

ELECTORAL SYSTEM, COALITIONAL DISINTEGRATION, AND THE FUTURE OF CHILE'S CONCERTACIÓN¹

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Abstract: While there is much disagreement concerning the political effects of Chile's two-member district binominal election system, most agree that it provides strong incentives for the formation and maintenance of coalitions. This article takes on these assumptions, contending that the electoral system's coalition-inducing tendencies are actually quite context dependent. Focusing primarily on the governing Concertación coalition and relying on analyses of relative levels of electoral support among parties, a "reward" insurance policy for electoral losers, and the timing and sequencing of elections, this article outlines the conditions under which the coalition-enhancing tendencies of the electoral system are at their strongest and their weakest. It finds that these variables align to provide a less than propitious environment for the maintenance of the Concertación coalition in the lead up to the 2005 elections. In theoretical terms, the article challenges direct and mechanistic connections between electoral formulae and party outcomes, arguing that we should not be surprised when subtle contextual variations cause theorized outcomes not to occur. These findings contribute to an emerging consensus that many of the theorized rules on the connection between electoral and party systems are more complex and context dependent than is usually supposed and should be applied with greater caution.

INTRODUCTION

There is extensive literature on the political consequences of electoral reform in Chile. Most of it analyzes continuity and change in the party system with respect to the number of political parties and the dynamics of coalitional competition (Carey 2002; Montes et al. 2000; Munck and Bosworth 1998; Siavelis 1997; Valenzuela and Scully 1997). Though there is disagreement on many issues in this literature, with few exceptions most scholars concur that the electoral system creates strong incentives

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for coalition formation and maintenance and that coalition formation has been the key to the stability of Chile's "model" transition. They suggest that the psychological and mechanical effects of the electoral system produce enhanced incentives for coalition formation (Carey 2002; Gutiérrez 1990, 345–49; Guzmán 1993; Munck and Bosworth 1998, 485; Rabkin 1996).

There is certainly a good deal of truth to the dominant view that incentives for coalition formation have been enhanced in Chile relative to the pre-authoritarian era. It is undeniable that the Alianza por Chile² (right; hereafter Alianza) and Concertación (center-left) coalitions are the longest and most durable since the promulgation of the 1925 constitution. Nonetheless, the unquestioning acceptance of the coalition-enhancing effects of the electoral system has often translated into a tendency to suggest that these incentives are absolute and immutable and that there is little about the electoral system that does not encourage coalition formation.

This article takes on these assumptions. Focusing primarily on the formation and maintenance of governing coalitions, the article contends that the electoral system's coalition-inducing tendencies are actually quite context dependent. It argues that the incentives to form and maintain these coalitions will be highest when: (1) Candidate selection is facilitated by relative equality in the support of electoral sub-pacts within the coalition; (2) A likely presidential victory provides governments with the ability to compensate coalition members who lose competitive parliamentary races at the hands of other coalition members; and (3) Elections are concurrent. Alternatively, when these conditions do not prevail, it suggests that the system's coalition-enhancing tendencies are seriously undermined.

This article does not argue that contextual variations among these three variables completely eliminate the other coalition-enhancing properties of the electoral system. Rather, its central claim is that the incentives for coalition formation within governing coalitions can be weaker or stronger based on variation among these three variables, and a sub-optimal combination of them can undermine the binomial system's oft-cited strong incentives for coalition formation. Since the return of democracy, the incentives set out here clearly outweighed some of the disincentives explored below. However, this is no longer the case, making for an uncertain future for the governing Concertación and the post-authoritarian coalitional configuration in general.

While similar incentives operate within the Alianza, this article focuses principally on the Concertación. Many of the variables set out here

2. This alliance has also been known in past elections as the Unión por Chile, Unión por el Progreso, and Democracia y Progreso.

do exercise the same effect within the Alianza and the Concertación. In particular, the influence of sub-pact parity and the concurrence of elections would be expected to exercise similar coalition-enhancing and dampening tendencies—although the right currently does not have at its disposal the ability to pass out electoral spoils as “insurance policies” from which the governing coalition benefits. The right, however, does have the unifying force of a negative opposition, without having to agree on concrete governing proposals. On the right, just as on the left, the ultimate ability to form and maintain a coalition depends on the overall constellation of these forces. However, because most advocates of the coalition-producing effects of the binominal system focus on the Concertación, this analysis limits itself to the governing coalition. What is more, once the right assumes government, as it may soon do, one should expect that similar incentives particular to governing coalitions will operate in the same way, and that all three of the variables set out here will be important.

In theoretical terms, this article suggests that overly mechanistic analyses of electoral systems in the predominant institutionally focused literature lead to misinterpretations concerning the operational dynamics of different electoral formulae. Duverger (1963), Taagepera and Shugart (1989), Reed (1990), Lijphart (1994) and Cox (1997) provide convincing and nuanced accounts of the connection between electoral systems and party outcomes, with important insights for electoral theorists. While they allow for some subtlety in variation among cases, in the end we still see what at times borders on an automatic connection between electoral systems and party effects. We should be cautious in establishing such direct and mechanistic connections and not be surprised when subtle contextual variations cause theorized outcomes not to occur. These findings mesh with an emerging consensus that the theorized rules on the connection between electoral and party systems must be better contextualized, and that we should be cautious in their automatic application outside of the regions where they are developed (Coppedge 1997; Weyland 2002).

THE BINOMINAL SYSTEM AND INCENTIVES FOR COALITION FORMATION

The Chilean military’s transformational intentions in imposing a new electoral system have been extensively analyzed (Guzmán 1993; Munck and Bosworth 1998; Valenzuela and Scully 1997). In designing the system, electoral reformers sought to simultaneously overrepresent parties of the right and to reduce the number of significant parties in the country. To reduce the number of parties, a single-member first-past-the-post system like that of the United States and Great Britain would have been the most logical choice. However, reformers knew at the time that the right could only rely on about 40 percent support. Thus, with a single-member

district system, the right would have been deprived of seats in congress. Military authorities instead opted for two-member districts known as a "binominal" system. The system was adopted for each of Chile's sixty Chamber districts (for a total of 120), and for elections to the Senate (with nineteen *circunscripciones* for a total of thirty-eight).³

The combination of district magnitudes of two ($M = 2$) and a d'Hondt counting system creates strong incentives for coalition formation. Each coalition or party presents two seat lists of candidates. To win both the seats in a district, the first place list must double the vote total of the second place list. So, if the top polling list doubles the vote shares of the second place list it garners two seats. If it does not, each of the top-polling lists wins one seat. After determining whether a list wins one or two seats, seats are allocated to individual candidates based on their vote shares.

Candidates who run outside the two large coalitions risk exclusion from Congress. This is the case because the competitive dynamic of the system establishes very high thresholds for representation. Although many have pointed to an effective threshold of 66.7 percent for winning two seats and 33.4 percent for one in each district, the ability to win seats, of course, also depends on the distribution of votes and the number of lists competing across districts. Chile is a multiparty system where routinely no party garners more than 25 percent of the vote. Parties could conceivably run individual lists and still garner legislative representation. However, there is a strong incentive to form coalitions, and this incentive increases as other parties coalesce. In essence, the threshold of representation in each district is a sliding function of the number of lists that present candidates and their relative levels of support. For example, with many lists competing, if the first polling list receives a plurality of 22 percent of the vote it will win one seat, and the next highest polling list need only receive 11 percent plus one vote in order to win the second seat. If the first polling party, though, strikes an agreement with another party expected to poll 8 percent of the vote, the effective upper threshold becomes 30 percent and the threshold to win the second seat rises 15 percent plus one vote. In effect, every time a coalition agreement is struck, the threshold for representation increases, providing, in turn, enhanced incentives for coalition formation in order to reach these thresholds district by district. In post-authoritarian Chile, these incentives have encouraged coalition formation and helped lead to a two-pattern dynamic of competition where thresholds have, indeed, approached a level 66.7 percent to win two seats and 33.4 percent to win one. Unless Chile's parties strike bargains to reach these thresholds, they risk exclusion from Congress.

3. There are also nine appointed, non-elected Senators.

The effective thresholds also make it quite difficult for a coalition or party to muster the super-majority necessary to win two seats in a district or to *doblar* ("double"). In the last four democratic elections in the Chamber, (1989, 1993, 1997, and 2001) the center-left Concertación coalition succeeded in doubling eleven, eleven, nine, and four times respectively. The center-right Alianza por Chile has only doubled twice in Chamber elections during this time, once in 1993, and once in 2001.⁴ Thus, in most districts, and given the bipolar pattern of competition, each coalition typically expects to win one of two seats in each district (or sixty each), and the fiercest contests are centered in the districts where one of the coalitions has the potential to "double."

From a national aggregate level, reformers assumed that these strong incentives would cause parties to fuse, and Chile's notoriously polarized and fractionalized party system would be moderated. According to this logic, Chile would be left with a two-party system or, at the very least, a pattern of competition between two large coalitions.⁵ Though there is widespread disagreement in interpretations of the results of the electoral system, most theorists agree that the system provides strong incentives for coalition formation and maintenance, and certainly much stronger incentives than existed in the past (Carey 2002; Gutiérrez, 1990, 345–49; Guzmán 1993; Munck and Bosworth 1998, 485; Rabkin 1996). Carey states it most explicitly: "The centrality of the coalitions to Chilean politics in the 1990s . . . is a product of the two-member district reform of the electoral system" (2002, 224).

Some analysts do allow for tensions that could lead to an end of the Concertación coalition. However, rather than point to the election system, they typically highlight the Concertación's advanced age or conflicts over social issues, abortion, privatization, and public welfare, as evidence of the reemergence of cleavages that might finish off the coalition. Indeed, scholars usually go on to argue that the incentives for coalition formation provided by the electoral system will actually help to bridge these cleavages and to moderate conflict. What is more, one might argue that the central rationale for the formation of the current coalitional pattern has been the authoritarian-democratic cleavage, and that the end of the Concertación could have more to do with the erosion of this profound generative cleavage (as the threat to democracy posed by the right disappears) than with the incentives created by the binominal system.

4. Table 1 would seem to suggest that the Concertación doubled in 9, 10, 9, and 3 districts respectively, given the electoral outcomes presented there. However, the "doublings" counted here also include those who did not formally run on Concertación lists but were associated with it and generally supported it upon election to the legislature.

5. Though clearly based in Downsian logic, Downs's (1957) argument does not really apply. Given two-member districts, electoral theory would more likely predict a three-party system. Neither has this come to pass.

However, the point of this article is that there are political behaviors and incentive structures generated by the *electoral system* that can undermine the other real and strong incentives for coalition formation created by the same *electoral system*. Analysis now turns to the specifically electoral variables that affect unity in Chilean governing coalitions.

The Binominal System, Candidate Selection, and Sub-pact Parity

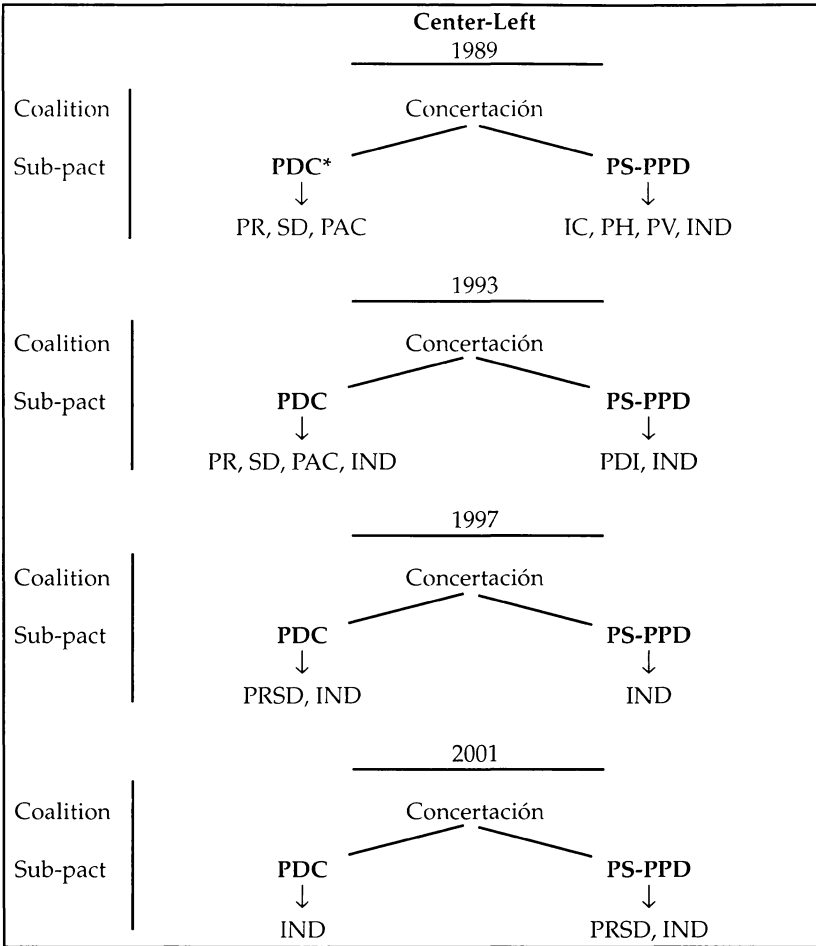
The perceived fairness in outcomes of candidate selection processes has been central to the maintenance of the Concertación. Given the lack of a majority party and the continued existence of an ingrained multi-party system, in order to effectively compete within a system characterized by strong thresholds and small magnitudes, parties must form pre-electoral lists to win elections. Chile's two post-authoritarian coalitions have performed this function. The coalitions are, in turn, broken down into two "sub-pacts" that share some ideological affinity, and form another negotiating unit. The center-left Concertación comprises a sub-pact of the left—the Party for Democracy (PPD) and Socialist Party (PS)—and the center—the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), the Radical Party (PR), and the Social Democratic Party (SD)⁶—as well as a number of smaller parties and independents associated with each sub-pact. Though the names of some of these parties have changed, and there have been mergers and splits since the return of democracy, the core supporters and leadership of each have remained essentially the same. The Alianza is composed of the right's two major parties— National Renewal (RN) and the Independent Democratic Union (UDI)—each of which anchors its own sub-pact of the center-right and right respectively. These two sub-pacts are also joined by smaller associated parties and independents. Figure 1 summarizes these sub-pact and coalitional configurations.

Because only two candidates can be presented in each district from either major coalition, party leaders are forced to engage in elaborate and time-consuming negotiations to assemble two-candidate parliamentary lists in the country's sixty electoral districts. That these negotiations have succeeded in the last four parliamentary elections is a testament to both the tenacity of the country's party system and the negotiating ability of Chilean party leaders.

However, the mechanical realities of the electoral system make negotiations more crucial and more complex than at any time in the past. Interviews with leaders charged with candidate selection in every major political party in 1999 and 2000 and empirical examples suggest a consistent logic in the candidate selection process. Briefly stated, all

6. The PR and the SD fused to form the Radical Social Democratic Party (PRSD) and switched to the sub-pact of the left for the 2001 elections.

Figure 1 Coalitions, Sub-pacts, and Parties in Chilean Parliamentary Elections 1989, 1993, 1997, and 2001

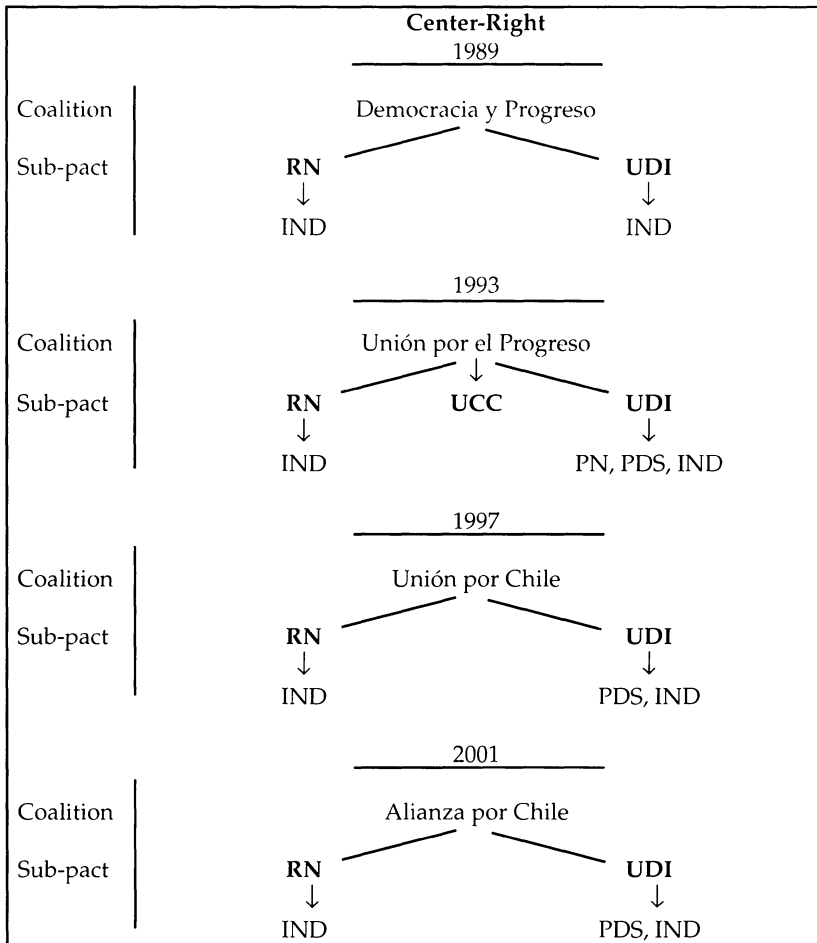


*ANCHOR PARTIES IN BOLD

PARTY KEY: IC— Izquierda Cristiana (Christian Left), IND—independents associated with sub-pacts, PAC—Partido Alianza de Centro (Center Alliance Party), PDC—Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party), PDI—Partido Democrático de Izquierda (Democratic Party of the Left), PH—Partido Humanista (Humanist Party), PDS—Partido del Sur (Party of the South), PN—Partido Nacional (National Party), PR—Partido Radical (Radical Party), PV—Partido Verde (Green Party), SD—Social Democracia (Social Democracy), RN—Renovación Nacional (National Renewal), PRSD—Partido Radical Social-demócrata, UCC—Unión de Centro Centro (Center Center Union), UDI—Unión Demócrata Independiente (Independent Democratic Union)

parties realize that a coalition is usually necessary to pass the threshold for a single seat, but it is very difficult for coalitions to gain two-seat

Figure 1 (continued)



victories. Thus, it is likely that at least one of the two candidates on each coalition's list will lose in each district.

This makes pairing on individual lists crucial. Parties seek to place their candidate on the same list either with an extremely weak candidate (who they can handily beat), or an extremely strong candidate (who can carry the list to a two seat victory) (Siavelis 2002). Negotiations are further complicated because smaller parties want to be placed not just on lists, but on lists where they can actually win. It is likely that representatives from major parties will trounce candidates from their small party partners, making small parties demand even weaker list partners. Strong parties cannot simply ignore the demands of small parties, because they need them on board to maintain the coalition and

ensure the support of small parties in presidential elections. Fundamentally, the divergence in actors' goals makes for counterintuitive results. While coalitions seek to maximize list votes, candidates are not necessarily interested in doing the same if maximizing their list vote means that their partner polls more than they do. Internecine list competition also emerges, especially if both candidates on a list are running neck and neck in the polls.

However, (and central for the arguments set out here regarding coalition dissolution) interviews and empirical evidence also suggest that negotiations can be easier or more difficult depending on the relative levels of support of sub-pacts. As disparity between sub-pacts grows, the incentives for coalition formation continue to remain for all. However, the potential electoral costs and transaction costs for striking such bargains increase along with sub-pact disparity. Because of the electoral system's thresholds, the major anchor parties of the two sub-pacts within the *Concertación* will be willing to equally divide candidacies in a situation where they know from public opinion data, previous elections, or seat shares in the legislature that each sub-pact enjoys relatively the same level of support throughout the country. In situations where sub-pacts of the center and left enjoy relative parity, they will usually decide to evenly divide seat allocations (that is to say, to take one candidacy each in every district—a sixty-sixy divide) and bank on the fact that parity in support among voters across the country will deliver a balanced victory between the two sub-pacts, and that both candidates will contribute to an overall list victory. The potential electoral costs of this strategy are minimal, given an expected balanced outcome, and the ease of negotiation in striking such a bargain makes for low transaction costs.

On the other hand, where sub-pacts find themselves with differential levels of support, bargaining and negotiations become more complex and difficult as potential electoral and transaction costs increase. If one sub-pact trails another nationwide, it will be loathe to simply divide districts with the stronger sub-pact, as this is a recipe for defeat across districts nationwide. The dominant sub-pact will also be less willing to surrender seats because the prospects of balanced list victories across districts nationwide will decrease. Disparity in the levels of support for sub-pacts does two things. It encourages the leading sub-pact to demand more candidacies. It also prompts the second place sub-pact to be more careful in agreeing to the pairing of its candidates. Only through arduous negotiations can the second-ranked sub-pact garner the weak candidate pairings necessary to win seats. These negotiations involve very high transaction costs in terms of time, energy, and the ability to strike a perceived fair balance between parties with increasingly disparate interests.

How do these rules affect the prospects for unity in the *Concertación* for the near future? In short, some party constellations are more likely to

result in "easy" negotiations. In essence, when the sub-pacts of the left and center can expect to poll roughly equal levels of support, negotiations are simplified, and likely to be more successful. Sub-pacts will simply divide candidacies in each district. However, in situations where there is a good deal of distance between major sub-pacts, we can expect more complicated and potentially less successful negotiations, characterized by more intra-coalitional squabbling and a higher probability of failure.

How have the incentives related to sub-pact parity played out empirically? Parity between sub-pacts can be understood in terms of either vote or seat shares. Leaders of the sub-pact use both sets of data to negotiate and demonstrate their levels of support. What is more, sitting members of parliament are understood to have an automatic right to renomination except in the most unusual of circumstances. This means that parity in levels of support in parliament will prompt leaders to push for the renomination of their candidates, reinforcing their negotiating power and ability to place their candidates where they have already won. Table 1 presents results from all Chamber of Deputies elections since the return of democracy. For ease of analysis, table 2 summarizes the differences in vote and seat shares of the two major sub-pacts of the coalition.

In the lead up to the 1989 elections, coalitions had little information on the relative support that their constituent parties could be expected to receive because of limitations on polling imposed by the Augusto Pinochet government. In an attempt to best position itself, each party professed to be the leader in its ideological sector. Parties understood the absurd competitive dynamic of the system, realizing that two-seat victories were unlikely. Nonetheless, running separate lists on the center and the left would have both handed the right a victory and diminished the probability of a Concertación president.

The urgency of the situation and the overall goal of defeating candidates tied to the previous government led the Concertación to agree that candidacies within each district would be shared equally between the sub-pacts of the left and center, with some minor adjustments on the basis of each sub-pact's willingness to accommodate smaller parties. There was also a tacit agreement between the PS-PPD sub-pact, the PDC sub-pact and the PAIS (a completely separate list on the left not associated with the Concertación). The Concertación would divide candidacies evenly between its two sub-pacts except where the PAIS was fielding a list. In those districts, two candidates of the center would be fielded in order to avoid dividing support on the left. What is more, the PAIS list agreed to support Concertación candidates where it had no list competing. The PDC as the sub-pact anchor party took advantage of getting two seats in some districts by distributing these to its minor party partners, in the process satisfying them, while maintaining an upper hand. Even so, the PDC knew that its higher level of national support would

Table 1 *Election Results and Distribution of Seats in the Chilean Chamber of Deputies by Party and Coalition 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001 (N = 120)*

Year		1989 ^a			1993		
Pact	Party	Votes %	Seats	Seats %	Votes %	Seats	Seats %
Concertación		51.5	69	57.5	55.3	70	58.3
	PDC	26.0	38	31.7	27.1	37	30.8
	PRSD ^b	3.9	5	4.2	3.8	2	1.7
	PS	0.0 ^c	0	0.0	11.9	15	12.5
	PPD	11.5	16	13.3	11.8	15	12.5
	Other	10.1	10	8.3	.7	1	.8
Alianza por el Progreso ^d		34.2	48	40.0	36.7	50	41.7
	RN	18.3	29	24.2	16.3	29	24.2
	UDI	9.8	11	9.2	12.1	15	12.5
	Other	6.1	8	6.7	8.3	6	5.0
Independents and Others not on Major Lists		14.3	3	2.5	7.9	0	0

Sources: Distributions of Seats—Congreso de Chile, Electoral Data—Servicio Electoral de Chile.

Abbreviations: PDC—Christian Democratic Party, PPD—Party for Democracy, PRSD—Radical Social Democratic Party, PS—Socialist Party, RN—National Renewal, UDI—Independent Democratic Union.

^aThe limitations on the representation of parties imposed by Pinochet led to fluidity in party identification for the 1989 elections. Though some members of parliament joined the Socialist Party later, it was originally banned from participating. The breakdown of party identification listed here represents the party labels candidates ran under, not necessarily the parliamentary contingent they later joined.

likely guarantee victory in the districts where its candidates were matched with small parties of the sub-pact.

However, the Christian Democrats outdistanced the left in the first elections following authoritarian rule, and in negotiations leading up to the 1993 elections the PDC and its center sub-pact succeeded in gaining a number of candidacies in the course of acrimonious and lengthy negotiations.⁷ As table 2 shows, because the center had 14.3 percent more seats in the Chamber of Deputies it claimed leadership of the Concertación and pushed harder for the nomination of centrist candi-

7. For a complete discussion of the dynamics of negotiation for candidate slates during each of the post-authoritarian elections see Siavelis (2002).

1997			2001		
Votes %	Seats	Seats %	Votes %	Seats	Seats %
50.5	69	57.5	47.9	62	51.7
22.9	38	31.7	18.9	23	19.2
3.1	4	3.3	4.1	6	5.0
11.1	11	9.2	10.0	10	8.3
12.6	16	13.3	12.7	20	16.7
.8	0	0.0	2.2	3	2.5
36.3	46	38.4	44.3	57	47.5
16.8	23	19.2	13.8	18	15.0
14.4	17	14.2	25.2	31	25.8
5.1	6	5.0	5.3	8	6.7
13.3	5	4.2	7.8	1	.8

^b For the 1989, 1993, and 1997 elections, this party ran as simply the Radical Party (PR).

^c This figure is 0 for 1989 because of problems with party legality and registration and the question of whether the PPD should disband and join the Socialists (once legalized). Most votes for "Other" in the Concertación were actually cast for de facto members of the Socialist Party.

^d This pact in previous elections has also been known as Unión por Chile, Democracia y Progreso and Unión por el Progreso.

dates. In addition, though the table notes 8.3 percent difference in vote shares between the two sub-pacts, the real difference is probably higher. Draconian laws on party registration imposed by Pinochet prevented the registration of the Socialist Party (PS), and most candidates categorized as "others" on Concertación lists for this election belonged to the PS. However, not all did, and more importantly, this perceived lack of coherence weakened the ability of the left to negotiate for slates in the 1993 elections, and the center exploited it, making for difficult negotiations. These negotiations were further complicated by a set of incumbents with a widely understood "right" to renomination, a factor not at play in the previous elections.

Though the left ceded a number of candidacies to the center in 1993, it managed to narrow the difference in seat shares between itself and

Table 2 Net Differences (Percentages) in Vote (V) and Seat (S) Shares of Concertación Sub-pacts for Chamber of Deputies Elections, 1989–2001

Year	1989		1993		1997		2001	
	%V	%S	%V	%S	%V	%S	%V	%S
Sub-pact								
Center—PDC led	29.9	35.9	30.9	32.5	26.0	35.0	18.9	19.2
Left—PS-PPD led*	21.6	21.6	24.4	25.8	24.5	22.5	29.0	32.5
Net Difference In								
Vote/SeatShares	8.3	14.3	6.5	6.7	1.5	12.5	10.1	13.3

Source: Table 1

* For all elections, this also includes votes of “Others” on Concertación lists. Because of registration limitations imposed by the Pinochet government, in 1989 most of the “Others” on this list were actually Socialists. While it is difficult to definitively identify every candidate’s real orientation, most joined either the PPD or the Socialist party after the 1989 election. If anything, for this election the net differences in vote shares are actually higher, then, because all candidates counted here as “Others” were not necessarily formally a part of the leftist sub-pact, as is noted in the text. For the rest of the elections (1993, 1997, 2001), the author identified all candidates identified as “Others” on Concertación lists as members of the left’s sub-pact, and they are counted as such.

the center sub-pact. As table 2 shows, the gap between the two sectors closed with only 6.5 percent difference in vote shares and 6.7 percent difference in seat shares. This increasing parity in levels of support gave the left a stronger negotiating position, and the sub-pacts agreed to split candidacies in each district for the 1997 elections. Because the two sectors had similar levels of support in the 1997 elections (with only 1.5 percent difference in vote shares), once again, the same dynamic characterized the lead up to the December 2001 elections and candidacies were again divided. Though there was a 12.5 percent difference in the level of seat shares, the left contended even more strongly that its electoral strength (especially relative to the center sub-pact) was not reflected in the seat outcome because it had been deprived of an equitable distribution of plum candidacies. Therefore, the left could very credibly claim equality based on its vote returns and demand that seat allocations again be divided. With roughly equal levels of support between major sub-pacts, the binominal system creates less complex electoral incentives and lower transaction costs, facilitating negotiations.

However, as the disparity between sub-pacts increases, negotiations become more arduous, costly, and likely to fail. As negotiations for the 1993 elections suggest, unequal levels of support between sub-pacts create insecurity for parties in second ranked sub-pacts who stand to lose in many districts. It also leads to higher demands for candidacies from parties who are ascendant in the polls or successful in elections.

However, in 1993 the overwhelming necessity to present a single presidential standard-bearer, combined with concurrent legislative and presidential elections and the relative temporal proximity of the democratic transition enhanced incentives for parties to give and take and agree in negotiations despite these tensions.

As negotiations begin for the 2005 elections this logic suggests negotiations will be more complex and divisive. Table 2 shows the highest disparity between sub-pacts in vote shares at any time since the return of democracy, and a disparity of seat shares that is higher than any time since 1989 (however, this time with the left clearly in the lead). The potential divisiveness in candidate negotiations that this disparity is likely to cause will be complicated by other areas of increasing disagreement within the Concertación coalition and the general public weariness with twelve years of single coalition government.

Thus, while the key to coalition unity has been the ability to strike bargains on joint lists, and the need to do so was elicited by the electoral system, some of the incentives to continue to do so may be attenuated in the future—and perhaps in the near future as the electoral risks and transaction costs associated with striking such bargains escalate. As negotiations begin for the 2005 parliamentary elections, the left is likely to demand a lot more, and the center is likely to resist. The complexity of negotiations will be further complicated given the additional variables analyzed below. Without the ability to reward losers, and with the potential for a presidential loss for the Concertación, there may be additional enhanced incentives for a breakup. What is more, given the dynamics created by the electoral system, the left will be unwilling to cede anything to the center in plum electoral districts. The center parties led by the Christian Democrats may decide they have more to gain by presenting a third electoral list. This will allow the PDC to present its strongest candidates in districts where it is most popular, without having to take into account the demands of the left. In this scenario the PDC would also be able to put forward its own Christian Democratic presidential candidate.

Similarly and more importantly, in the course of negotiations the PDC will presumably ask the left to refrain from placing strong leftist candidates in certain districts to allow for PDC victories. However, the left will have little incentive to do so. As the premier sub-pact in the Concertación, the left may decide it has more to gain from presenting a separate electoral list so that it can field its strongest candidates wherever it wants. This is the best of both worlds for the left's sub-pact. Its high level of electoral support will allow it to handily win in many districts that would otherwise have been ceded to the center, and at the same time, to more fully promote its own leftist presidential candidate. Thus, in the context of more complex negotiations and the flagging

electoral fortunes of certain parties, the coalition-building incentives of the electoral system may be significantly dampened. At the same time, unlike 1993, the coalition cannot rely on the urgency of a still-delicate democratic transition or the need to choose a single presidential candidate as additional coalitional glue.

"Doblado" and Electoral "Insurance Policies" as a Source of Unity

The most important resources coalitions can allocate among their constituent parties are parliamentary candidacies. However, as noted, there are very few districts in Chile where either the Concertación or the Alianza can expect to more than double its opponent's vote total (or to *doblar*) without an extraordinarily strong performance. Still coalitions obviously attempt to double where possible, and their prospects for doing so depend on pairing two strong candidates who can provide the list with the necessary votes to cross the second seat threshold. Also, for particular races (all districts in the Senate and the particularly visible Chamber races in Metropolitan Santiago, Valparaíso and Concepción), parties seek to place candidates with a high level of appeal to increase the visibility and total returns of both individual parties and the coalition as a whole. Thus, coalitions face the conundrum of attempting to place their best candidates in races where they will gain high national exposure, but at the very real risk of defeat if paired with another strong candidate whose party has similar goals. Popular candidates obviously prefer the more common weak-strong pairing, because the strong candidate is virtually guaranteed victory. However, the collective goal of the coalition runs contrary to the individual goals of candidates who seek political survival and resist pairing with a strong candidate. When paired with a strong partner, the candidate faces not only competition from a very strong opposition candidate but also stiff competition from a coalition partner. In essence, the political reward for the strongest and most visible candidates often becomes a pairing with another strong candidate in a plum district—a recipe for the loss of public office!

The most notorious example of this was the pairing of (now president) Socialist Ricardo Lagos with Christian Democrat Andrés Zaldívar in the Seventh Senate district (Metropolitan Santiago) in 1989. Though indisputably the most important figure on the Left, Lagos fell victim to the electoral system. Lagos garnered 30.6 percent of the vote and Zaldívar tallied 31.3 percent. However, because their total list vote (61.9 percent) did not double the total list vote of the right (32.5 percent), the right won one of the two seats in this district, and Lagos went down to defeat. This is the case despite the fact that the candidates of the right, Jaime Guzmán and Miguel Otero, polled 17.2 percent and 15.3 percent of the vote respectively.

How can coalitions provide candidates incentives to accept strong-strong pairings? Empirical evidence suggests that the coalition often provides insurance policies in the form of implicit promises for ministerial appointments or other high-level positions in exchange for the possibility of falling short in a high-risk race. Losers in highly competitive races can have some assurance of continued political life despite their losses. Lagos himself is an example of this dynamic. Shortly after his defeat he was named Minister of Education by the newly installed Patricio Aylwin government. Carey and Siavelis (2003) find that there are not simply isolated incidences of candidates being awarded post-election appointments but rather a consistent pattern where this system of insurance is used to reward risk takers. They find that, since the return of democracy, running in a high risk district (that is to say where the Concertación came close to doubling) roughly doubles the odds that an electoral loser will receive a post-election appointment in an embassy, a ministry, or another executive-appointed position.

Though Carey and Siavelis explore the centrality of this reward system to coalition maintenance (as well as the consequences of its disappearance), they say less about the circumstances under which this reward system can be expected to break down. In essence there are only two situations where a president can make these rewards: (1) when there is a sitting president during legislative elections (as a result of nonconcurrent elections) or (2) when there are concurrent elections and the *clear expectation* of a presidential victory. In 1989 Aylwin was virtually guaranteed victory in light of the decisive victory of the Concertación parties in the 1988 plebiscite. On the heels of Aylwin's enormously successful presidency, Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei was chosen as the Concertación standard-bearer and was an early and categorical leader in the polls before the composition of legislative lists. Frei's six-year presidential term meant that the 1997 legislative elections occurred when Frei had two years remaining in his term—sufficient time to provide appointed posts as compensation to “doubling losers.” Finally, the most recent legislative elections occurred in 2001, with four years left in President Lagos's term, and thus even more appointment compensation was available. Despite Lagos's razor-thin victory in the double round election, he had been widely predicted to win by political prognosticators. In each of these examples, the Concertación was able to provide insurance policies for high-risk candidates and to ensure that electoral losers would not go unrewarded for their dedication to the coalition.

The contemporary political situation in Chile is distinct from that of any time since the beginning of the democratic transition. Joaquín Lavín's impressive showing in the 1999 elections has led to widespread predictions of a Concertación defeat. Though polls in early 2004 showed eroding support for Lavín, the uncertainty surrounding the election's outcome

provides no guarantees for Concertación members who assume high-risk electoral candidacies in negotiations leading up to the 2005 elections.

While it may appear that this is only a minor point, applicable to a few high-visibility districts, this general dynamic also operates on the level of the coalition as a whole. Without the prospect of a unifying presidential election, and amid the declining fortunes of the center, the left may decide that it is in its best interest to bypass negotiations over candidate slates where it might lose and not receive post-electoral rewards and place its strongest candidates where the sector can rely on a core of supporters. This is the case, of course, because with a different number of lists, the competitive dynamic of the binominal system changes and thresholds are lowered. The left's sub-pact may decide that it can effectively outdistance the PDC in most districts with its own two-member lists. In this case, the left need only outpoll the Christian Democrats and their allies to approach a single seat victory in each district (assuming the right also garners one). Indeed, the outcome may be even more beneficial to the left because it will have the complete freedom to place its best candidates in the districts where they are most likely to win, and it will have to make no concessions to the center.

Election Concurrence and Coalition Maintenance

Political scientists have underscored the importance of the timing and sequencing of elections in shaping electoral outcomes (Carey 1994; Jones 1995; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997; Shugart 1995). Concurrent elections are said to reduce party system fragmentation and enhance the prospects that presidents will be able to rely on legislative majorities. In essence, these aspects of concurrent elections can help facilitate the operation of the sometimes awkward combination of presidentialism and proportional representation by better insuring that executives will be able to rely on majorities or working pluralities of their own parties. Conversely, scholars contend that without concurrent elections, presidents will often be left without majorities or near majorities upon which they can rely, party system fragmentation will increase, and the inherent disincentives to cooperate produced by presidentialism will be more likely to emerge (see Linz 1994; Valenzuela 1994). In Chile, executives serve for a six-year term; members of the Chamber of Deputies, a four-year term; and Senators, an eight-year term.⁸ Interspersed throughout (and not necessarily concurrently) are municipal elections every four years. Thus, Chile really has a suboptimal institutional design when it

8. Though the term for Senators is eight years, one half of the Senate is renewed every four years. This timing can deprive presidents of elective majorities in the Senate, even though their parties may sweep Senate elections.

Table 3 *The Timing and Sequencing of Elections in Chile, 1989–2011*

	<i>Presidential*</i>	<i>Legislative</i>	<i>Municipal</i>
1989	X (Aylwin)	X	
1990			
1991			
1992			X
1993	X (Frei)	X	
1994			
1995			
1996			X
1997		X	
1998			
1999	X (Lagos)		
2000			X
2001		X	
2002			
2003			
2004			X
2005	X	X	
2006			
2007			
2008			X
2009		X	
2010			
2011	X		

* Although Aylwin served a transitional 4 years, presidential terms are now 6 years. Names in parentheses represent the winners of the presidential elections.

comes to the timing and sequencing of elections. Table 3 summarizes this timing and sequencing.

Even with all the problems with timing and sequencing, Chileanist scholars have acknowledged that the connection between legislative and presidential elections creates strong incentives for coalition formation (Gutiérrez 1990; Guzmán 1993). The binominal electoral system raises the stakes for agreement on a single presidential candidate, which in turn reinforces the incentives for the creation and maintenance of joint electoral lists for congressional elections. The failure to agree on a presidential candidate can lead to the splintering of alliances for congressional races, given the impracticality and illogic of separate presidential

candidacies and joint congressional lists. The failure to reach the threshold established by the binominal system is extremely costly for a party and can result in its exclusion from Congress. Thus, the nature of Chilean presidentialism raises the costs for failing to strike a coalitional bargain, and again, for supporters of the binominal system, provides strong incentives for coalition formation and maintenance.

The durability of the Concertación attests to this very powerful coalitional glue. The Christian Democrats agreed to support what turned out to be the high-risk 1999 candidacy of Socialist Ricardo Lagos. Lagos's miniscule plurality in the first round of the election certainly drove home to the Christian Democrats how a Socialist presidential candidate alienated voters on the right side of the Concertación. Nonetheless, the Concertación knew it must settle on a single candidate, given the shadow of upcoming congressional elections and the cost that the binominal system would exact from the entire alliance were the Concertación to splinter into two separate presidential and parliamentary lists.

However, the coalition-enhancing incentives generated by the timing and sequencing of elections can operate in a different way in light of the analysis presented here. First, when presidential and legislative elections are nonconcurrent it is likely that coalition formation will be complicated because the process of candidate selection will prove more difficult. As noted, if major sub-pacts are not roughly equal in support, negotiations are likely to be more conflictual. In 1993 there was a good deal of disparity in the levels of support of the sub-pacts of the center and left, and as noted, the centrist PDC was able to extract a higher number of candidacies in negotiations. However, it is crucial to recall that a presidential race was to be held concurrently in 1993. Concurrent elections facilitated negotiations, reducing both the potential that the centrist PDC would demand an outrageous number of seats given its electoral advantage, and that the left would fail to surrender a limited number of seats to assure that it was part of the winning presidential coalition. Without concurrent elections some of the disincentives for coalition unity that are bound to emerge when sub-pacts enjoy unequal levels of support would certainly have been much stronger. Similarly, because the two sub-pacts of Concertación were relatively equal in support in the lead up to the 1997 and 2001 elections, the negotiation for candidacies was less complex and the need for a unifying presidential candidacy less urgent. However, the point is that the urgency and benefits of a joint list are likely to be much higher in the context of a concurrent election, especially when that president is expected to win.

Second, even in the context of concurrent elections, when victory for presidents is uncertain, the incentives for coalition maintenance related to candidate "insurance policies" are also much less likely to develop. The impending shadow of a presidential election may be insufficient to

generate enough incentives for candidates to agree to be paired with coalition partners that will defeat them because they can expect little reward for their dedication to the coalition.

Third, in the context of nonconcurrent elections, the incentives for coalition maintenance and formation really depend on whether or not a coalition holds the presidency or a legislative majority. In nonconcurrent elections where the coalition faces a legislative election but holds the presidency, moderately positive incentives to cooperate will still exist, because parties will be loath to dissolve a governing coalition. A similarly moderate positive incentive for coalition maintenance will exist even in the face of nonconcurrency where a coalition faces a presidential election but holds a legislative majority that it would like to see continue.

Finally, and of course, the lowest incentives for coalition maintenance will exist in nonconcurrent elections where presidential candidates do not benefit from a sitting legislative majority, or where concurrent election take place, but the president is expected to lose.

PARITY, PRESIDENTIAL VICTORY AND CONCURRENT ELECTIONS: A SUMMARY OF THE INCENTIVES FOR COALITION DISSOLUTION

Analysts are correct to note that the binominal system provides some strong incentives for coalition building and maintenance. However, they often tend to lump all of the operational characteristics of the system together, ignoring important context-dependent variations in the incentives for coalition formation that have been little recognized or analyzed by scholars. The system has not been operating long enough to see the other side of the electoral system coin when it comes to the dynamics of coalition formation.

Table 4 summarizes three of the significant variables that this article has argued can negatively affect the incentives for coalition formation and undermine some of the other strong ones: the influence of sub-pact parity, the government's ability to reward high-risk election losers, and the influence of election concurrence.

There are several caveats in order. First, this model does not suggest that these variables are the only ones that impinge upon coalition formation and maintenance. Rather, the table focuses on the electoral system's overlooked negative effects on the incentives for coalition formation that can aggravate or mitigate more manifestly political conflicts. Second, it should be noted that all three variables interact in a complex way and are set apart here only for analytical purposes. Finally, in different contexts the relative weight of each can be more or less important.

In terms of sub-pact parity, this paper has argued that sub-pact parity facilitates negotiations. Empirical evidence and the model of candidate

Table 4 *Map of Incentives for Coalition Formation for Chilean Parliamentary Elections*

Year	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005
Type of Election*	P/L	P/L	L	L	P/L
Influence of Sub-pact Parity	Positive†	Moderately Positive	Positive	Moderately Positive	Negative
Government's Ability to Award Losers	Positive	Positive	Moderately Positive	Moderately Positive	Negative
Influence of Election Concurrence	Positive	Positive	Moderately Positive	Moderately Positive	Moderately Positive

*P=Presidential, L=Legislative,

†As there were no "previous" elections and limited public opinion data, this is assumed positive; see explanation in text.

Influence of Sub-pact Parity: Positive—"Easy" negotiations, less than 10% difference in *both* vote and seat shares between sub-pacts in previous elections; Moderately Positive—"Intermediate" difficulty in negotiations, more than 10% difference in *either* vote or seat shares between sub-pacts in previous elections; Negative—"Difficult" negotiations, more than 10% difference in *both* vote and seat shares between sub-pacts in previous elections.

Government's Ability to Reward "Losers": Positive—Assured coalition victory in concurrent elections; Moderately Positive—nonconcurrent legislative elections with a coalition president in power; Negative—uncertain victory or expected loss in concurrent presidential elections.

Influence of Election Concurrence/Nonconcurrence: Positive—Concurrent presidential and legislative election with expected presidential win; Moderately Positive—concurrent election with expected presidential loss or nonconcurrent legislative election with governing president; Negative—Nonconcurrent elections with expected presidential loss.

selection suggest that when sub-pacts are roughly equal in support, negotiations for electoral slates will be simplified and, in turn, better contribute to coalition unity. Those negotiating candidate slates for the next elections use supporting data based on election returns and the size of legislative party contingents to put pressure on partners to extract more seats. Where parity exists, negotiations will be simplified, and parties will be more willing to simply divide slates between major sub-pacts because the stakes of negotiations are much lower, as each sub-pact will expect to win roughly the same number of seats. Table 4 categorizes the influence of sub-pact parity as positive where there is less than 10 percent disparity in both vote and seat shares between sub-pacts in previous elections. The influence of this variable is classified as a moderate boon to coalition formation where there is less than 10 percent difference between *either* the vote or seat shares between the two sub-pacts in

previous elections. Sub-pact disparity will have a negative influence where there is more than 10 percent difference in *both* the level of vote and seat shares of the two major sub-pacts. The 10 percent figure is, of course, arbitrary. The point is that when there are significant differences in the demonstrated level of support for sub-pacts either in terms of seats or votes (or dramatic shifts, like the spectacular loss of support for the Christian Democrats in the 2001), the dynamic of negotiations will be complicated and less likely to succeed.

In terms of the government's ability to reward losers, the model suggests that an expected presidential victory will assure members of the president's coalition that losers in high-risk legislative races will be rewarded. Alternatively, an uncertain victory for a president or an expected loss will provide a negative incentive for coalition maintenance. Of course, when legislative elections occur midterm, presidents will have less opportunity to provide concrete rewards for risk takers, because a lower number of public offices will be up for grabs. Nonetheless, sitting presidents do have the capacity to provide a limited number of rewards, and thus, this situation will provide a moderately positive reinforcing effect for coalition maintenance. In situations where there is only a presidential election, new presidents have a good deal of latitude to reward losers in previous elections, which exerts a positive, albeit more extended, influence on coalition maintenance.

Finally, with respect to election concurrence, a concurrent presidential and legislative election with an assured presidential win will provide the strongest coalitional glue. Alternatively, nonconcurrent elections with an expected presidential loss will provide a disincentive for coalition maintenance. A concurrent election without an expected presidential win will prove a moderately positive boon to coalition maintenance, given that even with a loss, a common presidential candidate will reinforce unity for legislative races, where candidates still need to amass enough votes to pass crucial thresholds. As table 4 notes, even nonconcurrent elections can provide a moderately positive influence on coalition unity. This occurs in elections where a coalition holds the presidency (in the case of legislative elections) or a majority in the legislature (in the case of presidential elections). This is the case simply because politicians have an incentive to maintain a successful coalition and parlay it into success in either type of impending election.

Empirical evidence from past elections supports the classifications summarized in table 4.⁹ In the interests of coalition unity and the stability of the democratic transition, the parties of the left agreed to support Christian Democrat Aylwin in the 1989 elections. Though there was not

9. The following analysis draws on Siavelis's (2002) account of the negotiations leading up to each election.

parity in the levels of support of the two sub-pacts, there was a great deal of uncertainty, which led to a general presumption of qualified equality. Victory was assured in the presidential race, along with the spoils it would bring, and elections were concurrent. Coalition unity was unprecedented during this period.

In 1993, sub-pacts of the Concertación could not benefit from relative parity (return to table 2). The 1989 elections had provided the center Radical Social Democratic Party (PDC-PRSD) 29.9 percent of the vote, while the anchor parties of the left received 21.6 percent (however, this figure included many "others" in the election, many of whom, as noted, were not considered members of the left's sub-pact by the Christian Democratic Party). This put the left in a weakened position in the lead-up to the 1993 elections, and candidate negotiations were more acrimonious and complicated. Though table 4 categorizes this outcome as a "moderately positive" negotiating environment for the 1993 elections (because the variation in vote shares between sub-pacts is less than 10 percent), one could make a plausible argument that it should be characterized as negative because of the previously discussed lack of coherence of the left following the first election, which minimized its perceived electoral power. Still, the certainty of presidential victory led to a good deal of cooperation, which was enhanced by concurrent elections, allowing the other boons to coalition formation discussed here to function.

In 1997, relative parity in levels of sub-pact support for the coalition (as evidenced in the 1993 elections) facilitated legislative candidate negotiations. The vote shares of the left increased to 24.4 percent versus the center's 30.9 percent. Also, the relative narrowing in the distribution of seat shares between the two coalitions (despite the left's disadvantaged position going into the 1993 elections), provided parity, more negotiating power for the left, and a decision to simply divide candidate slates for the 1997 elections, in turn, facilitating cooperation. While there was no presidential election to allow for the immediate distribution of spoils, the sitting government was in a position to make promises to losing legislative candidates, making for a moderately positive ability to reward losers. The effect of election concurrence was also moderately positive, given that the long-standing and successful coalition could benefit from a sitting president in power. What is more, the shadow of the 1999 presidential election and the (then assumed) assured victory of Lagos also helped to exert a positive effect on coalition maintenance.

Finally, in 2001, continuing sub-pact parity facilitated an agreement on candidate lists. Results for the 1997 legislative elections put the PDC-PRSD pact at 26.0 percent and the combined left at 24.5 percent, with only a 1.5 percent margin of difference. Still, the seat share disparity of 12.5 percent made for only a moderately positive negotiating environment. The government had the moderately positive capability to reward

losers (with a sitting president and legislative elections), and the coalition could rely on a strong coalition in the presidency to smooth over the effects of nonconcurrence, also making for the moderately positive influence of election concurrence.

The big question is, of course, what about 2005? Will the Concertación be around? Table 2 shows that, as the 2005 elections approach, the coalition will be unable to rely on sub-pact parity. Support for the Christian Democrats has plummeted, and their position as the most influential party in the Concertación has been challenged, with the two parties of the left supplanting the PDC as the leaders of the alliance. Returns from the 2001 elections gave the PDC only 18.9 percent in contrast to the Left's 29.0 percent in terms of popular vote.¹⁰ The left captured a whopping thirty-nine seats, versus the PDC's twenty-three, making for a 13.3 percent difference in seat shares. This is the largest disparity in seat shares that has existed between the two sub-pacts since the 1989 elections and the largest disparity in vote shares since the return of democracy.

According to many accounts (and some public opinion data) the potential for victory of a Concertación candidate in the 2005 presidential is dim, given the unprecedented performance of the UDI's Lavín in the last elections and the flagging fortunes of the Concertación.¹¹ However, as this article goes to press the political fortunes of the two coalitions are changing and uncertain. In April of 2004, public opinion polls showed prominent leaders of the Concertación, and in particular Defense Minister Michelle Bachelet and Foreign Affairs Minister Soledad Alvear, beating Lavín in a head-to-head battle for the presidency. Still, it is uncertain whether this dip in public opinion polls is a sign of a deep deterioration in support for Lavín or a shorter term reaction to scandals and divisions in the Alianza. If Lavín's drop in the polls is not illusory, some of the coalition-enhancing incentives for governing coalitions explored here may reemerge, and the Concertación would be expected to strengthen in the lead up to the election.

Alternatively, if Lavín pulls ahead, the Concertación will only be able to depend on the concurrence of elections as a moderately unifying incentive as the elections approach. However, it will be a concurrent election with an expected presidential loss. What is more, a variable not considered here can undermine the potential benefits that might be reaped from concurrent elections. If the Concertación is unable to choose

10. The PRSD joined the left for this election. This only explains a small amount of the overall increase in vote shares for the left, and the increase in the number of seats was truly remarkable.

11. Growing scandal and division on the right recently prompted Lavín to declare an independent candidacy in an effort to position himself above the fray, but he is still the *de facto* leader of the right.

a single presidential candidate, the potential benefits provided by concurrent elections will be lost, and there will be additional disincentives for coalition maintenance. All in all, in the lead up to the 2005 election, if Lavín reassumes the lead in the presidential race, the incentives provided by the electoral system for coalition maintenance are at their lowest point since the return of democracy, as table 4 suggests.¹²

CONCLUSIONS

This article does not suggest that three simple variables determine the incentives for coalition maintenance and stability in Chile. Nor does it suggest that the binominal system does not provide incentives for coalition formation. Rather, it has shown that the oft-cited incentives created by the system for coalition formation and maintenance are context dependent, and that institutional features of the electoral system itself can help create other incentives that, indeed, counteract them.

While scholars, practitioners and analysts have noted ideological rifts, disagreements, and the general exhaustion of the Concertación government as evidence of a potential split in the governing coalition, they usually point to the electoral system as a decisive factor in helping to counteract these centrifugal forces. However, this paper has shown that the electoral system itself also can exert disintegrative tendencies. Few analysts have noted that coalition formation has also succeeded in Chile because of the confluence of a series of incentives that do not always exist, including relative sub-pact parity, congruent elections, the likely victory of presidents, and the promise of electoral spoils. These are all elements that when changed also transform the operational dynamic of the electoral system.

Lessons from the Chilean case also provide more broadly applicable theoretical insights. The laws concerning the effects of electoral systems have often been treated as static, universal, and mechanical. That is to say, analysts have tended to assert that certain electoral formulae cause certain party system effects. This analysis shows that the effects of electoral systems on coalition formation are more malleable than they appear, echoing recent findings that force us to profoundly rethink the relationship between electoral rules and party outcomes and the important contextual variations that can induce them to operate in unexpected ways (Coppedge 1997; Weyland 2002). With different constellations of contextual variables, the operational dynamics of electoral systems are

12. The author certainly does not advocate this outcome nor any of the others explored here. They are simply scenarios associated with different competitive dynamics within Chile's electoral framework.

also quite different. Scholars have recognized the relationship between electoral systems and the number of parties and coalitions and the competitive dynamic between them. However, much more subtle variations in the areas of candidate selection, the timing and sequencing of elections, and the ability to compensate losers (just to name a few) can profoundly affect the party system consequences of distinct electoral formulae.

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