
STUDY

**BRIDESMAID INSURANCE AND THE SURVIVAL
OF CHILE'S CONCERTACIÓN**

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In order to secure legislative majorities under Chile's unique, two-member district electoral system, coalitions have to put their strongest candidates in the most precarious electoral list positions. This generates a divergence of interests between coalitions and politicians. Chile's largest coalition since 1990, the Concertación, has resolved the dilemma by providing appointed posts to candidates who accept personal risk on the coalition's behalf and run good—but just-not-good-enough—campaigns for Congress. We argue that this insurance system has provided glue critical to holding the coalition together since Chile's transition to democracy in 1990, and we illustrate the point with data on electoral performance and the distribution of post-electoral appointments among losing congressional candidates. We then show that recent changes in the electoral environment threaten the Concertación's control over the pool of appointed posts used to insure such candidates against losses undertaken on behalf of the coalition. This, in turn, undermines the Concertación's prospects to hold together throughout the contentious process of negotiating coalition candidate lists for the next legislative elections, in 2005.

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Introduction

The demise of Chile's Concertación coalition has been predicted often over the past dozen years during which it has governed. Even the coalition's leaders have issued premature announcements of its death (*Latin America Adviser* 2002; *El Mercurio* 2003a). Some observers of Chilean politics, therefore, might regard the dissolution of the Concertación as both a foregone conclusion and an overdetermined event—that is, as the product of so many factors, all working toward the same end, that it is impossible to assign responsibility among them. We share the opinion that the Concertación may well dissolve before Chile's next election, but not for the reasons commonly cited. Our argument is based, instead, on the structure of Chilean political careers, which in turn is connected inextricably with Chile's unusual electoral rules.

Harbingers of the Concertación's demise point out that the Chilean economy has slowed somewhat since the coalition's early years in government during the 1990s. Moreover, the coalition itself was initially galvanized around opposition to the Pinochet regime of the 1970s and 1980s, so as time passes, the compelling force of that initial motivation might naturally weaken. In addition, the Concertación, and even its component parties—most notably the Christian Democrats—are internally divided over social issues, such as the legal status of divorce and access to birth control. Finally, by the 2005 elections, the Concertación will have held the presidency and a majority in the Chamber of Deputies (the legislative house elected by popular vote) for 16 years. By the standards of multiparty coalitions anywhere, much less among Latin America's presidential systems, the Concertación is geriatric, bearing the scars of miscellaneous corruption charges against members, including the stripping of parliamentary rights from five of the coalition's deputies in 2002, and the general disillusionment that goes with holding the reins of power for so long. One might conclude, then, that the coalition is simply ready to expire.

Any of these forces, or some combination of them, could indeed undermine the Concertación, but we do not regard these factors as necessarily devastating to the coalition's survival for a number of reasons. In the first place, the Chilean economy has come through the last five years in far better shape than that of any of its Southern Cone neighbors, and employment and growth figures rebounded in first months of 2003. The Concertación may well be in a position in 2005 to claim credit for good economic stewardship. Next, many of the issues surrounding the non-democratic legacy of the Pinochet era—including the renowned

authoritarian enclaves in the constitution, and the privileged legal and budgetary position of the military— remain, and remain targets of reform for Pinochet opponents. While internal differences on social issues plague the coalition, this has been the case since it began to govern, and similar divisions bedevil its main opponents on the right. Finally, who is to say how old is too old for a coalition? Based on Chile's historical experience, the Concertación had already far exceeded the life expectancy of any multiparty coalition as early as the 1997 legislative elections, yet it prevailed in that instance, and in the 1999-2000 presidential election, and yet again in the 2001 legislative elections (Carey 2002, pp. 222-253).

To sum up, many of the conditions widely regarded as threatening to the Concertación's survival are not new. They have been present during much of its life lifetime, and so represent constants in the electoral environment. Moreover, as many observers have noted, Chile's electoral system presents substantial risk for parties that abandon coalitions and run on their own (Rabkin 1992, Siavelis 2002). Indeed, the explanation we advance here regarding the Concertación's potential demise rests on the unique nature of Chile's electoral law, and how this interacts with recent changes in the electoral environment. We address these issues in turn.

M=2 elections and coalition strategies

The most noteworthy characteristic of Chile's legislative election system is that all districts elect two representatives to Congress.¹ Each list on the ballot, therefore, can include up to two candidates. The lists are "open," in that voters indicate a preference for one candidate or the other within their preferred list. Despite the candidate-centered nature of the preference vote, the total votes for both candidates on any list are first pooled together for the purposes of distributing seats to lists, then seats are awarded to individual candidates in the order of their rank within their list. Seats are allocated by the D'hondt method, such that the first-place list in a district can only win both seats if it more than doubles the vote total of the second-place list; otherwise, each of the top two lists wins one seat.²

¹ This is true for the Chamber of Deputies, whose 120 members are elected from 60, 2-member districts, and for the *elected* members of the Senate, who are elected, two each, from 19 districts.

² This yields the frequent result, noted in many accounts of post-transition elections, that the second-place candidate in a district in terms of preference votes is not elected to Congress. This happens when the first- and second-place candidates are on the same list, but that list's total does not double the total of the second-place list.

Though the electoral rule is procedurally straightforward, its combination with the contemporary party system generates substantial strategic complexity for candidates, parties, and coalition leaders. Electoral politics in post-authoritarian Chile has been dominated by two major coalitions—the Concertación on the left and the Alianza por Chile on the right—each of which in turn is composed of two subpacts. For most of this period, the Concertación has been composed of four significant parties (PDC, PRSD, PPD, PS) and the Alianza por Chile has been made up of three (RN, UDI, UCC).³ Independents associated with particular ideological sectors play an important role and have also had to negotiate themselves into major lists.

The constituent parties of each coalition must negotiate sixty, two-seat electoral slates for the Chamber, and either nine or ten two-seat slates for the Senate depending on the cycle of turnover in the upper house. The pattern in past elections has been for each of the coalitions to allocate one seat to each of its two subpacts in each district, and then to tinker with list formation around the edges to attract small parties that can lend a helping hand bolstering national coalition vote totals for presidential elections.

Two stark realities shape negotiations. First, most lists can expect one defeat in each district because the threshold for two seat victories is so high. Table 1 summarizes the number of two-seat victories in recent elections for each major coalition. Second, and more important for our purposes, the pairing of candidates is crucial. The key to victory is for subpacts and parties to place their candidates on the same list either with an extremely strong candidate, who will help them more than double the vote total of the second-place list, or a relatively weak candidate, who will not outpoll their own candidate while the list pulls enough votes to win one seat. This delicate balance creates a tension between the preference of candidates and coalitions. Coalitions would like 60 pairings that maximize votes, whereas candidates may often prefer a weak list partner.⁴ Those who are outpolled by their list partner in these two-seat pairings we refer to as “bridesmaids.” We explore their fate below.

³ The Alianza por Chile has also been known as Democracia y Progreso and Unión por el Progreso. The UCC aligned formally with the right for the 1993 election. Party key: PDC-Christian Democratic Party (Partido Demócrata Cristiano), PRSD-Radical Social Democratic Party (Partido Radical Social Demócrata), PPD-Party for Democracy (Partido Por La Democracia), PS-Socialist Party (Partido Socialista), RN-National Renewal (Renovación Nacional), UDI-Independent Democratic Union (Unión Demócrata Independiente).

⁴ For a more comprehensive discussion of the intricacies of the Chilean party system and the empirical conditions that bear on coalition formation, see Siavelis 2002.

Figure 1: The number of districts won by the Concertación and the right in the Chilean Congress, 1989-1997.

		Right doubles	Concertación			Concertación bridesmaids
			Doubles	Wins neither seat	Wins one seat (non-right candidate wins the other seat)	
Chamber	1989	0	11	2	1	46
	1993	1	11	1	0	48
	1997	0	9	0	4	47
Senate	1989*	0	3	0	0	16
	1993	0	0	0	0	9
	1997	0	1	0	0	9

* In 1989, all 38 elected Senate seats (19 districts) were up for grabs. In subsequent elections alternately 9 or 10 districts are contested every four years.

Coalitions, majorities, and the risk of doubling

Chile's M=2 system presents a complex problem of distributing risk in situations where the collective goals of an electoral coalition conflict with the career goals of individual candidates. Consider the following: Coalitions want to maximize the number of seats they control in Congress—and in particular, they prefer to control the legislative majority. A coalition cannot win a majority without doubling the vote total of the second-place list in at least one district. Given the uncertainties associated with electoral politics, and the desire to capture the most seats possible, of course, an ambitious coalition ought to seek to “double” as often as its electoral strength will allow. Thus, coalitions that aspire to majority status face the challenge of identifying districts where doubling is possible, and targeting sufficient resources at such districts to cross the critical threshold.

One of the most important resources coalitions can allocate among districts is candidates. During the first decade after the democratic transition, a Concertación list that turned in a particularly strong performance could reasonably expect to double the list of the right, whereas the right faced prospects of doubling only under extremely propitious circumstances.⁵ Doubling, then, has been a strategic issue primarily for the

⁵ The mean shares of the two-coalition vote were, respectively 59% and 41%, with a standard deviation of 9%. Thus, the Concertación could double with performance one standard deviation above the mean, whereas the right had to perform three standard deviations above the mean.

Concertación and its prospects for doing so depend on putting up candidates who can turn in outstanding performances on behalf of the list, providing the necessary boost to cross the magic threshold. The problem is that the coalition's collective goal under such circumstances runs directly counter to the most immediate political goal of most candidates for elective office —political survival.

Candidates want to win elections, whether they are motivated only by base ambition, or by the loftier desire to make good public policy, or by some combination of these. If they lose, their ability to realize either type of goal suffers. Moreover, it is precisely the strongest candidates —the ones whose personal qualities and popularity among voters make them best able to win elections— that coalitions need to put in the riskiest positions in order to pursue the collective goal of doubling, and to win legislative majorities.

A strong candidate has every reason to prefer to be paired on a list with a relatively weak partner, in a district where her coalition is willing to settle for the one-one split between first- and second-place lists most common in Chilean elections. To be the strong candidate on such a list is, effectively, a guarantee of personal victory. To be nominated in a district where one's coalition aspires to double, on the other hand, means facing not only competition from other lists, but also competition from one's list partner. The very imperative that leads coalitions to run strong pairs of candidates in districts where they seek to double threatens the electoral security of their best politicians.

Appointed posts as insurance against the risk of coalition

How has the Concertación resolved this conundrum? We suggest that, in order to induce strong candidates to embrace the risk inherent in a doubling campaign, the coalition has offered insurance. In the language of political economy, for over a decade the Concertación has reaped substantial profits from its ability to act collectively, and the currency of those profits is control of the government —both of the leadership positions in Congress, due to the Concertación's success in doubling its opponents in key districts, and of the executive, due to the Concertación's ability to nominate presidential candidates and support them in a unified manner. For strong legislative candidates who take risks on the coalition's behalf by attempting to double, insurance takes the form of a promise of attractive appointed positions in the government if one should fall short in the electoral competition. In the most basic terms, the deal is: "You put

yourself at risk in this election for the good of the coalition. If we win both seats, terrific. If we fail to double and you lose out, you will be compensated with a ministry or some other attractive executive appointment.”

Model

We provide here a model of the conditions under which the second-place candidates on Concertación lists that failed to double —the so-called bridesmaids— receive desirable positions appointed by the executive following their electoral defeat. The model is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Pr (Appointment)} &= a \text{ (Constant)} \\ &+ b1 \text{ (Chamber)} \\ &+ b2 \text{ (Coalition Ratio)} \\ &+ b3 \text{ (Concertación Ratio)} \end{aligned}$$

where:

- *Appointment* takes a value of 1 if the bridesmaid received an appointment as a minister, vice-minister, or ambassador during the legislative period following their unsuccessful candidacy for Congress.
- *Chamber* takes a value of 1 for candidates to the Chamber of Deputies and 2 for Senate candidates.
- *Coalition Ratio* is the total votes for the Concertación list divided by the total votes for the Right’s list.
- *Concertación Ratio* is the votes for the first-place candidate within the Concertación list divided by the votes for the second-place candidate on the list.

Senate races are more important than Chamber races because the chambers have analogous powers, but there are fewer seats in the upper chamber, rendering each more precious. The Senate is also perceived as the launching pad for presidential candidacies. Because the stakes are higher, electoral competition for the Senate is fiercer, so strong performance is more impressive. Also, the candidates recruited for Senate races are more prominent. This has two implications. First, their experience and qualifications mean they are often “ministerial caliber.” Second, high-credential Senate candidates have attractive outside options, and in order to induce such individuals to undertake a risky campaign, the insurance for bridesmaids must be more generous than that for Chamber candidates. For all these reasons, we expect the coefficient on Chamber to be positive.

Coalition Ratio is higher the closer the Concertación came to doubling the Right,⁶ so the higher is the Coalition Ratio, the more impressive is the collective performance of the list in its attempt to double. Our expectation is that bridesmaids from such lists should be rewarded for their contribution to the collective effort, so the coefficient on Coalition Ratio should be positive.

Concertación Ratio is lower the more evenly matched are the two candidates on the Concertación list. If a strong list performance is largely the product of the vote-attracting capacity of one candidate, then the bridesmaid may not be regarded as instrumental to the list's overall performance, and therefore not as deserving of post-election reward as where the list's two candidates ran neck and neck. By this logic, the coefficient on Concertación Ratio should be negative. We are less confident about this hypothesis, however, than for the Chamber and Coalition Ratio variables because it is not necessarily in the coalition's collective interest to foster intra-list competition. That is, a coalition benefits from having strong candidates who attract votes, in a generic sense, to the list, but it does not profit from competition by which list-mates seek to take votes from each other. Indeed, too much internecine competition could prove damaging to a list's overall status and depress its overall votes, much as parties in the United States worry about the effects of a tough primary campaign on the party's eventual candidate. In order to mitigate incentives for "cannibalistic" intra-list competition, then, the coalition may want to emphasize collective list performance in providing insurance to bridesmaids.

In short, we expect a higher probability of the Concertación "bridesmaid" getting an appointment:

- in Senate, rather than Chamber, races;
- when the Concertación list beats the Right more severely (approaching a "double"); and
- (with less confidence here) when the two Concertación candidates contributed more equally to the list's overall vote total.

We would interpret such results as evidence that the "insurance policy" of appointments by the executive was wielded systematically as a way of attracting strong candidates to fight tough races, and rewarding those that did so valiantly in a losing cause.

At this point, it is worthwhile to emphasize what we regard as the relevance, and the limitations, of our statistical analysis. Our model

⁶ Concertación lists that successfully double, of course, produce no bridesmaids, because both their candidates are elected, so these lists are not included in the analysis.

measures whether, among bridesmaids, stronger candidates are more likely than weaker candidates to receive appointments. Our measure of candidate strength is based entirely on electoral outcomes, which reflect combinations of two types of characteristics:

1. inherent quality (charisma, qualifications, personal prominence), and
2. effort on behalf of the campaign.

The logic by which these two types of qualities contribute to the probability of appointment differs. We expect that a potential candidate's inherent strength raises the opportunity costs of accepting a risky electoral list position, because the same qualities that make candidates inherently strong also increase the odds that they have career options more attractive than placing themselves at electoral risk. For these types of candidates, a promise of insurance is critical to entice them to accept a spot on a high-risk (attempting-to-double) list. With respect to a candidate's effort, the logic is more straightforward. Everything else equal, the president should be more inclined to reward those who worked hard on behalf of the coalition, and thus fell just short of doubling, than those who campaigned less effectively, and so fell further short of the mark. Although there are two distinct logics at work here, both generate the same expectations with respect to the parameter estimates in our model.

Ideally, we would be able to measure inherent candidate quality separately from candidate effort, and thus to estimate the independent effects of each characteristic. If we could do this, then a relevant comparison would be between Concertación winners from lists that elect only one candidate (i.e. those that do not double) and Concertación bridesmaids in districts that the coalition targeted to attempt to double. If we are correct, then bridesmaids from attempting-to-double districts should be of even higher inherent quality than should winners from the full set of districts in which only one candidate from the Concertación was elected. Unfortunately, we do not have a way of measuring inherent candidate quality distinct from electoral outcomes. In the end, then, we acknowledge that our model does not allow us to disentangle the "inherent quality/opportunity costs" story about insurance from the "reward for effort" story. In fact, of course, these two stories are mutually consistent, and we think there is truth to both of them.

Data

The data on which the independent variables are based are publicly available and reasonably easy to collect. Electoral results from every

Chamber and Senate district for every election since 1989 are available—with returns broken down by candidate, party, and coalition list—at the Chilean Ministry of Interior website.⁷

Data on appointments, on the other hand, are more labor intensive to collect and more difficult to measure comprehensively. We pursued two strategies in collecting data on appointments. First, we created a variable, Appointment, following three steps:

1. We identified the Concertación bridesmaids, who are the coalition's losing candidates in districts *except* where the following conditions apply:

- the Concertación doubled the Right, thus electing both candidates on its list to Congress (i.e. no losers);
- the Concertación list included only one candidate, who won a seat;
- the Concertación won neither seat, thus suffering electoral humiliation in the district; or
- the Concertación won the first seat, but the second was won by a candidate from a list other than the Right, such that the Concertación failed to double even against a divided opposition—the conditions that ought to be most propitious for doubling. (Table 1, above, shows the frequency of each of these scenarios, as well as the remaining number of races from each election— races that produced bridesmaids, and so comprise our data set.)

2. We collected the names of those appointed to a set of political posts during the period 1990-2001—the legislative periods following the three elections we analyze.

3. We matched the names of our bridesmaids with those of the appointees we identified, and assigned the Appointment variable a score of 1 if the bridesmaid received a plum appointment during the legislative period following her/his electoral defeat, 0 otherwise.

Table 2 categorizes the positions for which we searched in constructing the Appointment variable, and our sources. The Chilean president has wide powers of appointment, naming approximately 3,500 government officials (*El Mercurio* 2003b). We, however, focus only on high-profile posts. Lower level positions are less attractive to ambitious politicians, and are less likely to be used as rewards. We certainly do not include all important appointments. There are other posts with which presidents might reasonably reward politicians who served valiantly in their

⁷ <http://www.elecciones.gov.cl/full/indexf.htm>

Figure 2: Number of appointments to various positions by president, 1990-2001.

Position	Number of available posts	Sources of Data
Minister	21	Keesings
Vice Minister	30	Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia, División Coordinación Interministerial
Ambassador	82 ^a	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

^a This is the number of positions to which presidents appointed ambassadors from 1990-2001, according to data provided by the Ministry of Foreign Relations.

coalition's electoral battles for which we were unable to obtain systematic data (e.g. boards of state-run corporations, regional governorships). Beyond these, there are still other positions (e.g. judicial appointments, party offices, future nominations to congressional or municipal council slates of candidates) that are not direct presidential appointments, but over which presidents could exercise considerable influence on behalf of their allies. In short, the Appointment variable almost certainly includes some Type II error, but not Type I error. That is, we almost certainly miss identifying some bridesmaids who received appointments from the executive, or at the behest of the executive, but we are certain that all those we identify as having received appointments are correctly classified.

Our second strategy for collecting data on appointments complements the first by minimizing Type II error (failing to detect appointments that *were* made) through intensive efforts to map bridesmaids' career trajectories following their electoral losses. Because we could not conduct such exhaustive efforts for all candidates in the study, we limited this strategy to those Concertación bridesmaids who were *most* and *least* likely candidates for appointment, according to our hypotheses. We identified "most likelies" as those bridesmaids on lists in which the Concertación:Right vote ratio was greater than 1.8—that is, the list won >90% of the necessary share of the vote to be able to "double" the right, falling just short. There were 20 such bridesmaids: 14 candidates from the Chamber of Deputies and 6 from the Senate. We identified "least likelies" as bridesmaids on lists that received *fewer* votes than the coalition of the right (Concertación:Right ratio between 0.5 and 1.0). This yielded 19 Chamber bridesmaids and only one from the Senate. So as not to exclude the Senate

among least likelies, we added the next four least successful Concertación Senate bridesmaids (with ratios up to 1.13).⁸

For our set of “most and least likelies,” we supplemented the data included in the Appointment variable with standard internet searches, “manual” searches of Chilean government, party, newspaper, and NGO websites and archives, and email correspondence with Chilean academics and government officials inquiring about the post-electoral careers of specific bridesmaids. This approach yielded information on some executive-level appointments to positions for which we do not have comprehensive data (i.e. those missing from the Appointments variable), as well as on some appointments to other posts, but for which presidential support may have been instrumental.⁹

Results

As a first cut at the question of whether Concertación bridesmaids who performed well on behalf of the coalition were systematically rewarded with appointments, consider the results of the exhaustive search approach for appointments to “most and least likelies,” which are summarized in Table 3. We identify desirable post-bridesmaid appointments for 70% of our “most likelies,” but for only 25% of our “least likelies.” These include presidential appointments during the immediate post-bridesmaid period for three of our six “most likely” Senate bridesmaids, plus prominent public posts not directly appointed by the president for two others, and nomination to a (successful) senatorial bid for the sixth. Thus, all six most likely Senate bridesmaids prospered. Among the five least likely Senate bridesmaids, we identified a presidential appointment during the subsequent period for one, during the second subsequent period for

⁸ Including these Senate bridesmaids should bias against supporting our model, as we are beefing up the “least likelies” category with Senate candidates, who are more likely than Chamber candidates to secure appointments.

⁹ “Most” and “least” likelies were subject to an exhaustive search, beginning with our appointment database, followed by an extensive search of the entire “Government of Chile” website (including current and past legislators). We followed up with combined searches of first-name, last-name, and political party, then first and last names, and then simply last names, using the Google search engine (widely acknowledged as the most complete and accurate). We examined every hit and followed up to ensure that we had identified the correct person, paired with the correct post-election position. One could contend that probable higher visibility of “most likelies” makes them more likely to be found, skewing results in favor of our hypothesis. To the extent this was the case, however, our search efforts were asymmetrical, with greater effort devoted to the “least likelies,” for whom post-electoral career information was generally more sparse. In the end, we are confident that the information we collected accurately reflects the post-electoral fates of both groups.

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Post-Bridesmaidenhood Appointment	Most Likelies	Least Likelies
Presidential appointment during period after bridesmaid loss	<i>Jara Wolff</i> <i>Lagos Escobar</i> <i>Rebolledo González</i> Saavedra Cortés Aylwin Oyarzún Pérez Lobos Molina Valdivieso	<i>Estévez Valencia</i> Auth Stewart
Presidential appointment during period subsequent to that after bridesmaid loss	Yunge Bustamante Santelices Altamirano	<i>Correa Díaz</i>
Nomination for election to Congress next period	<i>Zaldívar Larraín</i>	Girardi Lavín Romero Fuentes
Political post not appointed by president	<i>Sule Candia^a</i> <i>Navarrete Betanzo^b</i> Arenas Escudero ^c Dintrans Schafer ^d	Torres Gutiérrez ^e
Unknown	Gajardo Chacón Morales Abarzúa Del Valle De La Cruz Sepúlveda Gutiérrez Vargas Vega Leblanc Valenzuela	<i>Vodanovic Schnake</i> <i>Sáenz Rojas</i> <i>Carmine Zúñiga</i> Campos Leal Esquivel Santander Álvarez Pinto García Villarroel Arancibia Silva Gustavo Núñez Witker Velásquez Fuentes Araya Calquín Monardes Alarcón Rojas Rossetti Gallardo Molina Sepúlveda Ibáñez Vergara Apara Álamo Makluf Campos

^a President of the Partido Radical after bridesmaid election; deceased.

^b President of the Chilean Olympic Committee.

^c Secretary General of the PPD as of 2000.

^d Attorney integrated by the Appeals Court of Rancagua – a status accorded by judicial, not presidential, appointment.

^e Nominated by party to run (and was elected) as municipal council member in 2002.

another, and nothing for the other three. There are more Chamber bridesmaids, but the pattern is the same: we identify subsequent posts for most of the most likelies, but nothing for the least likelies.

The manner by which we selected cases for exhaustive career trajectory searches, of course, should be expected to generate a bias toward such stark results. What we can conclude at this point is that those bridesmaids we have posited to have the most promising post-electoral-loss prospects do, in fact, have good odds of receiving plum appointments (perhaps even better odds than the table shows, given that we may still have missed some appointments), whereas for those whose prospects we posited as least promising, the odds were a lot worse.

Having cleared this first threshold, we subject the theory to a broader, statistical test using the data from district-level elections and the Appointments variable based only on our comprehensive searches of those posts listed in Table 2. Because the dependent variable is binary (0:1), the model is logistic regression. The basic results, along with some values to facilitate interpretation, are in Table 4.

The likelihood of an appointment depends considerably on Chamber and on list performance, although not on the relative parity of candidates within a given Concertación list. The coefficients on all three independent variables of interest take the expected signs —positive for Chamber and Coalition Ratio, negative for Concertación Ratio. The first two are statistically significant at conventional levels, whereas the latter falls short, suggesting that individual bridesmaids within Concertación lists are rewarded according to the collective performance of the ticket rather than their individual vote totals.

The last two columns in Table 4 show the marginal estimated effect of change in Chamber and Coalition Ratio, in each case with other variables set to their mean levels, according to simulations conducted using Clarify software (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000). Other things equal, the model estimates that the odds of receiving a post-election presidential appointment are 15% higher for than Senate bridesmaids than Chamber bridesmaids, and although there is uncertainty around the specific estimate, the last column shows we can be very confident the effect is positive and substantial. Similarly, holding Chamber constant, the odds of an appointment are 8% higher for bridesmaids from lists that performed well (80th percentile, according to the Concertación:Right vote ratio) than from lists that performed poorly (20th percentile), and again we can be confident that the effect is in positive terrain. Given that the raw probability of an appointment is only 9% among all our bridesmaids (15/167), the difference

toward the collective performance of their lists —and thus to overcome the divergence of incentives generated by Chile’s unique electoral system.

The New Chilean Electoral Landscape

This insurance system has worked well for the Concertación, and for its candidates, in each of the four elections since the transition to democracy in Chile. Why should it fail now? We suggest that the insurance claim fund is no longer secure because it depends on control of the executive branch. The danger, from the perspective of would-be doubling candidates, is that the Concertación may well not control the executive branch after the 2005 election. The immediate threat became clear in 1999-2000, in the form of Joaquín Lavín’s stronger-than-anticipated challenge to Ricardo Lagos for the presidency. Since that election, Lavín has worked hard to position himself to run again in 2005, and at this early date Lavín is the clear frontrunner. According to a Centro de Estudios Públicos poll conducted in December 2002, 40% of respondents named Lavín when presented with the open-ended question, “Whom would you want to be the next president?” The next highest figure, Foreign Minister in the current Concertación government, Soledad Alvear, was named by only 9% of respondents. 56% of respondents thought Lavín would be the next president, and 53% expressed a willingness to vote for him (Centro de Estudios Públicos 2003).

At the time of this writing, almost three years remain before the 2005 election, and the Concertación’s prospects to hold onto the presidency may well improve during that time. Nevertheless, the situation is fundamentally different from that which has preceded every congressional election so far since the transition. In each of the previous cases, the Concertación’s control over the executive branch, and all the appointed posts it commands, has been in no doubt.

- In 1989, the victory of Patricio Aylwin was virtually unquestionable, following on his leadership of the unified “No” forces in the 1988 plebiscite, and his stewardship of the opposition to Pinochet’s government during the subsequent transition.
- In 1993, once agreement was reached within the Concertación on Eduardo Frei’s candidacy (*before* the selection of candidate lists for the legislative races), the outcome of the presidential election was never in doubt.
- Moreover, the establishment of a 6-year presidential term meant that the 1997 legislative elections occurred when Frei had two years

- remaining on his term —sufficient time to provide substantial compensation to worthy bridesmaids in terms of appointed posts.
- Finally, the next set of legislative elections occurred in 2001, two years after the Lavín threat to the presidency became apparent, but when President Lagos still had four years remaining in his term, and thus ample time to compensate Concertación bridesmaids with appointments.

In 2005, the situation will be different. Unless the Concertación is able to reestablish the dominance it enjoyed in the late 1980s and early 1990s in terms of expected electoral support, the coalition's ability to pay insurance to doubling losers will be in doubt. In 2005, moreover, legislative and presidential elections will be concurrent for the first time since 1993. The 1997 and 2001 legislative elections were held in the middle of presidential terms. The existence of a concurrent presidential election in 2005 adds an additional dimension of uncertainty for coalition leaders and for prospective legislative candidates because bargaining over the composition of lists for the legislative election will take place before the Concertación's presidential candidate is determined via a primary election. Facing the prospect of considerable electoral risk, and increased uncertainty about compensation in the event of an unhappy outcome, the question is whether strong candidates, and their associated parties, will remain committed to maintaining the coalition.

The General Mechanics of Coalition Dissolution

The dilemma we have described is not unique to the Concertación, but it applies most acutely to the Concertación because it is Chile's largest coalition (and so has the most to lose in terms of its insurance fund), and its most complex, encompassing the largest number of relevant political actors at the sub-coalition level. Our logic applies to any actor below the coalition level – a strong individual candidate, a party, or a bloc of parties within a larger coalition – who expects that, by running a list on its own and appealing to a core group of supporters, the list could place at least second, and not be doubled by any other list. If these expectations are met, this strong actor will capture one seat in the district, even running on its own. For such an actor, then, the potential gains from coalition are not in terms of legislative seats, but rather from being part of a governing majority.

Coalition, however, implies electoral risk. Coordinating a campaign with partners requires compromise on policy positions, which may alienate the actor's core supporters. If the coalition does not double its opponents, and if the actor's supporters are sufficiently disaffected by the concessions inherent in coalition, that actor may even lose the intra-list competition to its coalition partner, thus losing the legislative seat it had been confident of winning on its own. When this risk can be indemnified by a promise of an attractive political appointment, the gamble inherent in coalition can be attractive to any political actor who would be otherwise inclined to go it alone in the legislative election. Our point here is that, in Chile's current electoral environment, it will be increasingly difficult for the Concertación to make such promises credible because even if the coalition remains intact, its continued control of the executive branch is precarious, at best.

Indeed, we would expect that with an anticipated presidential victory in 2005, a similar dynamic will facilitate list formation for the Alianza. By capturing the presidency, the right will be in a position to indemnify risk takers among the ranks of its parliamentary candidates. Future bridesmaids on the right can expect plum appointment following the election, and will be more willing to subordinate personal electoral ambitions to the goals of the coalition.

Our findings also have cross-national theoretical applications, especially as political systems around the world increasingly adopt complex electoral systems in an attempt to balance representation and stability. We think it plausible that compensation systems could exist for losing candidates who bore risk on behalf of their coalitions in other systems. Insurance systems may be less critical to coalition maintenance elsewhere because, under all other electoral systems with which we are familiar, electoral economies of scale are more straightforward than under Chile's M=2 system. That is, the efficiency with which votes are converted into seats under higher-M systems means that the need to put strong candidates in the most marginal list positions is mitigated. Still, findings from Chile suggest that compensation systems of the sort caused by the binominal electoral system are likely to develop in other strategically complex electoral systems. In terms of future theorizing about both electoral systems and informal institutions, it is crucial to analyze the extent to which strategic complexity in electoral systems can lead to the creation of informal institutions to compensate for uncertainty.

We want to emphasize two final points in closing. First, we do not suggest that the bridesmaid system is the only, or even the most important, source of unity for the Concertación. Our point is that the bridesmaids

system provides an important coalitional adhesive overlooked by analysts of Chilean politics, and the demise of this reward system, along with other tensions emerging in the coalition, can significantly hasten the dissolution of the Concertación. Second, we are not advocating the demise of the Concertación, nor are we prepared to applaud this result, if it should come to pass. In our estimation, the Concertación governments and legislative majorities have, since 1990, provided Chile with some of the most enlightened and temperate political leadership in the country's history. Rather, we present our dire prediction entirely on the basis of what we see as a fundamental change in the Chilean electoral landscape since 2000, and what we understand to be the effects of this change on the strategic nature of coalition formation and maintenance.

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