Artisans. The President was losing his base rapidly. Whereas in the previous years the political map was fragmented in multiple groups, now they coalesced into three main blocks: the government Liberals, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Coalition, composed of the junior parties with a Liberal bent: Nationals, Nationalised, Radicals, Dissidents, and Conventionalists. The supporters of Balmaceda coalesced in a political club headed by Pedro Lucio Cuadra (President), Juan Eduardo Mackenna (vice-President), and as directors Lauro Barros Valdés, José Antonio Valdés Munizaga, Ismael Pérez Montt, José Velásquez, and José Manuel Encina (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 365).

The election for the vice-presidency of the chamber of Deputies represents a turning point in the government-opposition relations. The parties of the Liberal opposition voted against the government Liberal Ricardo Vial Lastra – grandson of the Pipiolo general Francisco de la Lastra – and elected in his place the National Vicente Grez. This change was a direct attack on the cabinet and the President. José Miguel Valdés Carrera, who witnessed the elections for vice-President, left the room shortly after listening to the results. He headed to the house of Minister of Interior Mariano Sánchez Fontecilla to inform him of his resignation. All the other ministers followed suit, and on January 21, 1890, Balmaceda formed a new cabinet. The new cabinet was different from all the previous ones in that it consisted of individuals of Balmaceda’s exclusive trust (Bañados Espinosa 1894, p. 406). The cabinet of January 1890 was as follows: Adolfo Ibañez in Interior, Juan Mackenna in Exterior, Luis Rodríguez Velasco in

Justice, Pedro Nolasco Gandarillas in Finance, José Velásquez in War, while José Miguel Valdés Carrera remained in Public Works. All ministers were part of the Liberal party of government but – except for Valdés Carrera – had not been involved in the internecine fights of the last few years. This ministerial change affected subsequent developments. In contrast to the previous cabinets, which had reflected a compromise between the President and the Liberal factions, the new cabinet represented the president's close entourage (San Francisco, 2017, p. 145). Enrique Mac Iver claimed that this cabinet had been formed “deliberately outside the influence of Congress, and, moreover, against Congress” (quoted San Francisco, 2017, p. 147). Besides, whereas the norm of previous cabinets was to exclude the military from high-level civilian posts, this one included General José Velásquez.

Two banquets reflect the reactions of one side and the other to the new cabinet. Governor of Valparaíso Ramón Sánchez Montes organised a pro-government feast on February 12 which had the select core of Balmaceda's supporters: all the ministers of the new cabinet and individuals like Zenón Freire, Eduardo de la Barra, and Ricardo Vicuña Guerrero (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 410). The second banquet, taking place on February 26, 1890, was organised by the Liberal coalition to express their discontent. But the political programmes presented in both conventions were remarkably similar. In the pro-government banquet, the discussions hinged around administrative decentralisation and electoral reform. It also reassured opponents that the government did not have an official candidate for President. The dinner of the Liberal coalition also stressed the importance of political decentralisation and total absence of the President in the electoral process. The one point in which government and Liberal opposition disagreed was in their preferred political system: representative, the former, and parliamentarian, the latter. However, the overall direction of the changes preferred by both blocks was similar. Note that the Conservative party also promoted the project of political decentralisation. Indeed, the Conservative leader, Manuel José Irarrázaval, was the foremost thinker behind this idea. It follows that the polarisation of the parties had very little to do with discrepancies over policies and much to do with *who* occupied power positions. From this point on, the government started dismissing state employees with links to the opposition. Tomás Romero Hodges, Governor of Cautín, was removed of his post for his association with the National party. On May 26, 1890, members of the army linked to the opposition organised a banquet that included high profile militaries such as Estanislao del Canto and his brother Enrique. As a punishment for his presence at the dinner, del Canto was re-located to the north of Chile (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 425). During the civil war of 1891, he would become the head of the revolutionary army.

Bañados Espinosa claims that, by this point, Conservatives were neutral in the conflict, perhaps slightly inclined to the government. He cites the declarations of two Conservative leaders – Carlos Walker Martínez and Ventura Blanco Viel – in the newspaper *La Unión* in January 1890. In these articles, the Conservative leaders referred to members of the coalition in unkindly terms (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 431). Some months later, Manuel José Irarrázaval – Senator and leader of the Conservatives –

declared during a Congressional debate that the government, in January 1890, had offered the Conservatives ministerial positions (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 438). We do not know what happened in these negotiations, but we know that they did not work out well, because by March 1890 the Conservatives were aligned with the Coalition in Congressional committees (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 434).

On May 30, 1890, there was a new ministerial change. The reason, Bañados Espinosa claims, was that Adolfo Ibañez did not feel healthy enough for fighting the new Congressional season starting on June 1, 1890. The new cabinet was an all-government Liberal team led by Enrique Salvador Sanfuentes in Interior, Juan Eduardo Mackenna in Exterior, Julio Bañados Espinosa in Justice, Pedro Nolasco Gandarillas in Finance, José Velásquez in War, and José Miguel Valdés Carrera in Public Works. The political orientation of the cabinet remained the same as the previous, but the individuals that entered – Sanfuentes and Bañados Espinosa – were more active supporters of Balmaceda than the ones they replaced – Ibañez and Rodríguez Velasco. Further, remember that part of the Liberal party had moved to the opposition partly because of the supposed official candidacy of Enrique Salvador Sanfuentes. The latter's appointment signalled that he would not run for office in the next elections (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 451).

The legislative term of 1890 marked the definitive break between the Congressional majority and Balmaceda. It was meaningful for yet another reason: the approval of the electoral reforms of 1890, which established measures to stop the government from intervening in elections (Valenzuela 1998). These reforms were not resisted by any faction, as most agreed on the general direction of the changes needed in Chile. All agreed on issues such as administrative decentralisation, the expansion of the electoral franchise, and free elections. It was Balmaceda and a group of his aides (Raimundo Silva Cruz and Luis Claro Solar) who wrote the first bill of electoral reform, in January and February 1890 (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 455). The main disagreement between the government and the opposition was whether Chile was a parliamentary or a presidential democracy. This disagreement was not stark because the government had agreed to promote policies aiming to strengthen the role of Congress and its autonomy. "The parliamentary government that some wish," expressed Balmaceda in his address to Congress on June 1, 1890 (quoted in Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 458-9), "tends inevitably to the dictatorship of Congress; in the same way that the centralised government (...) tends to a legal dictatorship."

Upon the inauguration of the regular season, the Senate impeached the Sanfuentes cabinet 25 against 9 (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p.492). In the Chamber of Deputies, the result was 70 to 1 against the cabinet – with the abstention of government Liberals (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p.497). By this point, the government was a minority. Balmaceda did not accept the result and kept the cabinet. Whereas in previous years the Liberal opposition refused to take an official presidential candidate, now their thrust

was against the formation of cabinets without its consent. On June 12, 1890, Julio Zegers proposed postponing the collection of taxes until the Government named a new cabinet that Congress could trust. This impediment denied the government a substantial amount of income. The Chamber of Deputies approved the motion 69 votes against 29, with five abstentions. Four days later, Joaquín Rodríguez Rozas proposed the same measure in the Senate, winning 19 votes against 5 (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 506). The administration could not function without the income from the contributions: it either had to change the cabinet to please the Congressional majority or break with Congress and collect the taxes unconstitutionally. In the meanwhile, the government tried hard to gain the allegiance of the Conservative party. They improved relations with the Vatican and the Chilean Catholic church by removing aspects of the secular reforms implemented in the government of Santa María.⁷⁰

Balmaceda needed urgently to reach a deal with the Liberal opposition about levying taxes. On July 21, 1890, representatives of both sides met in the house of Osvaldo Rengifo Vial to discuss the terms for a Liberal Presidential convention. Pedro Montt (National), Eulogio Altamirano (Dissident), and Ventura Blanco Viel (Conservative) conducted the negotiations on behalf of the opposition. Enrique Salvador Sanfuentes, Juan Eduardo Mackenna, and Miguel Castillo Andueza represented the government (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 535). The opposition demanded a new cabinet, but no deal was reached. On July 27, 1891, archbishop Mariano Casanova offered his mediation and proposed Alvaro Covarrubias to help him in the effort (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 564). The Conservative Ventura Blanco Viel hosted a meeting with fellow Conservative Joaquín Walker Martínez and the Liberal Ramón Barros Luco. After several rounds of negotiations, they decided that Belisario Prats would organise the new ministry, starting on August 7, 1891 (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 578). The other ministers were Jose Tocornal Jordán (Conservative) in Exterior, Gregorio Donoso Vergara (unknown affiliation) in Justice, Manuel Salustiano Fernández (unknown affiliation) in Finance, Federico Errázuriz Echaurren (opposition Liberal) in War, and Macario Vial (unknown affiliation but of Conservative nuclear family) in Public Works. None of the new ministers was members of Congress at the time. Prats, in his first address to Congress, indicated that “Peace and *neutrality* are our banners” (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 593). This new arrangement worked initially, but on October 3, 1891, Prats and the other ministers wrote a note to Balmaceda quitting. The conflict originated when they asked the Governor of Santiago – Guillermo Mackenna, of Balmaceda’s inner circle – to dismiss an employee of the police. Mackenna said no, and the entire cabinet resigned when Balmaceda did not back Prats.

To negotiate the formation of the new cabinet, Balmaceda met Aníbal Zañartu (Liberal opposition), José Tocornal (Conservative), and Enrique Salvador Sanfuentes (government Liberal) (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 644). The negotiations failed, and Balmaceda decided to form a cabinet of his

⁷⁰ The archbishop of Chile was Mariano Casanova who had assumed his position during Balmaceda’s tenure and after negotiations between the government and the Vatican. Further, the Casanova family married into traditionally Liberal families, and in 1891 his brother would become a member of the Constitutive Congress that supported Balmaceda. The negotiations paid off because the Church lifted a ban on Catholics to bury their dead in state-owned cemeteries, which it had issued after the 1883 secular reforms.

exclusive trust. It included Claudio Vicuña Guerrero (Interior), Domingo Godoy Cruz (Exterior), Rafael Casanova (Justice), Lauro Barros (Finance), José Francisco Gana (War), and Eulogio Allendes (Public Works). On October 14, Balmaceda sent a note to Congress: “Santiago, October 14, 1890. – I have the honour to present to you my decision to close down the sessions of the National Congress” (quoted in Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 651). No return was possible from this point on. On October 19, an opposition-organised demonstration issued the following statement: “All honourable citizens of the Republic, without distinction of political colours, have to prepare the resistance, through legal means insofar the government remains within the Constitution, and by *any* means, if the government does not remain within the Constitution” (quoted in Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 653, my emphasis).

The civil war of 1891

The active phase of the civil war began in December 1890, when a young member of the Conservative party – Isidoro Ossa Vicuña – was shot by the police during the inauguration of a political club supported by the Conservative party. The opposition press called Ossa “the first dead of the dictatorship,” and in a eulogy during his funeral, Eulogio Altamirano called the opposition to arms. The Club de la Union expelled Balmaceda supporters Claudio Vicuña, Domingo Godoy, Ismael Pérez Montt, José Francisco Gana, José Miguel Valdés Carrera, and Guillermo Mackenna (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 15). The opposition formed revolutionary committees. Gregorio Donoso Vergara, Carlos Lira Carrera, and Carlos Walker Martínez formed the committee in Santiago. In Valparaíso, Enrique Valdés Vergara obtained the adherence of navy captain Jorge Montt for Congress. Montt later declared, “[Valdés] used his connections with chiefs and officials that head had from the war against Peru and Bolivia” (cited in Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 18).

The army suffered some internal divisions. Marco Arriagada, Luis Rivera, Vicente Palacios, Estanislao del Canto, and Adolfo Holley adhered to the opposition (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 18). However, overall, the army stayed loyal to Balmaceda. Generals Jose Francisco Gana, Orozimbo Barbosa, José Velásquez, and Samuel Valdivieso backed him. I mentioned above that the incorporation of General José Velásquez to the January 1890 cabinet had marked a turning point in civil-military relations. Throughout 1890, pro-government groups took additional steps to gain the friendship of the army in case the conflict with Congress turned into a war. In September 1890, invited by General Orozimbo Barbosa, some members of the so-called cabinet of May (Sanfuentes, Bañados Espinosa, Valdés Carrera) attended military drills, which produced hostile reactions from the press controlled by the opposition (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 609).

On the evening of December 28, 1890, Congressional leaders of different parties met at the house of Conservative leader Abdón Cifuentes: Manuel José Irrázaval (Conservative), Zorobabel Rodríguez (Conservative), Carlos Walker Martínez (Conservative), Ventura Blanco Viel (Conservative), and the Radical senator Manuel Recabarren. They decided to issue a letter ousting Balmaceda, to be sent out

on January 1st, 1891. Some days later, the group of instigators asked general Manuel Baquedano – the hero of the 1879-1883 war – for his support. He sympathised with their cause but refused to collaborate actively. The first ones to sign the letters were Manuel José Irrarrázaval and José Besa (National). Others who signed were Melchor Concha y Toro, Luis Pereira, José Antonio Gandarillas, Pedro Nolasco Marcoleta, Waldo Silva, vice-President of the Senate), Ramón Barros Luco, Ladislao Errázuriz, David Mac Iver, Joaquín Walker Martínez, and Pedro Montt. The President of the Senate, Vicente Reyes Palazuelos, decided not to sign. The newspaper of the British colony in Chile wrote, “any misstep on the part of the President or the opposition can lead the country to a civil war” (cited in Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 16).

The misstep was Balmaceda’s decision to rule without a budget sanctioned by Congress. “All Presidents since 1833 to date, except only one, have ruled the Republic for a year, months or days (...) with no Budget Law,” (quoted in Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 17) he protested during a speech. The day after, the rebellion began. Waldo Silva (vice-President of the Senate) and Ramón Barros Luco (President of the Chamber of Deputies) together with Isidoro Errázuriz and Enrique Valdés Vergara boarded a navy ship. On January 7, 1891, captain Oscar Viel Toro – Intendente of Valparaíso and son of the Pipiolo general of 1830, Benjamín Viel – notified Balmaceda: “last night, the squadron shipped without orders” (cited in Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 16). The country was in a state of emergency; on January 8, newspapers did not circulate, and the Palace of Government cancelled all visits. Minister of War José Francisco Gana said: “The situation is defined, we now know who are our friends and who are not” (Velasco 1925).

In the days after, both factions aimed to recruit the armed forces to their side. Most of the navy supported Congress, and most of the army backed Balmaceda. However, there were some notable exceptions. In the heavily Congressist navy, the following members supported Balmaceda: Policarpo Toro Hurtado, Juan Williams Rebolledo, and Oscar Viel. Viel is exemplary of the 1830-1891 connection. Despite being tied to the nobility, Viel supported Balmaceda. The missing link is that he was the son of the Pipiolo general of 1830, Benjamín Viel. I do not have evidence confirming that his political allegiance had anything to do with his family history, but this is a reasonable hypothesis. Congressists had command over the seas and Balmacedists over the mainland.

What Congressists wanted was control over the productive fields of nitrate of the north. “More than anything,” wrote Carlos Walker Martínez, “we want Iquique” (quoted in Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 22). Before getting there, the squadron occupied Coquimbo and gained the adherence of military Adolfo Holley Urzúa. Congressists would later win the loyalty of another crucial army member: Estanislao del Canto. The Balmacedist governor of Coquimbo, Antonio Briebe, had to escape. The blockade of Iquique started on January 20. On February 6, Estanislao del Canto leading 500 troops landed in Pisagua and took the town, imprisoning 12 officials and 164 soldiers (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 27). The

government's campaign to recover the north of the country included Emilio Gana Castro (brother of a Balmacedist parliamentarian), Policarpo Toro Hurtado (the coloniser of Easter Island), and Miguel Arrate Larraín, the grandson of the former Pipiolo parliamentarian, Martín José Larraín Aguirre.

Due to a shortage of food in the north, workers mobilised. Government troops shot back, killing a sizeable number of demonstrators. The government's repression of workers in the nitrate fields strengthened the revolutionaries. Some of these workers would later enlist under the opposition in Iquique. On 8 March, the Convention of the pro-government Liberal Party nominated Claudio Vicuña Guerrero as Presidential candidate. The elections of July 25 confirmed him as the successor of Balmaceda. Claudio Vicuña, we must remember, was the grandson of Francisco Ramón Vicuña, the removed head of government in the 1829 civil war. He was also the cousin of Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, the historian who conducted the populist Presidential campaign of 1876. Claudio Vicuña, one of the richest men in Chile, was married to his cousin Lucía Subercaseaux Vicuña. Two sisters of Lucía Subercaseaux, in turn, were married to Claudio Vicuña's cousins Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna and the Senator Nemesio Vicuña Mackenna.

Balmaceda called for a new Congress in February 1891, with the commission of writing a new Constitution (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 28). Many of those elected for the Constituent Congress were military: José Velásquez, Orozimbo Barbosa, José Francisco Gana, Francisco Pérez Marin, David Marzán, Luis Solo de Zaldívar, Mateo Martel, and Exequiel Fuentes. Others were traditional Liberals such as José Miguel Valdés Carrera, Eulogio Allende, Adolfo Eastman, Juan E. Mackenna, Adolfo Valderrama, and Manuel Arístides Zañartu.

On April 12, the opposition formed a governing junta in Iquique, composed of Jorge Montt, Waldo Silva, and Ramón Barros Luco. The secretary of the junta was Enrique Valdés Vergara. The ministers were Isidoro Errázuriz (Exterior), Joaquín Walker Martínez (Justice), Adolfo Holley (Finance and War), and Manuel Antonio Matta. The ministry of interior was occupied at different points by Isidoro Errázuriz, Manuel José Irrarrázaval, and Manuel Antonio Matta. By this point, the country fell into a dual power situation. While Balmaceda waited in his Santiago stronghold, Congressists raised troops and money in the north. The governing body in Iquique organised an assembly of mayors, a judicial system, and by May 1891 it was able to raise two million of pesos monthly (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 65).

A fact that shows that the Congressist camp was not exclusively oligarchic was the adherence of the Democratic party – at the time the political vanguard of the middle classes and the artisans. In January 1890, when the Liberal opposition attempted to gain their support, the Democratic party issued the following statement: “The Democratic party, which is supported by one-third of the electoral body of the country, cannot adhere to any convention that does not give the party the representation that corresponds to it” (quoted in Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 429). Bañados Espinosa also claims that

during a Democratic rally, workers and artisans cheered in favour of Balmaceda (quoted in Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 502). Whatever the internal negotiations were, on July 6, 1891, a rally organised by the Liberal opposition celebrated the adherence of the Democratic party to their cause (Bañados Espinosa, 1894, p. 538). We also know that, during the actual conflict, the Democratic party supported Congress. Indeed, the 14-year old Luis Emilio Recabarren, who decades later would become the founder of the Chilean Communist party, was caught by the police pro-Congress pamphlets on behalf of the Democratic party (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 40).

During the inauguration of the Constituent Congress, Balmaceda gave his last public message to the nation. He referred to Congressists as a movement “initiated by a small and centralised social class that thinks of itself as called, due to their relations and fortune, to be the chosen group to govern Chile” (cited in Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 49-50). His message, more generally, called for a new constitution that strengthened the attributions of the executive vis-à-vis Congress, but also limited the degree to which the executive could intervene in elections. In May, there were attempts at reconciliation. The revolutionaries sent a committee to Santiago composed of the following members: Carlos Walker Martínez, Gregorio Donoso Vergara, Melchor Concha y Toro, Eulogio Altamirano, Pedro Montt, Belisario Prats, and Eduardo Matte (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 54). Permitted by the government to stay in Santiago, these individuals walked in the city freely. They received signs of support from neighbours of the town, which problematised the negotiations. During the talks – held at the United States embassy – the opposition demanded a return to the situation before December 31, 1891. Balmaceda had to call the old Congress again, and the Presidential and legislative elections of 1891 were to be cancelled, as well as all laws issued in 1891. On the part of the government, the chief negotiator was Ricardo Cruzat Hurtado.

An incident made the negotiations fail. On May 7, 1891, there was an attempt against the life of the hard-line minister Domingo Godoy Cruz, who for some reason took over the negotiations on the part of the government. “There is no deal!,” he said while storming in the negotiation room, “and the members of the revolutionary committee will be jailed” (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 54). The other ministers of state – Juan Eduardo Mackenna and Ricardo Cruzat – later gave excuses for what happened and reinstated the protection of the government. However, explosive attacks in the following days against supporters of Balmaceda undermined this extension. One of these explosives impacted the house of minister of the interior – and elected President – Claudio Vicuña. The Government-opposition negotiations failed.

Two of the leading banking families of Chile – the Edwards and the Matte – were financiers of the Congressist military campaigns. Moreover, Agustín Edwards and Augusto Matte both served as representatives of the revolutionaries in Europe, despite having opposed one another during the

ministerial turnovers of previous years. They oversaw buying weapons as well as undermining the image of Balmaceda's government in the eyes of European powers. Indeed, an economic dimension of the Government versus Congress conflict was the role of the state in the banking sector. In 1890, this had been a contested issue, with Congress knocking down attempts by the government to monopolise the printing of bills (Bañados Espinosa 1894). In 1891, now without the obstructionist Congress of the year before, the government adopted policies that impacted the interests of the private banks negatively. On May 4, the Senate approved a project that would withdraw the note issued by private banks and make the state the only issuer of notes. The Banco de Valparaíso and the Banco Nacional lost value in the Santiago stock exchange. Fanor Velasco, who worked in the palace of government in 1891, referred to this measure as "eminently socialist" (cited in Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 55). On July 9, the government sent to Congress a project to create a national bank, an idea that had been in the agenda of Balmaceda and his minister of finance Manuel Arístides Zañartu for a long time. The message indicated that "there will not be in this institution oligarchic banking classes (...) benefiting its owners exclusively or exerting a pernicious influence in politics" (cited in Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 70).

The government experienced internal conflicts as José Miguel Valdés Carrera and José Francisco Gana fought over the budget for the army, and a delegation of Deputies asked Balmaceda for the removal from office of the temperamental Domingo Godoy. The call worked, and a new cabinet – the last one of the Balmaceda administration – was headed by Julio Bañados. Manuel María Aldunate Solar went to Exterior, Francisco Javier Concha to Justice, Nicanor Ugalde to Public Works, and Manuel Arístides Zañartu to Finance, and José Velasquez returned to the Ministry of War (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 60). This change was partly an attempt to improve the image of the government, which had been damaged by the drastic measures of minister Godoy.

Bolivia was the first country to recognise the revolutionary junta. There, the Congressist representative, Juan Gonzalo Matta, had agreed on behalf of the junta commercial prerogatives to Bolivia were they to win the conflict. The Balmacedist ambassador in Bolivia, Ángel Custodio Vicuña, abandoned the country as a result (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 60). The decisive military encounter was approaching rapidly. In July, Balmaceda gave the army a new structure that was headed by Orozimbo Barbosa, José Miguel Alcérreca, Ramón Carvallo Orrego, and Daniel García Videla (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 70). The President raised salaries and promoted several officers. With 32,000 troops and total control of the railways of the central region of Chile, the government was confident of its victory.

The decisive battles took place in Concón (August 21) and Placilla (August 28), near Valparaíso. Reinforcements from Concepción did not arrive on time, which rendered the official forces slightly inferior in numbers vis-à-vis the enemies. The government forces lost both battles. Balmaceda received the news at 8 PM that day, during the birthday celebration of his wife, Emilia Toro Herrera. Upon

knowing the outcome of the battle, Balmaceda arranged a meeting in the house of his minister José Velásquez to pass the interim government to Manuel Baquedano, an officer that sympathised with Congress but had stayed passive during the conflict. That night Balmaceda and his family would leave the palace of government and depart from each other. Emilia Toro and the rest of the family took a carriage to the United States embassy. Balmaceda took another carriage together with Manuel Arístides Zañartu, Gregorio Cerda Ossa, and the governor of Santiago, Luis Antonio Vergara Ruiz. Destination: the Argentine embassy (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 96).

On August 29, Manuel Baquedano sat in the Presidential seat of La Moneda and named Álvaro Covarrubias Ortúzar as his secretary. Baquedano was advised to take the troops out to the streets to protect the properties of the defeated, but he did not accept the proposition. Carlos Walker Martínez opened the doors of hundreds to political prisoners. Throughout the day, the houses of several Balmacedist head figures were looted, including those of Adolfo Eastman, Eulogio Allendes, Juan Eduardo Mackenna, Adolfo Ibáñez, Domingo Godoy, Julio Bañados Espinoza, Nicanor Ugalde, Orozimbo Barbosa, José Tiburcio Bisquert, Francisco Solano Astaburuaga, and others. In the house of Nemesio Vicuña Mackenna, his mother met the crowds at the door. “Her husband, Pedro Félix Vicuña, had been an illustrious Liberal” indicated two years later Pedro Pablo Figueroa (1893). “Her son, Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna had been a Liberal (...). His father, the Independence hero Juan Mackenna had been a Liberal. She had been a Liberal her entire life.” Another house of received attacks was that of the Zenteno family. Enriqueta Zenteno de Prieto, recalled Figueroa, was the “mother of illustrious sons of the fatherland (...), the generals Prieto, Zenteno, Cruz, and Gana” (Figueroa 1893).

On August 30, the victorious troops entered Santiago. On August 31, members of the revolutionary governing junta arrived, including Jorge Montt, Joaquín Walker Martínez, Adolfo Holley, and Estanislao del Canto. That same day, Baquedano passed the command of the country to them (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 96). Some days later, they called for the election of a new Congress, to take place on October 18, 1891 (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 104). A decree of September 14 specified the categories of people that would be legally persecuted by their allegiance to the previous regime. The list included former President José Manuel Balmaceda, his ministers and state councillors, those who formed part of the Constitutive Congress of 1891, the governors and intendants, among others. The decree instructed the persecution of the individuals associated with these categories. On the same day, an order from the ministry of war indicated that all officials fighting for Balmaceda were to be removed from the army (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 105-6). Jorge Núñez Pinto (2003, p. 107) calculates that the new authorities expelled around 500 hundred state employees and jailed around 600 individuals. The replacement of personnel was dramatic, considering that the Chilean state had approximately 12,000 public employees in the period.

Balmaceda committed suicide on September 19 at 8 AM at the Argentine embassy, one day after the end of his constitutional mandate as President. Most of his high ranking supporters were in exile in Argentina (Domingo Godoy, Ismael Pérez Montt, Salvador Sanfuentes) and France (Adolfo Eastman, Guillermo Mackenna, Julio Bañados, José Miguel M. Valdés Carrera, Oscar Viel) (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 114). The new Congress started sessions on November 10. It included two unexpected members: Balmaceda's brother, Vicente Balmaceda, and Balmaceda's brother-in-law, Domingo Toro Herrera. "Cain, Cain," wrote a satirist (Pérez de Montalbán, 1892, p. 68) about Vicente Balmaceda, "what have you done to your brother?" The same satirist wrote about Domingo Toro: "Owing everything he is to his brother-in-law, [Toro] was one of the first to show his ingratitude" (Pérez de Montalbán, 1892, p. 51). We do not know what took these relatives of Balmaceda to side with the opposition during the civil war. However, it is telling that Balmaceda's letters to his relatives right before committing suicide included four of his brothers but not Vicente Balmaceda (Núñez Pinto, 2003, p. 108). The election of a new President was to take place on December 23. All parties that contributed to the revolution supported Jorge Montt, the main head of the navy. Three days later, on December 26, he assumed power.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the period 1874-1891, which culminated in the most significant civil war of Chilean history. After 1861, the National party transitioned to the opposition and – together with the Radicals – began a campaign to democratise the electoral system. Their efforts gained traction after the Conservative party abandoned an electoral coalition with the Liberals and joined the opposition. The electoral reforms of 1874, thus, were pushed forward by the bourgeoisie and the most traditional section of the oligarchy.

The social composition of Congress changed considerably in the 1880s after emerging elites took over the reins of the Liberal party and made Domingo Santa María president. In the elections of 1882, the traditional oligarchy – including the Liberal families that had founded the Liberal party – dropped their representation and a cohort of newly rich men took the empty places. Chapter 7 will provide evidence showing that, up to the 1870s, the elites that presided over Chilean politics were the same that had expelled the Spanish colonialists from Chile in 1810. The post-1882 social configuration was less familial and more plutocratic than the previous one, and it remained this way up to the 1920s.

As the political elites diversified and kinship became less of a mediating force in politics, the mechanisms of political promotion turned more contentious. The result was a long sequence of ministerial rotations and conflict around the ways of conducting party conventions. A theme that had begun in previous decades – the need of limiting the ability of presidents to control the political process – gained popularity, and by the end of the 1880s, a broad anti-presidential coalition had consolidated. Chapter 6 will look closer at the social composition of the parties that fought the 1891 civil war.

6. Familial continuity (1829-1891)

During the civil war of 1891, the Liberal party split in two, and the ideologically opposed Conservative and Radical parties joined forces. 1891 was not a civil war of parties divided over ideological principles. Who, then, were the Balmacedists and their Congressist opponents? Moreover, what did they represent? The conventional wisdom in Chilean historiography is that Congressists were wealthy and aristocratic while Balmacedists were bureaucrats of the middling sort (Edwards 1928; Encina 1952; Góngora 1986). Maurice Zeitlin (1984) argues that the civil war confronted different sectors of the economy, namely the miners versus the bankers and the landowners. These hypotheses can be tested empirically by examining the social background of members of the Balmacedist Congress of 1891 and the pro-opposition Congress of that same year. If Congressists were substantially more oligarchic than Balmacedists, then the conventional approach would be confirmed. If different sectors of the economy were differentially represented among Congressists and Balmacedists, then Zeitlin's account would prevail.

Table 5: Distribution of wealth, land, and status

	No. of Congressist individuals	No. of Balmacedist individuals	Total No. of Individuals
Rich	11	8	19
Noble	17	11	28
Landed	52	35	87
Mining	9	17	26

Note.— The figure for the wealthiest individuals counts the number of individuals belonging to the 80 wealthiest individuals of Chile as listed by Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna in 1882 (Vicuña Mackenna 1882). The figures for the most extensive landowners are for 1874 (Chile, Oficina de Estadística 1875); noble descent comes from Amunátegui Solar (1901), and mining comes from Zeitlin (1984) and Méndez Beltrán (2004).

Table 4 shows that, on average, Balmacedists were slightly less likely to be part of the 80 wealthiest individuals of Chile, as identified by Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna in 1882. Balmacedists were also somewhat less likely to own vast swaths of land and descend from noble families. The differences, however, were not substantial. Zeitlin's interpretation of 1891 presents problems as well. Miners were a small fraction of the Balmacedist Congress of 1891 and were also found across the fire line, as shown in Table 4. Further, consider the role of the Radical Party during the conflict. Founded in the aftermath of the 1859 civil war, the Radical Party drew its support mainly from the mining regions of the North (Vicuña Mackenna, 1875, p. 59). Contra Zeitlin's expectations, the Radical party, fought for Congress.

Another reason to doubt that the civil war of 1891 pitted different economic sectors is that the fiscal policy of the Chilean state did not change fundamentally after the Congressist takeover. The state kept spending generously on infrastructure while leaving the income of the rich untouched (Bowman and Wallerstein 1983). Further, it was Balmaceda, not the Congressists, who abolished the tax on income on the wealthy (Sater, 1976, p. 335). While the political economy of the state did not change much after 1891, politics did. Not only did Chile transition from a Presidential to a parliamentary system, but the new regime also empowered local governments and established new electoral rules. Samuel Valenzuela (1998) posits that the new electoral system marks the beginning of a limited form of democracy in Chile. For the first time, political parties gained seats in Congress by persuading voters as opposed to persuading the Minister of Interior (Valenzuela, 1998, p. 266). A clear indication of this change is that no official party achieved an absolute majority in Congress throughout the parliamentary period (Scully 1992).

Figure 22. Terms served in Congress of Balmacedists and Congressists

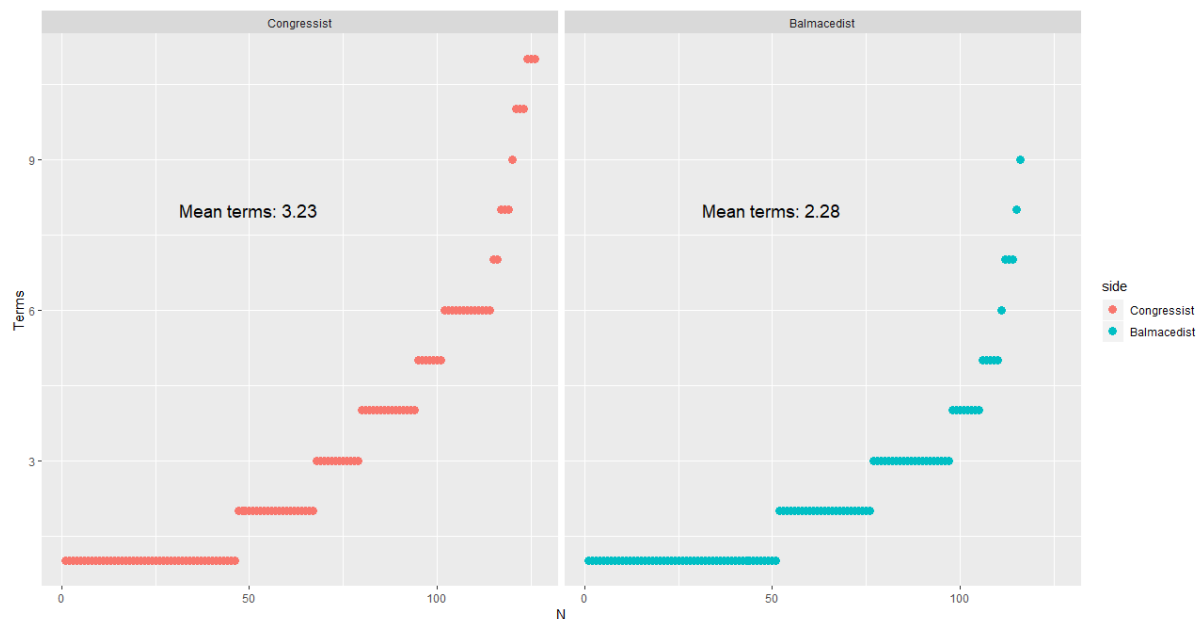
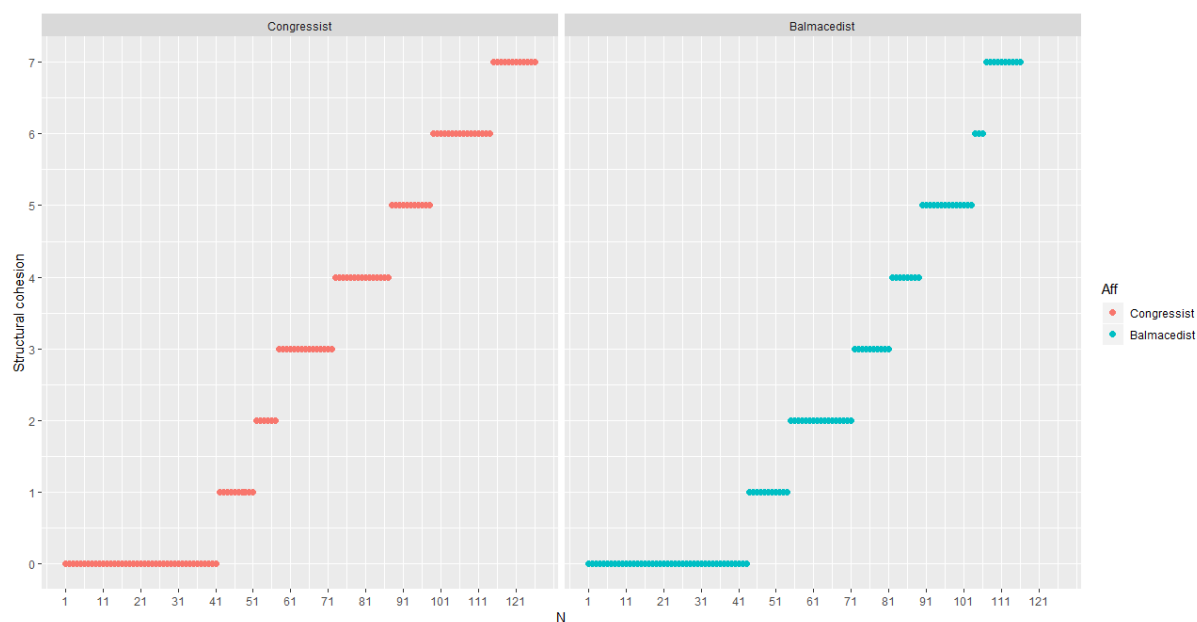


Figure 22 represents the number of terms that members of parliament from the two sides served before 1891. Mainstream historiography would predict that Congressists had substantially more experience than Balmacedists. Figure 22 does not provide evidence in support of this prediction. Congressists were more experienced, but not by much, namely 3.23 terms versus 2.28 on average.

Figure 23. Structural cohesion of Balmacedists and Congressists

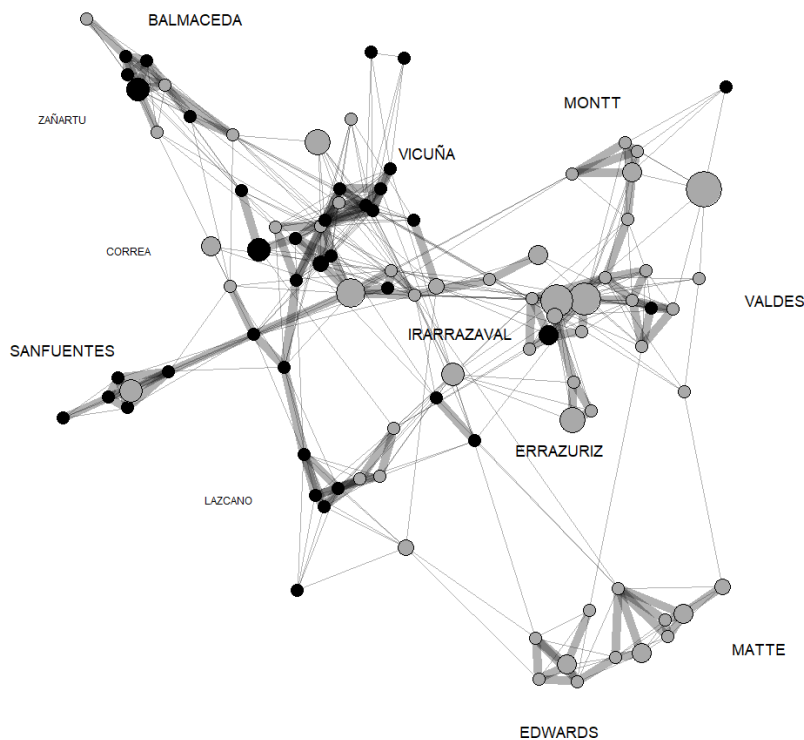


Their levels of structural cohesion did not differ much, either. Figure 23 represents the structural cohesion level of each side. Both groups had a substantial representation among the network periphery (i.e. individuals with structural cohesion 0) and had an even distribution of representatives in different levels of cohesion. In sum, Congressists and Balmacedists did present some differences, but these were not large. The most remarkable story emerging from the evidence provided here is their similarity. The following section shows that kinship networks are a better way of understanding how the sides of the conflict formed.

Network location

The critical factor dividing the Balmacedists and the Congressists was not status or economic sector, but family. This section shows that Balmacedists and Congressists differed in terms of their location in the kinship network. The next will show that they also were distinct in terms of their family political history.

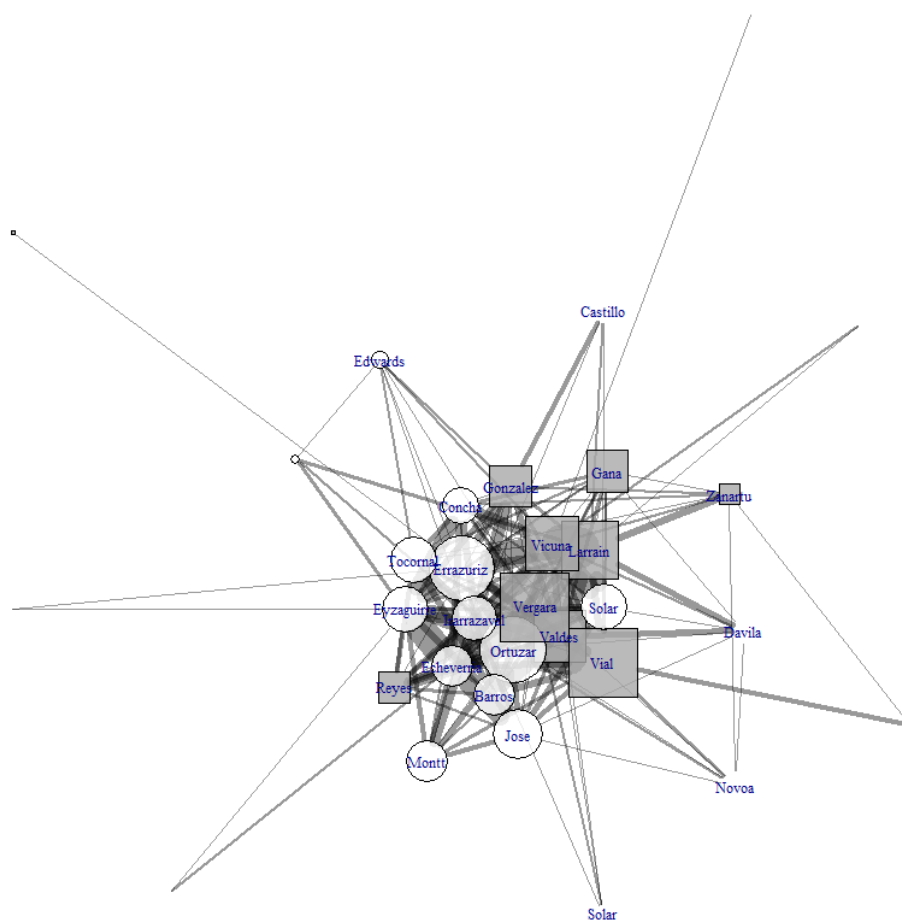
Figure 24. The allegiance of political elites in the civil war of 1891



Note: Membership to Congresses of 1891; blacks were members of Constitutive Congress (Balmacedist), and grey were members of regular Congress of 1891 (Congressist). Edge width represents the number of walks of a tie: direct ties are thicker than two-walk ties. The plot includes only nodes connected to the main component.

Figure 24 represents the members of the Congressist and Balmacedist Congresses of 1891. Kinship connected individuals across the fire line. That said, Balmacedists and Congressists tended to occupy distinct familial neighbourhoods. Visually, four or five clusters can be identified, each with a dominant allegiance. The Congressist clusters (represented in grey in Figure 24) tended to be more homogenous politically. For example, in the “Edwards” and “Matte” clusters, no Balmacedist is to be found. Families committed to the Balmacedist cause seem to have had a harder time keeping some of their members from defecting to the other side. Even in the vigorously Balmacedist Vicuña cluster, some high-profile members supported Congress – the case of Antonio Subercaseaux Vicuña. In Chapter seven, I speculate on the reason why. By the turn of the twentieth century, as the intra-elite cleavage became irrelevant in the face of the emergence of class parties, members of the traditionally Liberal oligarchy transitioned to the right of the political spectrum.

Figure 25. The allegiance of family clusters in the civil war of 1891



Note: The force-directed graph drawing algorithm (Fruchterman and Reingold 1991) was utilised for the graph's layout. Grey represents family clusters with more members on the Balmacedist Congress of 1891; white represents clusters with more members in the Congressist Congress of 1891. Labels represent the most frequent surname of each group. Edge width represents the number of connections between clusters; node size represents the degree of the cluster.

Figure 25 displays contracted communities of the full network's main component identified using the Louvain algorithm and coloured/shaped after the inferred alignment of families in 1891. If a cluster had more members on the Balmacedist side, it was painted grey and shaped in the form of a square; if it had more members on the Congressist side, it was coloured white and shaped as a circle. Visual examination of Figure 25 reveals that interrelated families tended to commit to the same faction. Not only did the families Larraín and the Vicuña side with Balmaceda in 1891, but families well connected to them also did, notably the Zañartu cluster, to which President Balmaceda belonged. Typical accounts of Balmaceda identify him as a maverick whose modernisation programme placed him in confrontation

with his social class of origin.⁷¹ His own mobilisation strategies had populist overtones, as illustrated in Chapter six. Figure 25, however, suggests that he was a typical representative of a large block of oligarchic families that fought together in 1891.⁷²

The visual evidence presented so far is suggestive but partial. Next, I test quantitatively whether the sides of 1891 were divided along familial lines. Table [] shows coefficients from a QAP regression estimating whether kinship ties at different distances predict joint political alignment.⁷³

Table 6: QAP regression coefficients predicting co-allegiance during the civil war of 1891 from kinship ties at different distances

	Model 1
(Intercept)	-0.03
One-walk	0.91***
Two-walks	0.42***
Three-walks	0.16**
Four-walks	0.07
AIC	80745.81
BIC	80790.68
Deviance	80735.81
Null deviance	80851.46
Num. obs.	58322.00

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Note: The number of walks represents the distance between nodes. One walk refers to direct connections (e.g. cousins); two walks represent indirect connections at a range two (e.g. the cousin's nephew), a so forth.

The coefficients of Table 5 show that direct and indirect kinship ties are significantly associated with supporting the same side during the civil war of 1891. If we were to select two individuals from our pool at random, chances that they belonged to the same faction (Balmacedist or Congressist) are about 49%. Randomly picking directly connected individuals increases the chances to 71%. Randomly

⁷¹ The Balmacedas bought an entail in the colonial period (Amunátegui Solar 1901) and the land census of 1874 puts Balmaceda's father as the single largest individual landowner of Chile (Chile, Oficina de Estadística 1875).

⁷² President Balmaceda's nuclear family did not fight in 1829, one of the few of noble descent that did not (Amunátegui Solar, 1901, p. 260). Of his six brothers, three became members of the Balmacedist Congress of 1891. His brother Vicente Balmaceda, however, passed to the opposition and sat in the anti-Balmacedist Congress of 1891. I have not found documentation explaining this break. In a letter that Balmaceda wrote to his siblings before committing suicide, he excluded Vicente (Núñez Pinto 2003). In a satirical publication of 1892, Vicente Balmaceda was dubbed "Cain", after the biblical figure that killed his brother. The phrase was: "Cain, Cain, what have you done to your brother?" (Pérez de Montalbán 1892).

⁷³ "QAP regression" is shorthand for linear or logistic regression for which a quadratic assignment procedure (QAP) null hypothesis is used to test the coefficients.

selecting pairs connected by two walks increases the chances to 60%. Finally, randomly choosing two nodes connected by three-walks expands their chances of belonging to the same side from 49% to 54%, a modest but statistically significant increase.

That siblings and cousins side together during a civil war should not come as a surprise. But individuals connected by more distant, often invisible chains tended to flock together, too. The coefficients tell us that, for example, ego and his cousin's brother-in-law's nephew (three walks) were more likely to support the same side than what we should expect by chance alone. Manuel José Irrarrázaval (leader of the Conservative party) was the son of the cousin of the brother-in-law of Pedro Montt (leader of the National Party). They were not part of the same family, yet they belonged to the same neighbourhood, and both supported the Congressist camp. The reason why individuals connected by invisible chains side together might be that political mobilisation diffuses through networks. As ego recruits the support of his cousin, the cousin will try and gain the adherence of his brother-in-law. There were cases in which members of the same family stood on opposite camps, but overall family networks predict the sides of 1891 satisfactorily.

The 1830-1891 connection

Not only did Balmacedists and Congressists tend to belong to distinct kinship networks, but their respective families also had different past political engagements. To estimate the effects of family political history, I deploy a QAP regression predicting co-alignment in the civil war of 1891 from family allegiance in the civil war of 1829. Controls included in the models are the network itself, political party, region of birth, status, network centrality, and network marginality. Columns represent different ways of assessing family political history.⁷⁴

Table 7. QAP regressions predicting co-allegiance in the civil war of 1891 from family allegiance in the civil war of 1829 and other independent variables

	Direct link	Louvain	Greedy	Walktrap	Infomap	Girvan	Label	Eigen	Spinglass
(Intercept)	-0.05	-0.06	-0.03	-0.05	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04
1829	0.46***	0.31***	-0.02	0.18**	-0.06	-0.03	-0.05	0.15*	0.09
Network	0.83***	0.77***	0.90***	0.85***	0.92***	0.91***	0.91***	0.87***	0.87***
Party	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**
Region	-0.04	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05
Status	-0.13	-0.12	-0.12	-0.13	-0.11	-0.11	-0.12	-0.12	-0.12
Core	-0.08	-0.02	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.02
Margin	0.10*	0.11*	0.08	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.09*	0.09
AIC	80627.56	80671.84	80770.76	80741.26	80766.03	80770.53	80768.79	80756.75	80764.78
BIC	80699.34	80743.63	80842.55	80813.05	80837.82	80842.32	80840.58	80828.54	80836.57

⁷⁴ See the Data and Methods section and the notes of the table.

Deviance	80611.56	80655.84	80754.76	80725.26	80750.03	80754.53	80752.79	80740.75	80748.78
Null deviance	80851.46	80851.46	80851.46	80851.46	80851.46	80851.46	80851.46	80851.46	80851.46
Num. obs.	58322.00	58322.00	58322.00	58322.00	58322.00	58322.00	58322.00	58322.00	58322.00

*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

Note: Columns represent different ways of assessing a family's political background. Direct link counts the number of immediate relatives that took part in the Pipiolo Congresses of 1828 and 1829 versus the number of relatives that belonged to the Pelucón Congresses of 1831 and 1834. The remaining columns assess family's political history utilising community detection algorithms. As explained in the Methods and Data section, communities were identified via different algorithms, and then the 1829 allegiance of the communities was inferred by counting the number of members in the Pipiolo Congresses versus the Pelucón congresses. If an 1891 elite belongs to a Pipiolo cluster, then he was tagged as such.

The QAP regression coefficients of Table 6 provide evidence that the sides of 1891 respond partially to family political history. This is especially true in the first model of Table 6 ("Direct link"), in which political history is measured by the number of direct relatives that were members of the Pipiolo Congresses that preceded the civil war of 1829 versus the number that were members of the Pelucón Congresses after the conflict. Political party (Liberal coalition versus Conservative party) is a modest but statistically significant predictor. Remarkably, status, as measured by pertaining either to the list of wealthiest individuals listed by Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna in 1882 (Vicuña Mackenna 1882) or descending from noble families, is not a significant predictor of siding together during the civil war. Belonging to the network's core does not impact the chances and belonging to the network's margins matters but modestly. The unimportance of status and network centrality refutes the conventional wisdom about the principal cleavage of the conflict, namely that the oligarchy fought the emergent middle-class.

Converting the log odds of column one to probabilities gives us the following figures. Choosing two political elites at random from our pool, we should expect that 49% of the times they will belong to the same side (Balmacedist or Congressist). Randomly selecting two connected elites, the probabilities increase to 70%, something we know from the previous regression table. Selecting a random pair with a similar family political history (Pipiolo or Pelucón) increases the chances that they will side together in 1891 increases from 49% to 61%. The impact of party and network marginality is less: they increase the chances of siding together from 49% to 52%.

Figure 26: The Vicuña in 1829 and 1891

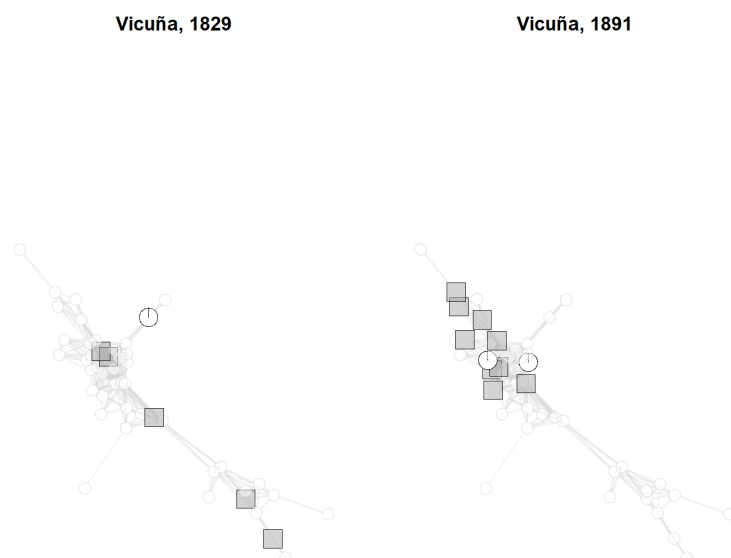
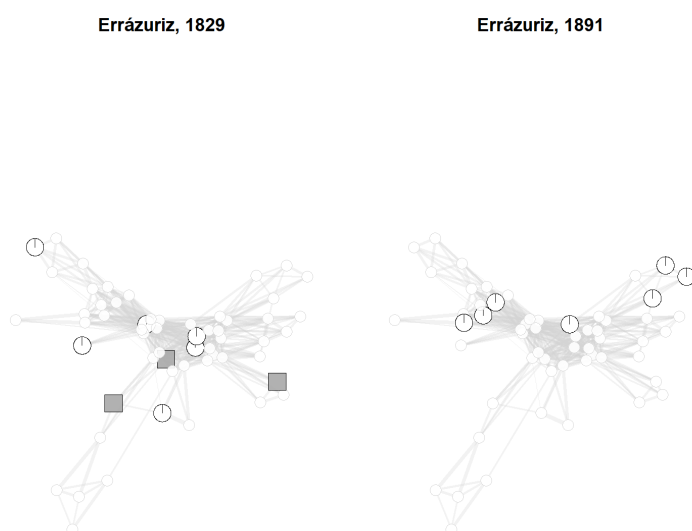


Figure 27: The Errázuriz in 1829 and 1891



Figures 26 and 27 illustrate the political allegiance in 1829 and 1891 of the four Aranaz families reviewed in Chapter two. The Vicuñas are the most obvious example of continuity. This family gave to the 1829 Pipiolos vice-President Francisco Ramón Vicuña Larraín. Had Balmaceda won the civil war

of 1891, his presidential successor would have been Claudio Vicuña Guerrero, the grandson of Francisco Ramón Vicuña. The Errázuriz were Liberal party allies of the Vicuñas in the mid-nineteenth century, but in 1829 and 1891 they were their enemies. The Errázuriz gave Pelucones a vice-President (Fernando Errázuriz Aldunate) shortly after the 1829 conflict; and in 1891 they were conspicuously Congressists.

Figure 28: The Larraín Otomano family in 1829 and 1891

Larraín (Otomano), 1829

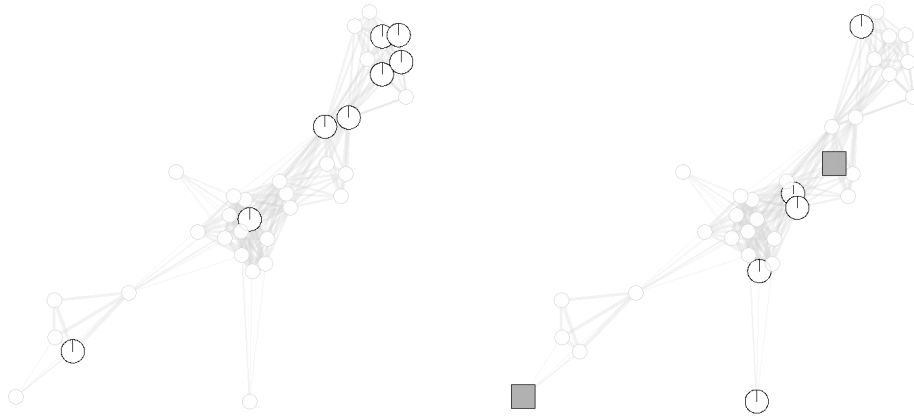
Larraín (Otomano), 1891



Figure 29: The Larraín Marqués family in 1829 and 1891

Larraín (Marqués), 1829

Larraín (Marqués), 1891



The two branches of the Larraín family – the one descending from Santiago Larraín Vicuña and the one descending from his nephew Martín José Larraín Vicuña – were consistently on different political lanes throughout the nineteenth century. From Mary Felstiner’s (1970) we know that the Marqués branch was royalist during Independence and the Ottoman branch was patriot. The political divide between the two branches did not close in subsequent decades. The Ottomans participated actively in the Pipiolo government lead by their close relatives Vicuña, and in 1891 they sided decisively with Balmaceda. The Marqués branch was Pelucón in 1829, Conservative throughout the nineteenth century, and Congressist in 1891.

In short, statistical and electoral evidence suggests that Balmacedists and Congressists not only were differentiated by their location in the kinship network but also by their families’ political history. Families that in 1891 aligned with Congress, were dominant in the Pelucón period (1831-1851) and the 1861-1874 period. Families that in 1891 identified as Balmacedist were less dominant throughout the nineteenth century but experienced a rise in their representation in the Pipiolo period (pre-1830), in the 1840s, and in the post-1874 period.

7. Conclusion: extensions and implications

Summary

The civil war of 1829 involved three large familial blocks: on the Pipiolo side fought the Santiago-based Ottoman branch of the Larraín family, especially its Vicuña branch, together with related families based in Coquimbo such as the Marin, Solar, and Recabarren. On the Pelucón side fought two distinct familial blocks: on the one hand, several interrelated families of the Santiago aristocratic elite, including the Marquis Larraín, Portales, Irrázaval, and Eyzaguirre families. On the other side, fought a familial cluster composed of the Concepción-based Vial, Prieto, and Bulnes families together with the Santiago-based Ortúzar, Rengifo, and Gandarillas families. These alignments suggest that 1829 was a conflict between a Concepción-Santiago axis versus a Coquimbo-Santiago axis.⁷⁵

After the establishment of the Pelucón regime, the aristocratic faction led by Diego Portales and the so-called *Filópitas* began an internal struggle for prominence. The *Filópita* leaders were mostly part of the Vial cluster together with some Errázuriz.⁷⁶ The *Filópita* leader Manuel Camilo Vial reached the peak of his influence as Minister of Interior during the legislative elections of 1849, in which he promoted many of his supporters. However, his relationship with President Bulnes deteriorated and Manuel Montt – his primary opponent within the administration – was chosen as Presidential successor. As a result, Vial passed to the opposition and formed the Liberal party in alliance with the Errázuriz and the old enemies Vicuña. The civil war of 1851 was fought over the same *Filópita*/aristocratic fault line of the early 1830s, excepting that now the former had the Pipiolo on their side.⁷⁷ It was not the old Pelucón families that reasserted their prominence after Montt's victory in 1851, but the bourgeois: wealthy individuals that were not necessarily well-connected, entrepreneurial families like the Urmeneta, Gallo, Cousiño, Matte, Edwards, and Besa. In the civil war of 1859, the government had few supporters among old political families and fewer than before among the bourgeoisie.

The 1850s civil wars were not as consequential as that of 1829 nor as large as that of 1891. However, they did have an impact on the realignment of political factions. The Liberal party emerged in 1849 from an alliance between the Vial the Errázuriz as well as the old-Pipiolo Vicuñas. The Conservative party appeared in 1857 when core Pelucón families abandoned the government after a conflict over clerical issues. The familial roots of the Liberal and Conservative parties shaped how they evolved in subsequent decades. The Liberal party was larger but incoherent, while the Conservative party was smaller and better organised.

During the civil war of 1891, Liberals split in two, and the ideological opposites Conservative and Radical parties joined forces. The conflict did not pit parties over ideological principles. Who, then,

⁷⁵ For a review of the historiography on the Chilean civil wars see (Fernández Abara 2017).

⁷⁶ Leaders Manuel Camilo Vial, Manuel Rengifo, Manuel José Gandarillas, and Diego José Benavente, are all members of the Vial cluster.

⁷⁷ Bruno Larraín Aguirre and Pedro Félix Vicuña Aguirre – Ottoman and Vicuña, respectively – were among the main instigators of the revolution (Encina, 1949, p. 140).

were the Balmacedists and their Congressist opponents? The conventional wisdom in Chilean historiography is that Congressists were wealthy and aristocratic while Balmacedists were bureaucrats of the middling sort (Edwards 1928; Encina 1952; Góngora 1986). The analysis presented in Chapter 6 shows that, on average, Balmacedists were slightly less likely to be super-rich. Balmacedists were also somewhat less likely to own vast swaths of land and descend from the colonial nobility. However, these differences were not significant. The most remarkable story emerging from the evidence provided in this thesis is the similarity between the two groups. Regression analyses presented in the previous chapter show that individuals connected by kinship ties tended to fight on the same side. They also confirm that families on both sides of the conflict tended to have distinct past political engagements. While Balmacedists came disproportionately from Pipiolo families, Congressists came disproportionately from Pelucón families.

Democratisation: top-down opening

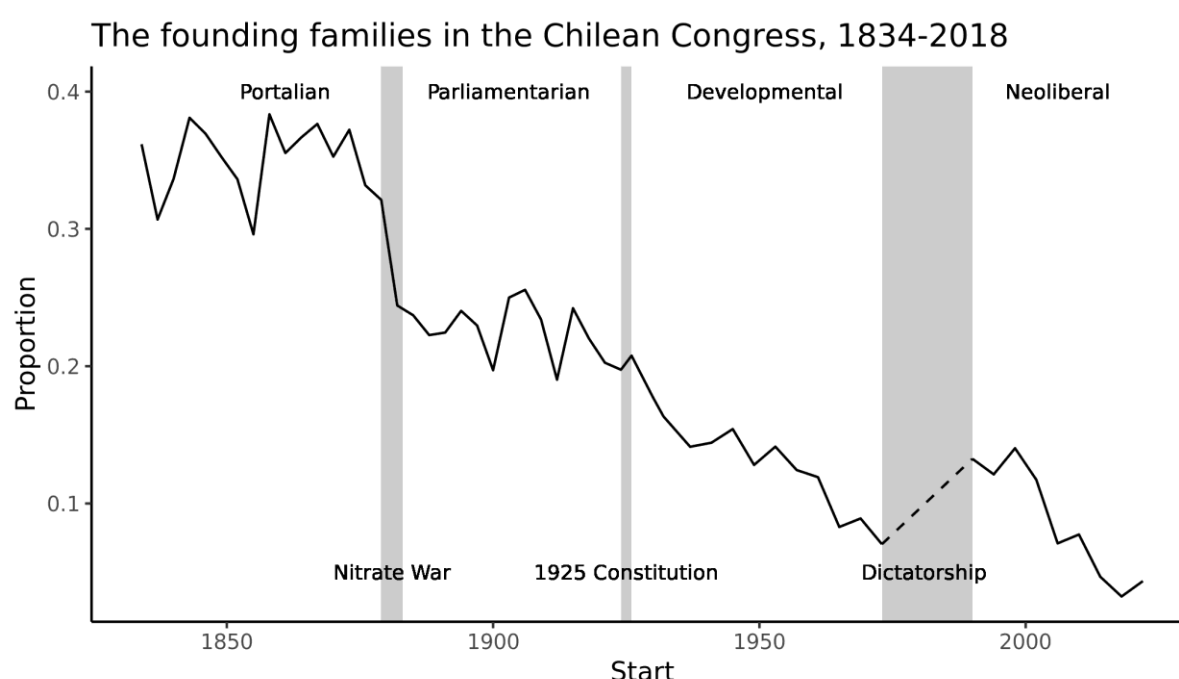
The historical-comparative literature attributes key political regime outcomes to the state/oligarchy competition or to class conflict. The results of this thesis show that critical political outcomes must be attributed to within-elite dynamics. It demonstrates that Chilean politics in the nineteenth century was dominated by the upper classes thoroughly and that the existence of multiple centres within it set the country into a consistent path of democratisation. The ascendancy of a faction tended to be met by the resistance of other factions, forming a de facto system of checks and balances. As a result, while the oligarchy remained dominant throughout the period, not one camp was able to hold to power for long. The norm was alternation. This picture corresponds to Dahl's (1973) notion of polyarchy, where democracy is represented as a pluralist system with many centres of power.

Besides, the network density of the elites may have contributed to the democratisation of Chilean politics. Consider these two premises: first, the network density of a system makes probable that enough individuals on the two sides of any given conflict will be tied in some way. Second, Liberal democracy depends on the losers' acceptance of defeat, something that presumably is more likely when such loss does not represent an existential threat. It follows from these premises that elite network density may contribute to the formation of Liberal democracies insofar some individuals on the losing side will be tied to the winners and that such connections will make more likely that the treatment of the former is lenient. Chilean political history is filled with conflict but also with amnesties and comebacks, as demonstrated by Loveman and Lira (2000). This argument contrasts with Naidu et al (2016), who conclude from their study on the Haiti 1991 coup d'état that elite network density predicts democratic breakdown. The nineteenth-century Chilean case, however, suggests that density leads to democratisation when the cleavages of conflict are internal to the elites.

The democratic reforms of nineteenth-century Chile were made by a smaller, more homogenous group than previously thought. The middle- and working classes partook only marginally in their making. The

vital electoral reforms of 1874 increased the number of legislators, put limits to the interference of the executive on the electoral process, and made the Senate subject to direct elections (Valenzuela 1985). These reforms were conducted by, arguably, one of the most oligarchic Congresses in Chilean history, that of 1873. Why did the elites loosen their grip over the state? Because they were internally competitive. Families in the very core of the oligarchy sided on opposing sides in three of the four civil wars studied in this thesis. Competition made the system dynamic, and non-elite parties seized the opportunities opened by the reforms in subsequent periods.

Figure 30: Proportion of legislators holding surnames of the founding families



Note: The surnames were extracted from all legislators of the so-called *Patria Vieja* (1810-1814). The surnames are the following: Errázuriz, Vicuña, Larraín, Araoz, Vivar, Cerda, Concha, Egaña, Gandarillas, Marín, Tagle, Portales, Cienfuegos, Salas, Infante, Alcalde, Aránguiz, Astorga, Benavente, Binimelis, Calvo, Campino, Echeverría, Elizondo, Goycoolea, Recabarren, Rozas, Lastra, Alcázar, Salcedo, Eyzaguirre, Manzano, Gallo, Palma, Jaraquemada, Guzmán, Lecaros, Barra, Mascayano, O'Higgins, Orihuela, Ovalle, Cotapos, Rosales, Ugarte, Urrejola, Urrutia, Valdivieso, Vergara, Vial.

Figure 34 represents the participation of the founding families in the Chilean Congress from 1818 to 2018. I define the founding families as those politically active in the years right after Independence, from 1810 to 1814. Three distinct periods can be identified: 1830-1880, 1880-1925, and the twentieth century. The period 1810-1880 could be referred to as the *age of the families* because politics was dominated by the same handful of kinship groups that expelled the Spanish in 1810. Until the 1870s, informal networks, primarily kinship, represented the main organiser of politics. Such networks were the raw materials utilised to form the Liberal and Conservative parties in the 1850s, and for the following thirty years, kinship mapped into political parties. Notice that the age of the families spans the traditional periodisation that distinguishes between the Conservative (1831-1861) and Liberal

periods (1861-1891). While the Conservative and Liberal periods were not ruled by the same families, the families of both periods were all old.

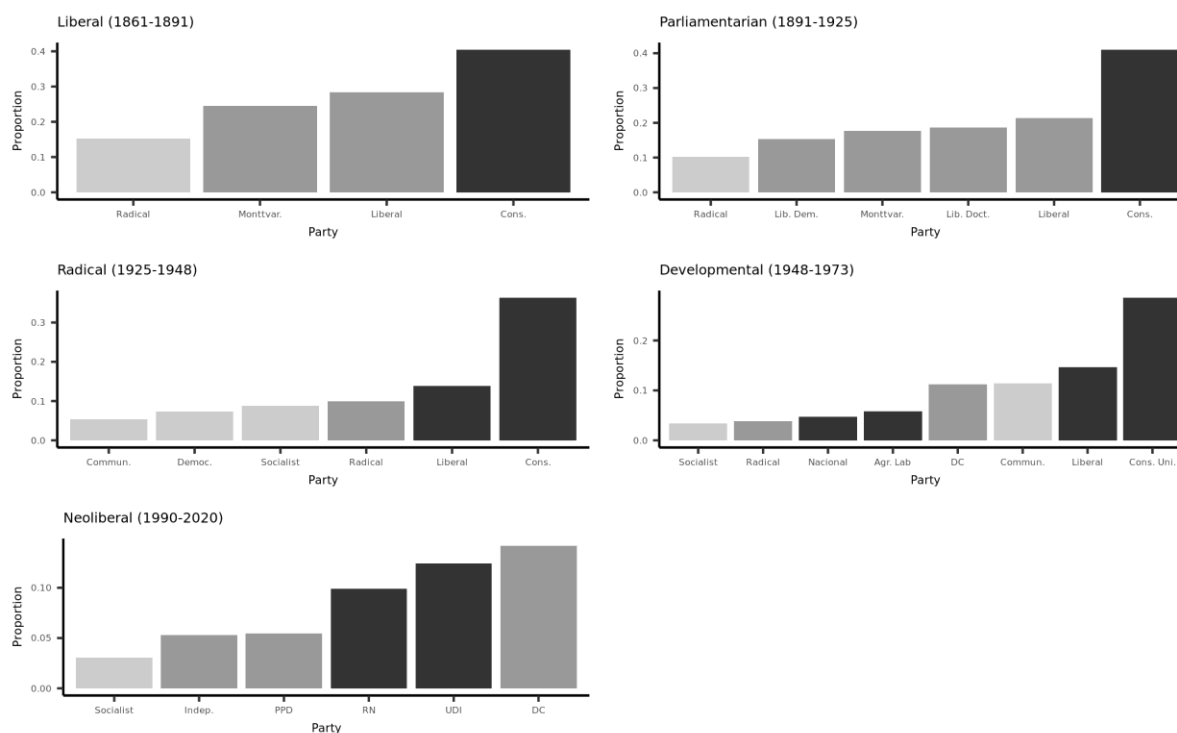
Previous chapters describe the drop in familial density in the post-1876 Congresses. Figure 34 shows that these Congresses also had higher percentages of new men. The electoral reforms of 1876 and especially the elections of 1882 introduced a new compositional equilibrium that remained stable up to the Constitution of 1925. I call this period as the *age of the bourgeoisie* because legislators in this era were wealthy but less likely to belong to the old families. From 1925 to 1973, Congress became socially diverse as the descendants of the founding families decreased their political representation. The 1990s experienced a new increase in individuals with a traditional elite background.

The increased power of the middle- and working-classes explains the long-term downward trend of elitism in the Chilean Congress. How could these parties enter the political game in the first place? The electoral reforms of 1874 and 1890 represent the critical turning points. Ansell and Samuels (2014) propose that democratisation occurred because of the fear of over-taxation on the part of the bourgeoisie. The data presented in this thesis, however, call into question this idea. The political heyday of the non-oligarchic super-rich of the nineteenth century was the Montt presidency (1851-1861), an authoritarian period. The Congresses that prepared and issued the 1874 electoral reform were not bourgeois, but distinctively oligarchic. Future research will test the role of intra-elite familial conflict in producing democracy, especially in the Congresses of 1870 and 1873.

Party formation: from family to party

After the turn of the twentieth century, the relation of the elites with politics changed. Whereas in the nineteenth century, intra-elite factions fought one another, in the twentieth century most individuals with an upper-class background flocked on one side of the political spectrum: the right. For much of the twentieth century, the main cleavage shaping political conflict was social class. Figure 36 represents the party membership of members of the elite over 150 years.

Figure 31: Proportion of party membership (parliamentarians) holding surnames of the “founding families”, 1861-2018



Note: The party membership data comes from the Chilean Congress (Chile 2014). Elite membership was determined using the surnames of the legislators of the “Patria Vieja” (1810-1814), the same ones utilised in figure 31. The colours of the bars represent the left-right gradient, with lighter colours representing the left and darker colours representing the right. Bars are ordered from lower to higher according to their proportion of elite members.

In the Parliamentary period 1891-1925, the core of the oligarchy started migrating from the Liberal to the Conservative party. Even the families that founded the Liberal party such as the Errázuriz, the Vicuña and the Vial transitioned. The Radical Party had few individuals of elite origin, despite being important electorally. In subsequent periods, the elites remained on the right of the political spectrum, with little participation in the Socialist and Communist parties, which in the period 1930-1973 represented on average one-third of the Chilean electorate (Garretón 1989). This association between the traditional elite and the right remains stable up to this day. In the Neoliberal period (1990-2018), Congress members of elite origin belong to the right-wing parties UDI and RN,⁷⁸ as well as to the centrist Christian Democracy. Again, the Socialist party, PPD,⁷⁹ and the Communist party count very few elite members, despite together representing around half of the Chilean electorate.

To summarise, the long-term change in the relation of the elites with politics is as follows: whereas in the nineteenth-century political competition took place within the oligarchy, in subsequent periods most elites joined one side of the political divide. Two causes explain this shift. First, after the turn of the twentieth century, the middle and the working classes gained a degree of political representation, which made the previous intra-elite familial disputes irrelevant (Correa 2005; Scully 1992).

⁷⁸ Unión Demócrata Independiente and Renovación Nacional, respectively.

⁷⁹ Partido por la Democracia

State formation: stability and enhanced policy implementation

The familial density of the Chilean elites impacted the establishment of the state in two ways. First, it solved the question of who rules early on. Chile did not witness substantial conflict between regions, for the elites from different areas cohered strongly. Indeed, the rich of Coquimbo, Santiago, and Concepción all belonged to a single familial network. Therefore, armed conflicts between regions were fewer than in other Latin American countries. The primary form of political competition was not between geographic areas but between interrelated families, who fought in a restrained manner. Given that Chile had few civil wars, there were fewer opportunities for *caudillos* to gain ascendancy through the military or local militias. The guerrilla bands that formed after independence never threatened the central government existentially, and by the 1830s the large ones were put under control. As a result, civilians dominated politics for most of the nineteenth century.

A second hypothesis is that the density of the elite kinship network enhanced the ability of the government to implement policies at the local level. The elites controlling the state were to varying degrees tied to local elites by kinship. Such relations provided the national elites with means to promote policies in the domestic sphere. For example, the establishment of primary schools often depended on the willingness of local landowners to lend a piece of land and to allow the children of their workers to attend classes. Landowners that had personal connections with the national elites presumably were more willing to cooperate. If proven right, this idea can change the debate on the historical emergence of the modern state, which rests on the assumption that the state and the local elites opposed each other. The most typical story in this literature is that the early modern state expanded by taking power from the local elites. Based on this assumption, the remaining effort has been to identify the sources of energy that allowed states to succeed in such an effort, e.g. external war (Centeno 1997; Mann 2012; Tilly 1990) and capitalism (Anderson 2013; Wallerstein 2014). But the relation between state and local elites should be a variable. In some cases, local elites connect to the national elites; in other cases, they do not.

The findings of this thesis are the first step to establish this claim on firm grounds. Subsequent research could take the following form. 1) Identify the local elites of several localities over time. 2) Create an index of closeness between local and national elites using the method of surname commonality. 3) Collect data on an appropriate dependent variable, such as the creation of schools or hospitals. 4) Statistically determine whether closeness between national and local elites predicts the successful implementation of state projects at the local level, controlling for geography and economic performance.

Conclusion

This thesis shows that politics in nineteenth-century Chile was the exclusive domain of a small number of interrelated families. The oligarchic nature of Chilean politics renders the country's democratisation in the second half of the century paradoxical. Why did an oligarchy that exerted unchallenged control

over the state open the system? I argued that the Chilean political elites were internally competitive; their membership was socially homogenous but differentiated by familial networks, each hoping to gain privileged access to the state. Families located at the very core of the oligarchy often fought on opposite sides during times of armed conflict. These families did not flock together against the state bureaucracy, as traditional Chilean historiography posits. Neither did they diverge in terms of their sectoral interests, as Marxist historical sociologists argue. The familial differentiation of the Chilean political field prevented one faction from taking over the state entirely. Over time, this de facto system of checks and balances became institutionalised.

The main political rupture of nineteenth-century Chilean politics was not the transition between the Conservative and the Liberal Republic around 1861. Instead, the main break was the electoral reforms of 1874 and the concomitant diversification of Congress. Up to that point, the same handful of families that expelled the Spanish in the 1810s controlled politics. Some were Liberal, others were Conservative, but all were old. For this reason, I refer to the period from 1810 to 1876 as the *age of the families*. The electoral reforms of 1874 expanded the electoral franchise and established mechanisms to prevent the executive branch from interfering in elections. The social diversification of Congress became evident in the legislative elections of 1876. In the following years, the Liberal party was taken over by a new group of people, some very wealthy but not necessarily old.

Traditional elites did keep a substantial representation in Congress throughout subsequent decades, but not as in the decades preceding 1876. The social composition of Congress stabilised in the period from 1891 to 1925. In this new context, and for the first time, traditional elites flocked together on one side of the political spectrum. Whereas in the previous period they fought one another and were similarly distributed between the Liberal and Conservative parties, now most of them joined the latter. The traditional elites were noticeably absent in the Radical, Socialist and Communist parties after the 1930s. Throughout the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries, they have remained consistently on the right of the political spectrum, and to a lesser extent the centre.

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