
STUDY

Translated by María Cecilia Blanco

STRONG CANDIDATES IN THE “CONCERTACIÓN” AN INSURANCE FOR RUNNERS-UP OR PREDOMINANCE OF THE TWO-THIRDS?*

Carolina Garrido and Patricio Navia

The authors provide an alternative explanation of an article by Carey and Siavelis which suggests that the Concertación presents parliamentary lists with two strong candidates because, as the governing coalition, they can provide an “insurance” —in the form of appointments to Executive positions- to those candidates who, accepting a personal risk for the sake of the centre-left coalition, fail to win a seat. Because, at the time when Carey and Siavelis wrote their article, the presidential election of 2005 was expected to be more visibly marked by the uncertainty of the outcome, they argued that “the Concertación will no longer be able to guarantee its candidates (...) a post in the Government structure”. This would

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* We acknowledge the suggestions and comments of an anonymous referee and the conversations held on this subject with John Carey and Peter Siavelis.

mean greater difficulty to present pairs of strong candidates. Carolina Garrido and Patricio Navia provide two alternative explanations of why the Concertación presents list with a higher number of strong candidates than the Alianza. The first explanation is that the Concertación is formed by parties representing two of the traditional three thirds in Chilean politics. The second explanation is that the Concertación is simply composed of more parties than the Alianza. Although there is enough evidence to support both explanations, there is insufficient statistical or methodological certainty to claim that these alternative explanations are better than those provided by Carey and Siavelis. However, it is also true that their explanation is not, from the statistical or methodological viewpoint, more plausible than those described in this essay.

In this article we offer an alternative explanation of an article by Carey and Siavelis which suggests that the Concertación presents parliamentary lists with two strong candidates because, as the governing coalition, they can provide an “insurance” —in the form of appointments to Executive positions—to those candidates who, accepting a personal risk for the sake of the centre-left coalition, do not win a seat but still help to increase the vote of the coalition at national level. Because, at the time when Carey and Siavelis wrote their article, the presidential election of 2005 was expected to be more visibly marked by the uncertainty of the outcome, they argued that “the Concertación will no longer be able to guarantee its candidates (...) a post in the Government structure”. This would mean a greater difficulty to present pairs of strong candidates.

What follows is, first, a discussion of the incentives of the electoral system, underlining that, although the coalition would rather have two strong candidates per district in order to win more votes, candidates themselves prefer to be paired with a relatively weak partner. Below we will discuss how the Concertación in effect fielded strong candidates in more districts than the Alianza por Chile between 1989 and 2001. After summarising the views of Carey and Siavelis, we offer two alternative explanations, check them against empirical data, and finally conclude that, even if our explanations do not provide greater predictability than those offered by Carey and Siavelis, they are at least equally valuable as potential explanations of why the Concertación has presented a greater number of strong candidates in Chilean parliamentary elections from 1989 to 2001.

1. The two-member district system and the two-candidate lists

The Constitution of 1980 states that the Chamber of Deputies has 120 members, whereas the Senate has 38 democratically elected senators. Because each senatorial constituency and each deputy-electing district fills two seats, the Chilean electoral system is known as a binominal or two-member district system. This system enables parties to form electoral coalitions¹. Each coalition is entitled to present lists with a maximum of two candidates to compete for the two seats available in each electoral district. Because these lists are open, each elector states his/her preference for a particular candidate on any list. The total number of votes garnered by both candidates on the list is added up to determine the number of seats the Coalition will fill. For this reason, although the votes are counted individually for each candidate, the seats are allocated to the coalitions. Therefore, the important thing is to win the highest possible number of votes for each list in order to double the vote of the second list and win both seats.

This is because both candidates on the same list are elected if the list wins the highest number of votes and also doubles the vote of the list that comes second. If the most voted list does not “double” the vote of the second list, each of the lists obtaining the two largest majorities will each win one seat, to be filled by the candidates who won most votes on their respective lists.

The negotiation to form pairs of candidates in each coalition (for 60 districts electing deputies and 9 or 10 electing senators) is a crucial time to predict the electoral performance of each group. When lists are drawn up, the coalitions have a choice of two possible strategies: they may seek to win both seats or just one. In the first case, a coalition may field two strong candidates who will be able to double the vote of the runner-up list or just one strong candidate who they think will win enough votes to double the other lists and win a seat for his partner on the list with his own votes. In the second case, a coalition may present one strong candidate who can secure a seat by himself or two weak candidates who, together, may garner enough votes to win one seat.

A strong candidate will prefer to be paired with a weak partner in order to secure his own seat in Congress. Even if the candidate's intention is to help his list win both seats, it is always better for him to have a partner who is

¹ The authorization to form multi-party coalitions dates back to Law No. 18.799 of April 1989, which amended the Organic Electoral Law on Popular Voting and Vote-Counting (No. 18.700). See Allamand (1999).

likely to obtain fewer votes in order to ensure he gets the first of the two seats at stake. However, if the coalition seeks to “double” the vote of the competing lists in as many districts as possible, in order to have a majority of seats in the House, the coalition will be forced to find a pair of candidates who are both strong enough to garner the number of votes required to double all other lists and thus secure both seats in each district. This is where the clash of interests between coalitions and individual candidates arises. Coalitions will prefer to have two strong candidates in order to double the vote of the competing lists, win both seats and hope to achieve the majority in the House. But each candidate will favour and work for his own aim of securing a seat for himself, making it preferable for him to be paired with a weaker partner. The presence of two strong candidates on a list encourages intra-list competition, regardless of whether the coalition is capable of gaining a two-seat victory in a district. Understandably, all candidates would rather have no competitors on their lists in order to make sure they win the seat that the coalition is likely to obtain.

In an attempt to explain this contradiction, Carey and Siavelis (2003) state that the Concertación has solved the clash of interests by introducing an “insurance” for those candidates who put their own interests at stake for the sake of the coalition. This insurance takes the form of a post in Government. Because the Concertación had clear chances of success in the presidential election of 1989 and 1993 and was already in power at the time of the parliamentary elections of 1997, it was in a position to offer this “insurance” to congressional candidates who accepted the risk of competing and failing to win a seat.

Unlike the Right, the Concertación was in a position to offer relatively certain compensation to defeated candidates (runners-up, in the words of Carey and Siavelis) in the form of a post in the Executive. In their essay, Carey and Siavelis provide evidence that the Concertación rewarded its runners-up with posts in the Executive Power during the 1993-1997 period. By comparing the votes obtained by each candidate, Carey and Siavelis also showed that, the closer they were to victory, the higher their chances of receiving “insurance” from the Government, then in the hands of the Concertación.

Before moving on to the discussion of the arguments presented by Carey and Siavelis, we have some more evidence of the phenomenon that they have studied: the presence of a higher number of strong candidates in the Concertación than in the Alianza por Chile. Table No. 1 shows details of all districts where both coalitions presented two candidates for election (Carey and Siavelis have only looked at elections during the period 1989-1997). To analyse the presence of strong candidates, we have used the

same tool as Carey and Siavelis: the mathematical ratio between the candidate with more votes and the candidate with fewer votes within the coalition, i.e. we have divided the votes of the more successful candidate by the votes of the less successful candidate in the coalition. This figure varies from a minimum that is just above 1 (when both candidates obtained virtually the same number of votes) to any whole positive number. Please note that the definition of “strong” may be misleading. The tool used by the authors enables a list where one candidate gets 10% of the vote and the other one 1% to have the same value as another list where one candidate wins 40% of the vote and the other one 4%.

As shown in Table N° 1, the ratio first: second was always higher in the Alianza por Chile than in the Concertación. While in the Concertación this average value was above 3 only in 2001, in the Alianza it was always above 3, reaching the highest figure in 1997. This means that, in effect, the Concertación presented a greater number of strong candidates than the Alianza in every parliamentary election held after democracy was restored. However, Table No. 1 also shows that the number of strong pairs of candidates presented by each coalition varied through the years (this will be discussed in detail below).

TABLE N° 1: RATIO FIRST: SECOND PLACE IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS
1989-2001

Election Year	Number of districts w/ 2 candidates	Average ratio1st:2nd	Average Standard Deviation	Minimum Value	Maximum Value
Alianza					
1989	59	3.67	4.73	1.02	25.25
1993	60	4.29	3.91	1.04	18.76
1997	59	5.24	5.91	1.02	29.07
2001	59	4.74	4.97	1.03	24.52
1989-2001	237	4.49	4.93	1.02	29.07
Concertación					
1989	56	2.45	2.50	1.03	13.34
1993	60	2.47	2.40	1.00	16.12
1997	60	2.19	1.66	1.01	10.46
2001	60	3.05	4.28	1.00	30.30
1989-2001	236	2.54	2.88	1.00	30.30

Source: Compiled by the authors with data collected from www.elecciones.gov.cl

It should be noted that, while the Concertación recorded, in general, a lower average in the ratio first: second (i.e. the Concertación presented a

greater number of strong pairings than the Alianza), the Alianza's standard deviation was higher than the Concertación's, showing that there was a greater variation in the Alianza between strong pairings and pairings where one candidate was weak. While in the Alianza the average ratio for the four parliamentary elections was 4.49 with a standard deviation of 4.93, the average ratio in the Concertación was 2.54, with a standard deviation of only 2.88. This means that, while in two-thirds of the contests in the 236 districts the Concertación obtained figures between 1 and 5.42, in two-thirds of the contests the Alianza recorded figures between 1 and 9.42.

Carey and Siavelis (2003:10) show that the Concertación managed to gain two-seat victories in 31 districts in elections held between 1989 and 1997 (11 in 1989 and 1993, 10 in 1997), while the Right won both seats in one district in 1993 and 1972.² We might add that in 2001 the Concertación “doubled” in 4 districts, while the Alianza achieved this in 1 district. Therefore, the number of runners-up in the Concertación has fluctuated between a minimum of 45 in 1989 and a maximum of 58 in 2001.

We suggest that the argument based on the ‘insurance’ for runners-up is not necessary —and neither is it sufficient— to explain the pairing of two strong candidates by the Concertación. There are other historical and empirical variables that explain just as well the reasons why the Concertación finds it easier and is in a better position than the Alianza to present a larger number of strong candidates. The number of parties forming the coalition and the characteristics of these parties as representatives of the political Centre and Left can explain by themselves why the Concertación presents two strong candidates in each district. What follows is, first, an analysis of the historical explanation of the Concertación as a coalition of the Left and the Centre. Then we will discuss how the number of parties in the Concertación —larger than the number of parties in the Alianza por Chile— is positively associated with the number of strong candidates presented by each of the coalitions.

² There are three errors in Table 1 by Carey and Siavelis (2003:10), where they report that the Right did not “double” in any district in 1997. In fact, the right-wing coalition doubled in district 23 in 1993 and in 1997 (also in 2001, but this election was not taken into account by these authors). The Concertación doubled in 10 districts in 1997, not in 11 as stated by Carey and Siavelis.

TABLE Nº 2: RESULTS OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WHERE THE TWO COALITIONS COMPETED AT DISTRICT LEVEL (1989-2001)

	Right Doubles	Concertación					Total number of districts	
		Doubles	Does not win a seat	Wins a seat (the other one goes to a non- rightist candidate)	Runners- up	Total number of seats		
Cámara	1989	0	11	2	1	45	69	56*
	1993	1	11	1	0	48	70	50
	1997	1	10	2	4	47	69	50
	2001	1	4	1	0	58	62	50
Senado	1989	0	3	0	0	16	22	19**
	1993	0	0	0	0	9	9	9
	1997	0	1	0	0	9	11	10

* In 4 districts the Concertación presented only one candidate.

** In 1989 there were elections in 19 senatorial constituencies; in 1993 and 2001 there were elections in 9 senatorial constituencies, while in 1997 there were elections in 10 constituencies.

Source: Carey and Siavelis (2003) and own research

2. First hypothesis

The Concertación is the sum of the Centre and the Left

Literature on the evolution of the political system and political parties in Chile is rich and varied, though surprisingly lacking in major debates on the nature and characteristics of the political party situation in the country until the interruption of democracy in 1973 (Scully, 1992; Tironi and Agüero, 1999; Valenzuela, 1978; Valenzuela, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999; Valenzuela and Scully, 1997; Urzúa Valenzuela, 1992). Although there have been some debates on the characteristics of the political party system after the plebiscite of 1988 (please see particularly Tironi and Agüero, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999), there is a wide consensus on the nature of a moderate, multi-party political system with a tendency towards polarization before the interruption of democratic rule (Gil, 1969; Sartori, 1976; Garretón, 1983). The division of the party system into three thirds (the Right, the Centre and the Left) is widely accepted by all those who have studied the Chilean party system and democracy before 1973.

Against this general background, different explanations have been given to account for the political developments of the second half of the 20th century. For instance, Scully (1992) argues that the transformation and polarization of the party system between 1952 and 1958 resulted from the clerical-anticlerical conflict and the class struggle in the rural and urban sectors. As a result of this conflict, a new party emerged as a Centre party: the PDC (Christian Democratic Party). With the emergence of this party, the country temporarily split into four groups: the Left, represented by the coalition PS-PC (under the acronym FRAP in the presidential election of 1958); the Christian Centre represented by the PDC; a lay Centre represented by the PR and a traditional right-wing sector divided into two groups: the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. In 1962, the PR moved towards the right (although eventually a good number of its members, including its leadership, left the party to join Allende's leftist group), leaving the centre sector free to be filled by the PDC which, in the presidential elections of 1964 and the parliamentary elections of 1965 established itself as a highly polarized and ideological Centre party. As a result of this change in the Centre and a mass mobilization of voters, among other variables, the country was divided into 3 major groups (or thirds): the Left, the Centre (PDC) and the Right.

After 1970, as a result of the ambitious revolutionary programme of the leftist government headed by Salvador Allende (Unidad Popular), the traditional division of the political system into three groups changed to become, at least in the parliamentary elections of 1973 and during the months preceding the military coup, a dichotomous division between those in favour of Allende's socialist revolution and those who opposed it (Arriagada, 1974; De Vylder, 1976). In spite of this, the party system at the time of the interruption of democratic rule was made up of three large groups with a particular identity and different ideologies. The Right was represented by the National Party (PN), the Centre by the PDC and the Left by the PS (Socialist Party), the PC (Communist Party) and other smaller parties (like MAPU, the Leftist Christians and a faction of the PR). But, as Valenzuela and Scully say (1993: 198-199), "the Chilean party political spectrum was characterized since the mid-30's until the interruption of democratic rule in 1973, not only by its division into a right wing, a centre sector and a left wing, but also, and at the same time, by its multi-party structure (...) Even if, at certain times, there were up to thirty competing parties, there were never more than five or six important ones". The three big thirds of the Chilean political system remained generally unchanged, and were each represented by one or two leading parties.

However, the division into three large groups began to fade in 1973, when the Right and the PDC joined forces in a coalition against the UP. In the parliamentary elections of 1973, the traditional division into three groups was replaced with a confrontation between the Left and an electoral coalition of the Centre and the Right. However, with the arrival of the military dictatorship, the division into three groups reemerged, with a Left that was openly opposed to the military government, a Centre that was willing to support the dictatorship (or at least showed signs of accepting it), and a Right that openly supported the new de facto government.

Afterwards, more precisely since 1983, a wide Opposition began to form against Pinochet's regime, which put an end to the traditional order that, for ideological reasons, separated the third represented by the Centre from the third represented by the Left. One of the first initiatives that managed to bring together the leaders of the Left and the Centre was the so-called Group of Constitutional Studies (the Group of 24), where most political groups of the Centre and the Left were represented, except the Communists and Pinochet's Right. Later on, the rise to the presidency of the PDC of Frei Montalva's former foreign minister, Gabriel Valdés, made much easier the decision of that party—and the political Centre—to become a militant Opposition to the dictatorship and seek a large front with all democratic groups—particularly the Left—which eventually put an end to the dictatorship and succeeded in restoring democracy. (Cavallo, Sepúlveda and Salazar, 1997: 341-380; Constable and Valenzuela, 1991: 271-295).

After failed attempts to negotiate with Pinochet's government, in the midst of a wave of popular protest demonstrations motivated by the economic crisis that the country was going through, the democratic forces formed a coalition named Alianza Democrática, which included the PDC, several factions of the then broken-up PS, various factions associated with the PR, the Social Democratic Party and other groups, even some that had been traditionally associated with the Right. This was the first formal manifestation of what would later become the coalition of left-wing and centre parties (Boeninger, 1997: 292-346).

By the time when the plebiscite took place in 1988, and with the aspiration to oust Pinochet from power, the then weak and difficult coalition between the PDC and the PS the two most important and best-organized parties of the Centre and the democratic Left-gained enough strength to become a formal political coalition. The aim of the coalition was to restore democracy using the mechanisms provided by the Constitution designed by the dictatorship itself and adopted in the plebiscite of 1980 (Ortega Frei, 1992; Walker, 1990). In addition, several leaders associated with socialism and other

moderate groups decided to create what they then regarded as an “instrumental party”, capable of overcoming the existing legal restriction for the creation of a truly socialist party. This is how the Party for Democracy (PPD) emerged, which eventually became one of the two leading parties in the leftist sector of the Concertación.

Together with the PDC, the PR and several socialist factions, the PPD formed the Concertación de Partidos por el No prior to the plebiscite of 1988. They were a total of 17 parties and groups representing both the Left and the Centre (although there were also some right-wing groups) which joined forces to put an end to Pinochet’s dictatorship through the people’s vote in October 1988. Although Chile had in the past experimented with coalitions formed by the Centre and the Left (for example the radical governments of Aguirre Cerda and Ríos), since the emergence of the PDC in the 50’s and its consolidation as an hegemonic party of the Centre from the 60’s onwards, the Centre and the Left had never managed to form a coalition. As an example, let us recall just how difficult it was for the PDC to make the decision to vote for Salvador Allende after the National Congress was forced to elect the President following an election where the people had not given a majority vote to any of the three candidates running for president in 1970. This is why the formation of the Alianza Democrática first and the Concertación de Partidos por el No later represented a substantial change to the political practices followed in the country since the second half of the 20th century.

After the victory of the “No” vote in the plebiscite of 1988, the parties of the Concertación quickly agreed on the convenience of maintaining their political partnership and turning it into an electoral coalition to compete in the presidential and parliamentary elections of 1989 as a united front. And so, the Concertación de Partidos por el No changed, evolved, became stronger and adopted a new name: Concertación de Partidos Por la Democracia (Otano, 1995: 54-87).

Following the presidential and parliamentary elections of 1989, and after the adoption of the constitutional reforms of June 1989 which eliminated restrictions to the existence of socialist and communist parties, the number of parties in the Concertación became considerably smaller. The unification of various wings into a single party (as in the case of the PS and the PR) and the disappearance of other smaller groups as a result of their poor electoral performance helped to substantially reduce the number of parties in the Concertación. In fact, since 1994, this coalition is formed by 4 parties with parliamentary representation: PDC, PS, PPD and PRSD.

Therefore, we might say, in agreement with Scully and Valenzuela (1993) and Valenzuela (1999) that the Concertación de Partidos por la

Democracia includes two of the three thirds that made up the party system until 1973. Even from a viewpoint opposed to Valenzuela's, presented by Tironi and Agüero (1999), we may conclude that, ironically, because the elections of 1988 were like a plebiscite in nature, Pinochet's Government left as a legacy a division in the country where two of the traditional three thirds joined forces to constitute a democratic Opposition to the military régime. Whether it is because the Concertación represents a coalition of the Centre and the Left or because the Yes-No division enabled the Centre and the Left to unite as a single bloc, the presence of a greater number of strong candidates in the Concertación could be explained by historical facts, regardless of the ability to offer insurance to any losing candidates the Concertación might have.

Indeed, the fact that the Concertación is formed by the Centre and a good part of the traditional Left born from the old party system not only makes it easier but also virtually inevitable that the union between both parties should lead the Concertación to present a greater number of candidates in the parliamentary elections, regardless of the pattern formed by voters' preferences (i.e. a continuation of the 3/3 or a new 2/2 structure). This should also help the Concertación to have more chances than the Right of presenting strong pairs of candidates.

To verify the consistency in the Chilean vote, we compared the vote obtained by the leading political parties in every parliamentary election between 1961 and 2001. TABLE No. 3 shows a surprising level of consistency in electoral preferences for the three groups. Although the right-wing group has clearly experienced an increase after 1989, while the Centre has experienced a decline since 1965, it is still easy to associate the Chilean people's electoral preferences with the old three-thirds structure. The leftist third has fluctuated between 22.2% in 1961 and 43.9% in 1973.

TABLE NO. 3: ELECTORAL WEIGHT OF CHILEAN POLITICAL PARTIES IN EACH COALITION 1961-2001

Sector	Party	1961	1965	1969	1973	1989	1993	1997	2001	Average
Right	PI, PCo									
	PN,RN, UDI,PSur									
	UCC, others	30.4	13.1	20.0	23.0	41.32	36.7	38.4	44.3	30.0
Centre	PDC, PR (except 73), PADENA, PRSD, others	43.7	58.8	42.8	30.3	34.5	30.1	26.1	23.0	36.2
Left	PR (73), PS,PC, MAPU,IC, PPD, PH, others	22.2	22.7	30.9	43.9	22,3	32.4	34.0	29.1	29.7
Total	Right									
Three	Left	96.3	94.6	93.7	9.72	91.0	99.2	98.5	96.4	95.9
thirds	Centre									

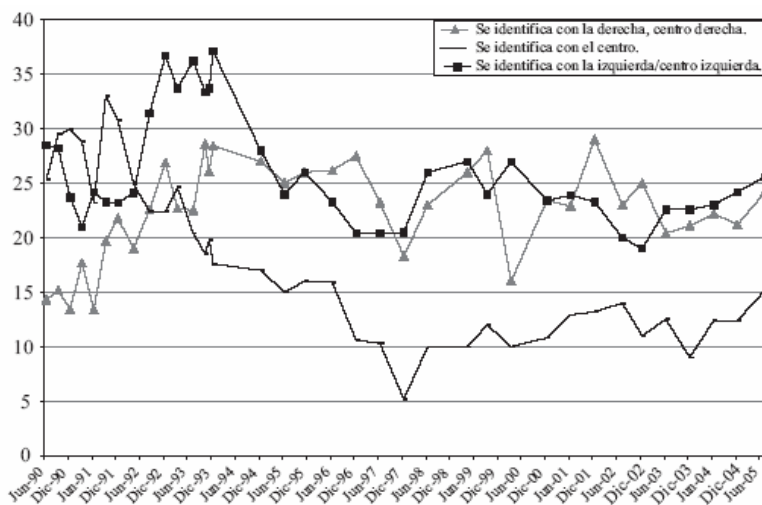
Parties:
 PL (Liberal Party),
 PCo (Conservative Party),
 PN (National Party),
 RN (National Renovation),
 UDI (Independent Democratic Union),
 PR (Radical Party),
 PADENA (National Democratic Party),
 PDC (Christian Democratic Party),
 PRSD (Radical Social Democratic Party),
 PS (Socialist Party),
 PC (Communist Party),
 MAPU (People's Action Movement),
 IC (Christian Left),
 PPD (Party for Democracy),
 PH (Humanist Party).

Sources: 1961-1965: Urzúa Valenzuela (1992: 622); 1969-73: Valenzuela (1978:85); 1989-2001: <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl>

If we take the averages for the 8 parliamentary elections held between 1961 and 2001, we will be quite close to the three thirds. In fact, even if we take the averages only for the elections held after 1989, the figures are 38.4% for the Right, 28.4% for the Centre and 29.5% for the Left. The persistence and endurance of the of the three thirds for the purposes of the various electoral laws and different forms of political coalitions —which have been described in brief here, but have been extensively demonstrated in literature— should be taken into account at the time of assessing electoral behaviour in Chile. The presence of two of the three thirds in the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia should not be ignored as an alternative explanation of why this government coalition presents more pairs of strong candidates in legislative elections than the right-wing coalition.

Naturally, an assessment based exclusively on aggregate electoral data at national level would be too simplistic. However, if we combine this with the results of regular surveys carried out during the 1990's, these results will clearly show that the theory of the survival of the three thirds should not be ruled out too quickly. In the regular surveys conducted by the Centro de Estudios Públicos (we are only considering here the surveys carried out after the return of democracy in 1990) there is a question where people are asked to identify themselves with one of the three thirds into which parties and voters have traditionally been divided in the country. As shown by Figure N° 1, between June 1990 and June 2004, the number of people who claim to identify themselves with the Left has fluctuated between a little over 35% and just under 20%. Those who say they identify themselves with the Right have fluctuated between a little under 15% and a little over 25%, with a clear rising tendency after 1990. Those who say they identify themselves with the Centre have shown a declining tendency after 1990, reaching a peak just above 30% at the beginning of the 90's and fluctuating between 10 and 15% after 1998 (see also CERC tables in Huneus, 2003: 238). Although we could well say that the number of people who do not identify themselves with any of the three groups has risen from less than 30% in 1990 to more than 40% in the most recent surveys, more than two thirds of the people surveyed still recognize that the traditional division into three thirds is a valid reference. If any, the only trend that has strengthened during the post-dictatorship period is the decline of the Centre, which has gone from being the strongest group at the beginning of the 90's to being the weakest in the last few years. Nevertheless, a wide majority of the people surveyed continue to identify themselves with one of the three thirds in national politics, showing that the Right, Centre and Left categories should not be so easily ignored or rejected.

FIGURE N° 1 IDENTIFICATION WITH A POLITICAL GROUP



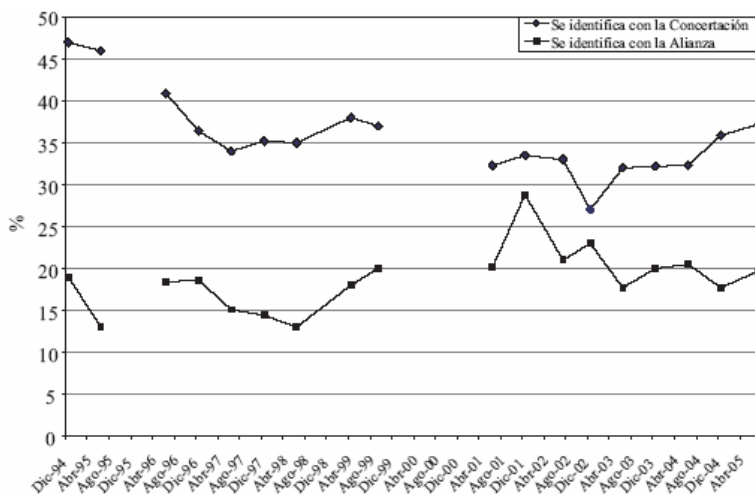
Source: Own work, based on data from www.cepchile.cl

The widely publicized argument that the dichotomy between Concertación and Alianza has replaced the traditional three thirds is also based on the evidence of surveys. As shown in Figure No. 2, a considerable number of Chileans identify themselves either with the Concertación or the Alianza. However, the number of people who claim to support either one of the country's two most important coalitions has been falling since 1990. In fact, while in 1990 more than 65% of those surveyed claimed to identify themselves with the Concertación or the Alianza, towards 2004 only a little more than 50% of those surveyed said they identified themselves with either one of the two coalitions.

If we compare the percentage of those who still identify themselves with one of the two coalitions, with the number of people who still define their preferences on the basis of the traditional three thirds, we will see this historical division seems to persist through the times with more strength than the division that originated in the plebiscite of 1988. In 1990, 70% of the population identified themselves with one of the two leading coalitions while just under 70% identified themselves with one of the three thirds. By 2004, more than 60% still identified themselves with one of the three thirds, but only about 50% identified themselves with either the Concertación or the Alianza. This means that the three thirds have managed to remain as a reference for political identification with greater success than the division into Concertación

and Alianza, at least in the surveys carried out by the Centro de Estudios Públicos.

FIGURA NO. 2 PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION WITH A POLITICAL COALITION, 1994-2005



Source: Own compilation with data from www.cepchile.cl

Naturally, it will be difficult to suggest from these data that the three thirds are stronger and more enduring than the Concertación/Alianza division. However, for the purposes of this essay, it will be sufficient to say that there is not enough evidence to claim that the three thirds have lost historical significance. Therefore, we do not see any justification for ruling out the possibility that the Concertación may still represent two of the traditional three thirds. And therefore, we also think it is risky to ignore the possibility that the presence of strong pairs of candidates in the electoral lists of the Concertación may result from the fact that the ruling coalition still represents two of the traditional three thirds into which the party system and the Chilean voters have been politically divided since the mid-20th century.

3. Second hypothesis: Number of parties in the Concertación and the Alianza

Apart from the historical explanation discussed above, we believe that another possible reason why the Concertación presents lists with two strong candidates is that the coalition is formed by a greater number of parties than

the right-wing coalition. That is to say, maybe the Concertación presents lists with a higher number of strong candidates simply because there are more parties in this coalition than in the right-wing coalition. The hypothesis discussed in this section is that, the greater the number of parties in a coalition, the greater the number of strong pairs of candidates.

3.1 Insurance for runners-up in the Concertación

To be able to determine whether only the number of parties is significant at the time of forming pairs of candidates, we have developed a data base that is similar to the one used by Carey and Siavelis. Our data base includes all pairs of candidates in the Concertación for all the elections to the Chamber of Deputies between 1989 and 2001. We have created the variable “Concertación Ratio”, consisting in the division of the votes of the candidate receiving the first majority by the vote of the candidate who received the second majority on the same list. Based on this variable we can find the average difference between pairs of candidates presented by the Concertación for each district. At the same time, we reported the number of parties making up this coalition for each of the specified elections. To prove our hypothesis, the Concertación Ratio should be higher when the number of parties in the coalition is lower, i.e. with a higher number of parties in the Concertación, we should have a higher chance of the coalition presenting more than one strong candidate in each electoral district and constituency.

Table N° 4 shows the average Concertación Ratio for each election to the Chamber of Deputies held since 1989, together with the number of parties making up the Concertación in each year. In 1989, the Concertación was composed of 7 parties that presented candidates for election to the Chamber of Deputies: PDC, PR, PPD, PH (Humanist Party), PV (Green Party), PS (although some of its candidates ran as members of the PPD, a good number ran as independent candidates on the Concertación list) and independent candidates (militant members of smaller parties who, for the purposes of this essay, are placed in a single category). With 7 parties competing in the 1989 election, this coalition presented a figure of 2.451 as the result of the Concertación Ratio (vote of the candidate who came first divided by the vote of the candidate who came second).

TABLE N° 4 CONCERTACIÓN RATIO AND NUMBER OF PARTIES IN THE CONCERTACIÓN 1989-2001

	Conc. Ratio 1989	Conc. Ratio 1993	Conc. Ratio 1997	Conc. Ratio 2001
Average	2.451	2.475	2.198	3.057
No. of parties	7	6	5	5

Source: Calculation made by the authors with data collected from www.elecciones.gov.cl

In 1993, the Concertación changed its party base. That year, both the PH and the PV (then allied under the name of Alianza Humanista Verde) broke away from the Concertación, while the PSD (Social Democratic Party) joined the Concertación and the PS became a formal member of the coalition. The double party membership of the PS and PPD came to an end in 1992, and so the parties in the government coalition that year were the PDC, PR, PSD, PPD, PS and the Independents. Although there was one party less, the Concertación Ratio in 1993 increased slightly in relation to 1989. However, towards the end of 1997, two years from the end of the Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei's term as president, the Concertación, with one party less in the coalition as a result of the union between the PR and the PSD, saw the Concertación Ratio fall to 2.198. Finally, in 2001, four years from the end of the presidential term of Ricardo Lagos (PS-PPD) and with the same number of parties as in 1997, the coefficient rose again, reaching its highest figure in the 4 elections held since the return of democracy.

Although, at first sight, we might conclude the existence of a rising tendency, statistically speaking the differences between ratios in each election are not significant. Table N° 5 shows T-tests for a sample for the 4 parliamentary elections of the period. Given the high variance between districts where two strong candidates competed and districts where only one strong candidate stood for election, confidence intervals (95%) are quite high. Therefore, in 1989, with a 95% confidence interval, we can say that the real Concertación Ratio stood between a minimum of 1.78 and a maximum of 3.12. As can be expected, the confidence intervals for the 4 elections overlap, i.e. we cannot conclude with statistical certainty that the lower number of parties in the Concertación had a significant influence in increasing the number of districts where there were not two strong candidates. However, as discussed above, the fact that the number of strong candidates has fallen with the passage of time does seem to be associated with the lower number of parties in the Concertación.

TABLE NO. 5 T-TESTS FOR A SAMPLE OF CONCERTACIÓN RATIO, 1989-2001

	T-Value	Degrees of freedom	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference Intervals	Average 95% confidence	
					Low	High
Concertación 89	7.310	55	0.000	2.4468	1.7760	3.1175
Concertación 93	7.962	59	0.000	2.4715	1.8504	3.0926
Concertación 97	10.221	59	0.000	2.1938	1.7643	2.6233
Concertación 01	5.527	59	0.000	3.0525	1.9473	4.1577

Source: Calculations made by the authors with data collected from www.elecciones.gov.cl

Even if we cannot assert with statistical certainty that the lower number of parties in the Concertación has reduced the number of districts where the government coalition presents two strong candidates, there are some important considerations that are worth highlighting and underline the existence of a relationship between the number of parties in the government coalition and the number of districts where the coalition presents two strong candidates.

Both in 1989 and 1993, the Concertación's victory in the presidential elections was taken for granted even months before the registration of candidates for the parliamentary elections that were to be held simultaneously with the presidential election. In 1997, there were just two years to the presidential election of 1999 and it was already clear that the right-wing coalition would attempt for the first time since the return of democracy to present a candidate that was strong enough to run for president. For this reason, the potential Concertación candidates knew that, if defeated, they would only have 2 years where they would be guaranteed to receive an "insurance" from the Executive. Because they could not be sure of who would win the presidential election of 1999, the potential candidates could not rely on the Government to guarantee that their "insurance" would be "paid" beyond President Frei's term.

But in 2001 there were still four years to the end of President Ricardo Lagos's term. Although surveys then showed that the right-wing opposition was clearly ahead in the race for the next presidency, Lagos's Government still had 4 years to pay the alleged "insurance" to any Government candidates defeated in December 2001. In addition, the perception that the presidential race for 2005 was already decided so far ahead of the elections was clearly more widespread in the press than in the strategic considerations of shrew politicians.

In this context, and following the logic of Carey and Siavelis, the Concertación was in an excellent position in 2001 to promise an “insurance” to runners-up who stood for election to Parliament and suffered defeat. In 2001, the Concertación was certain that it would remain in power until March 2005, whereas in 1997 they were less certain than in any of the other four elections. On that occasion, there were only two years to the end of Frei Ruiz and Tagle’s term. In 1989 and 1993, although there was no absolute certainty that the Concertación would remain in power, there were nonetheless high expectations that this would be the case for a 4-year period from 1989 and for a 6-year period from 1993. Therefore, we could list the four elections according to the Concertación’s level of certainty about retaining power, as follows:

(highest certainty) 2001 > 1993 > 1989 > 1997 (lowest certainty)

The perception of the Concertación’s chances of remaining in power beyond the end of the presidential term in progress probably varied from one candidate to another in each election. Therefore, there may have been more candidates who thought it more likely that the Concertación would remain in power in 1997 following Frei’s term than those who had the same perception in relation to Lagos’s successor in 2001. However, our analysis is simply based on the number of years left to complete the presidential term and on the certainty that the Executive could offer that it would provide “insurance” to runners-up, regardless of the result of the next presidential election.

Therefore, 1997 would be the year where there was the least certainty and as a result, there must have been fewer incentives for the Concertación to present two strong candidates in most districts. But, as Table No. 5 shows, in 1997, the Concertación presented a larger number of strong pairings in the country. Conversely, fewer strong pairs were presented for the parliamentary elections of 2001, when the certainty of remaining in power was highest. Now then, as already stated, the difference between the average number of strong pairs in 1997 and 2001 is not statistically significant. Although it is worth noting that Carey and Siavelis do not include the parliamentary elections of 2001 in their research, the evidence of the greater difficulty that the Concertación apparently experienced that year to find strong pairs of candidates challenges the argument that the offer of “insurance to runners-up” induces strong candidates to stand for election as part of the Concertación lists.

TABLE NO. 6 RE-ELECTION TO THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, 1993-2001

Year	Re-elected Deputies	Non-re-elected Deputies	Deputies who stood for re-election
1993	71 (80.1%)	17 (19.9%)	88 out of 120
1997	72 (85.7%)	12 (14.3%)	84 out of 120
2001	74 (80.4%)	18 (19.1%)	92 out of 120
Total	217 (82.2%)	47 (17.8%)	264 out of 360

Source: Calculations by the authors with data from www.congreso.cl

Actually, one possible reason why the number of strong pair in the Concertación has fallen may have to do with the high re-election rate in the House. Table No. 6 shows re-election rates for the three legislative elections where deputies stood for re-election. Although the number of deputies that have stood for and achieved re-election has remained stable, the fact that over 80% of deputies seeking re-election are successful may well represent a sufficiently strong obstacle to deter potential candidates from competing, regardless of any “insurances” the Concertación might offer.

3.2. ‘Insurance for runners-up’ in the Alianza

Another way of looking at Carey and Siavelis’s argument is to study what happens with the Alianza’s electoral lists. If true, the explanation based on ‘insurances for runners-up’ should also be consistent with the presence of strong pairs of candidates in the right-wing coalition. To determine whether or not this is true, we use the same method applied to the Concertación, reversing the hypothesis. If the Concertación presents more pairs of strong candidates when it has more chances of guaranteeing an “insurance for runners-up”, then the Alianza should present more pairs of strong candidates when the Concertación has less chance of remaining in power.

Table No. 7 contains t-tests for a sample of the results obtained by the Alianza in the 4 parliamentary elections of the period. Again, given the high variance between districts where two strong candidates were presented and districts where only one of the candidates was strong, confidence intervals (95%) are quite high. Therefore, in 1989, with a 95% confidence interval we may say that the true Alianza Ratio stood between a minimum of 2.44 and a maximum of 4.91. As can be expected, confidence intervals for the 4 elections overlap in the same ways as observed in the Concertación, i.e. we cannot conclude with statistical certainty that the variance observed in the average reflects substantive differences in the districts where the Alianza presented

two candidates. Although, in fact, if we compare the values in TABLE N° 7 (results obtained by strong Alianza pairings) with those in TABLE N° 5 (strong pairings in the Concertación), the values also overlap within the 95% confidence interval, with the exception of 1997. We may say with statistical confidence that in 1997 the number of strong pairings in the Concertación was higher than in the Alianza, i.e the year in which the Concertación had less time to provide insurance to its runners-up was the time when the greatest difference was recorded between the number of strong pairings in the Concertación and in the Alianza for elections to the Chamber of Deputies.

The uncertainty about the prospect of receiving insurance for runners-up does not seem to influence the likelihood of the Concertación presenting a higher number of strong pairings in the period. Similarly, the “uncertainty” variable about the election results does not seem to influence the presence of strong pairings in the Alianza. In 1989, the Alianza presented more pairs of strong candidates than in any other year. Conversely, in 1997 the number of strong pairings was the lowest in the 4 elections.

Although these differences are not statistically significant, they seem to reflect the Right’s low expectations about winning the presidential election. In addition, this figure may also reflect the lower number of parties in the Alianza. In 1989, this coalition was formed by two main parties and several smaller parties, apart from a considerable number of independents (which we have grouped together as a single party). As the RN and the UDI began to establish themselves as the two strong parties in the Alianza, and most candidates started coming from those two parties, the number of strong pairings began to fall because both parties were able to negotiate candidate omissions in favour of privileged candidates. Similarly, the presence of deputies who stood for re-election may have contributed to reduce the number of strong challengers in the Alianza, thereby reducing intra-coalitional competition.

TABLE NO. 7 T-TESTS FOR A SAMPLE OF ALIANZA RATIO, 1989-2001

	T-value	Degrees of freedom	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference intervals	Average95% confidence	
					Low	High
Alianza 89	5.965	58	0.000	3.676	2.4426	4.9098
Alianza 93	8.489	59	0.000	4.291	3.2798	5.3028
Alianza 97	6.821	58	0.000	5.247	3.7072	6.7868
Alianza 01	7.350	58	0.000	4.753	3.4587	6.0478

Source: Calculations by the authors with data from www.elecciones.gov.cl

All the same, unless the Alianza and the Concertación took for granted that the Concertación would always remain in power, the expectations about the electoral results and the Government's remaining time in power do not seem to have had any effect on the RN's and UDI's considerations. We believe that this evidence challenges Carey and Siavelis's argument. If the parties in the Concertación acted rationally, offering their candidates "insurances" to persuade them to run for election as part of strong pairings, the certainty about who would rule the country in the years following the election must have had an effect on the number of strong pairing presented. Similarly, the possibility of rising to power in the next election should have had an influence on the number of strong pairings presented by the Alianza, but in practice it did not.

3.3. Strong parties and strong pairs of candidates: the Concertación

Now then, not all parties have the same electoral weight or importance. For this reason, we are repeating the whole analysis including only candidates from "strong parties" in order to determine whether the presence of a greater number of strong parties in each coalition has an effect on the number of strong pairs standing for election. We have polished our initial hypothesis for this analysis. The new hypothesis is that, the greater the number of strong parties in the coalition, the higher the number of strong pairings the coalition will present for election to Congress. We define strong parties as those parties with most votes and a leading presence at national level in each coalition. Therefore, in the Concertación there are three strong parties: PDC, PPD and PS. In the Alianza por Chile there are 2 strong parties: RN and UDI. Apart from being the five parties that collected most votes at national level, they are the parties with the largest presence in the 60 districts. We believe that perhaps the higher number of strong parties in the Concertación may account for the greater presence of strong pairings in this coalition.

An alternative way of addressing this issue would be through the analysis of subparts inside the Concertación instead of analyzing the stronger parties. Traditionally, one of the subparts in the Concertación has been the occasional alliance between the PDC and other independent parties and candidates, while the other subpart has been the occasional partnership between the PS-PPD and other independent parties and candidates. However, if we consider the subparts as units of analysis, we will simply confirm, through the initial hypothesis (that the Concertación subparts repeat the partnership between the Centre and the Left), the point that we wish to

consider: whether the Concertación is in fact made up by the 33% represented by the Centre and the 33% represented by the Left. This is why we have chosen to study parties rather than subparts³. It is worth mentioning that, on the right, each party is actually a subpart, which is why the analysis of subparts will only be relevant in the Concertación.

Table N° 8 shows the average Concertación Ratio for each election to the Chamber of Deputies held since 1989. We are only considering districts where both candidates in all pairings were members of the PDC, PPD or PS. In 1989, the Concertación recorded an average ratio of 1.427, bearing in mind that it only presented lists with strong pairs of candidates in 18 districts. In 1993, the Concertación presented strong pairs in 41 districts, with an average ratio of 2.074. In 1997, the Concertación presented strong pairs in 50 districts, with 2.345 as its average ratio. Finally, in 2001, the average ratio of strong pairs was 2.523, in 40 districts.

Although, in 1989, candidates from the PPD and the PDC competed only in 18 districts (the PS was not officially registered on that occasion), the Concertación Ratio was the lowest for the four elections. When the PS joined the competition in 1993 as an official party within the Concertación, the Concertación ratio rose slightly (although we should remember that the PS and PPD have never faced each other in the same district in parliamentary elections).

TABLE NO. 8 CONCERTACIÓN RATIO AND STRONG PARTIES IN THE CONCERTACIÓN 1989-2001

	Conc. Ratio 1989	Conc. Ratio 1993	Conc. Ratio 1997	Conc. Ratio 2001
Average	1.427	2.074	2.345	2.523
No. of strong parties	2	3	3	3
No. of districts	18	41	50	50

Source: Calculations by the authors with data from www.elecciones.gov.cl

Table N° 9 shows T-tests for a sample for the 4 parliamentary elections of the period. The only election where results are statistically different is the 1989 election, which showed substantially higher intra-list competition in the

³ The adoption in 1989 of an electoral reform which enabled the formation of coalitions, and a subsequent reform in 1991 which enabled subparts for the local elections may also be interpreted as evidence of the persistence of distinguishable parties inside each coalition, as well as the survival of the three major groups (Right, Centre and Left) which became stronger during the 60's.

Concertación. This is probably due to the absence of deputies seeking re-election, which made intra-list competition in the coalition fiercer in many more districts. However, for the rest of the elections, the values are not statistically different one from the other.

A comparison with the values in TABLE N° 5 shows that when we do not consider smaller party candidates in the Concertación, the values for the Concertación Ratio fall substantially in all the elections. This means that, when candidates from the PS-PPD sub-pact face PDC candidates there is more competition than when one of the Concertación candidates is a member of another party (PRSD or independent). This supports the hypothesis that the Concertación has a greater number of strong pairs of candidates because it is made up by two of the traditional three thirds into which the Chilean political system used to be divided.

TABLE NO. 9 T-TESTS FOR A SAMPLE OF CONCERTACIÓN RATIO, 1989-2001 (STRONG PARTIES)

	T-test	Degrees of freedom	Sig. (2-tailed)	difference intervals	Average 95% Confidence	
					Low	High
Concertación 89	11.485	17	0.000	1.425	1.163	1.687
Concertación 93	9.056	40	0.000	2.09€1	1.624	2.557
Concertación 97	9.362	49	0.000	2.345	1.842	2.849
Concertación 01	5.527	39	0.000	2.523	1.872	3.173

Source: Calculations by the authors with data from www.elecciones.gov.cl

As we did before, we may apply to these data the same criterion of “certainty about remaining in power” to analyze the presence of strong parties in pairings. In 1989 and 1993 the Concertación’s victory in the presidential election had been widely predicted even before the establishment of lists for the parliamentary elections. In 1989 there were high chances -though not absolute certainty- that the Concertación would remain in power for another 4-year term and, in 1993, for another 6-year term. 1997 was the year when the Concertación had the least certainty about remaining in power because there were only two years to the election. As in 2001 there were still four years to the presidential election, the Concertación should have had a larger number of strong pairings, since that was the year when it was best placed to guarantee ‘insurances’ to potential runners-up. However, in 2001, the highest Concertación Ratio was recorded, contrary to all expectations.

Even though there is no meaningful statistical difference between the average ratios per year, there seems to be a rising tendency in the number of strong pairings in the Concertación's list when we exclude smaller party candidates and consider only the PDC and PS-PPD candidates. These data show how the presence of stronger party candidates in parliamentary pairings enables the coalition to field stronger electoral lists.

3.4. Strong parties and strong pairings in the Alianza por Chile

We have also analyzed the presence of candidate pairings from strong parties (RN and UDI) in the Alianza por Chile. TABLE No. 10 shows the average Alianza Ratio for each election to the Chamber of Deputies held since 1989, considering only the districts where pairs formed by candidates from RN and UDI were presented. In 1989, the right-wing coalition presented strong pairings in 37 districts and obtained an average ratio of 3.492. In 1993, it fielded strong pairings in 17 districts and achieved an average ratio of 4.448. In 1997, in 40 districts, the average ratio of strong candidate pairings was 6.126. Finally, in the 2001 elections, it presented strong candidate pairings in 39 districts and the average ratio was 5.285. The Alianza's average ratios with candidates from strong parties increase in comparison with the results in TABLE No.7, when all districts in the country are taken into account. This shows that, contrary to what happens with the Concertación, it is the independents and representatives of smaller right-wing parties who help the Alianza to form a larger number of strong pairings. This may well be due to the fact that, despite the apparent differences and disputes existing between the RN and the UDI, both parties tend to reach agreement on privileged candidates and candidate omissions in districts where deputies stand for re-election, so that there is less of a real competition between candidates from both parties than might be perceived. In fact, if there is more competition when smaller party or independent candidates face RN and UDI candidates, then we may conclude that actual confrontations between candidates from both parties are less frequent than confrontations between right-wing independents and RN or UDI members, or even that competition between candidates from the RN and UDI is not as fierce as it is between candidates from the PDC and the PS/PPD partnership in the Concertación.

TABLE NO. 10 RATIO-ALIANZA AND NUMBER OF STRONG PARTIES IN THE ALIANZA 1989-2001

	Conc. Ratio 1989	Conc. Ratio 1993	Conc. Ratio 1997	Conc. Ratio 2001
Average	3.492	4.448	6.126	5.285
No. of strong parties	2	2	2	2
No. of districts	37	17	40	39

Source: Calculations by the authors with data from www.elecciones.gov.cl

As with the Concertación, we used a statistical test to confirm whether there is a significant relationship between election years and the new ratios. Unlike the case of the Concertación, none of the values is statistically distinguishable. However, similar to what happens with the Concertación, there is more competition in 1989, possibly as a result of the absence of deputies seeking re-election. The 95% confidence intervals are extremely wide, reflecting the high variance from one district to another. While in some districts there was fierce competition between the RN and UDI candidates, in others there was very little. Unlike the Concertación, where there is more competition between DC candidates and PS-PPD candidates than when there are smaller party candidates, in the Alianza the competition between RN and UDI candidates does not lead to a reduced Alianza Ratio, i.e. it does not contribute to make intra-list competition fiercer in the Alianza.

TABLE NO. 11 T-TESTS FOR A SAMPLE OF ALIANZA RATIO, 1989-2001 (STRONG PARTIES)

	T-value	Degrees of freedom	Sig. (2-tailed)	difference intervals	Average 95% Confidence	
					Low	High
Alianza 89	4.446	36	0.000	3.491	1.898	5.084
Alianza 93	3.566	16	0.003	4.448	1.804	7.092
Alianza 97	5.832	39	0.000	6.122	3.999	8.245
Alianza 01	5.948	38	0.000	5.285	3.486	7.085

Source: Calculations by the authors with data from www.elecciones.gov.cl

The evidence seems to be conclusive. While the presence of strong party candidate pairings (DC vs. PS-PPD) tends to increase intra-list competition in the Concertación, the presence of strong party candidate pairings in the Alianza tends to reduce competition in this coalition. This

could well show that, despite their fights and disputes, the two leading parties in the Alianza do not really in confrontation and instead tend to reach agreement on displaced and privileged candidates which results in a lower level of intra-list competition in the Alianza than in the Concertación.

Again, the ghost of “the three thirds” seems to reemerge here to account for the fiercer competition within the Concertación. Rather than the possibility of offering ‘insurance to runners-up’ —whose variance does not seem to affect the number of strong candidates who are brave enough to stand for election representing the Concertación’s list— it seems that the existing competition between the PDC and the Left (PS-PPD) is what actually accounts for fiercer intra-list competition between Concertación candidates. As for the Alianza, although it is composed of two different parties, this coalition represents a single political sector, formed by two parties which, despite their differences, avoid open confrontation. The number of parties seems to have some relevance, but the presence of candidates from strong parties would seem to be the reason why there is more intra-coalitional competition (lower Concertación Ratio) in the government coalition than in the Alianza. This again reinforces the argument that the Concertación has a higher level of intra-coalitional competition because it is formed by two of the three thirds rather than because it has the ability to offer ‘insurance’ to its defeated candidates.

4. Conclusion

In this essay, we have suggested two alternative explanations to those provided by Carey and Siavelis to account for the presence of a larger number of strong candidates in the Concertación than on the right for the parliamentary elections held in Chile since 1989. Siavelis and Carey suggest that the Concertación presents lists with two strong candidates because they are able to offer “insurances” —in the form of presidential appointments— to those candidates who, accepting a personal risk for the sake of the Centre-Left coalition, fail to win a seat. Because, at the time when they wrote their article, a great level of uncertainty was expected about the outcome of the presidential election of 2005, Carey and Siavelis argued that the Concertación would find it more difficult to present strong pairs of candidates. Regardless of the existing level of uncertainty about the 2005 presidential election, we have suggested two alternative explanations of why the Concertación presents lists with a larger number of strong candidates than the Alianza. The first one is that the Concertación is formed by parties representing two of the historical “three thirds” in Chilean politics. The second claims that the Concertación is

simply composed of more parties than the Alianza. In fact, we suggest that the Concertación presents strong candidates regardless of the expected level of uncertainty in each presidential election.

Although we have found sufficient evidence to support our two alternative explanations, we do not have enough statistical or methodological confidence to suggest that our explanations are better than those provided by Carey and Siavelis. But we have also argued that the explanation they provide is not statistically or methodologically more plausible than ours. We have gone further and suggested that, if the Concertación presents strong pairs of candidates in the forthcoming elections of December 2005, our alternative explanations will be more valid than those provided by Carey and Siavelis. It does not seem to us that the uncertainty about the outcome of the election (or the ability to make credible promises about possible insurances to losing candidates) can explain the presence of strong candidates in the Concertación. Rather, it would seem that the nature of the Concertación, formed by parties representing two of the traditional three thirds in Chilean politics, is what actually accounts for the larger number of strong pairings in the Centre-Left coalition's lists of candidates.

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