

Congress skips one turn, again

Agenda obstruction in Chile's Congress

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ITAM

APSA annual conference, San Francisco
Sep. 4th, 2015

What is the urgency authority?

The executive can **interfere with legislative scheduling** at will
(Carey&Shugart 1998, Morgenstern 2002)

When a bill declared **urgent**:

- ① Colombia: it takes precedence over other legislative business immediately
- ② Brazil: assembly must act in 45 days, else it takes precedence
Since 2001, all *medidas provisórias* are urgent
- ③ Mexico: must be scheduled for floor vote in 30 days
4 bills/year only
- ④ Uruguay: must act in a pre-specified, short period,
inaction turns bill into law
- ⑤ Chile: like Uruguay, but silent on consequences of inaction

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- ① Any bill at any stage can be declared urgent
- ② Chamber receiving the message must “discuss and vote” before 30 days
- ③ Law sets the breadth of the interference
 - act now (*discusión inmediata*, 6 days)
 - two weeks notice (*urgencia suma*, 15 days)
 - four weeks notice (*urgencia simple*, 30 days)
- ④ Can retire the urgency, with immediate effects
- ⑤ Non-compliance: reversionary schedule/policy indetermined

Does it matter?

“... can have **dramatic effects** on ex.-leg. relations,
legislative organization, and policy...”
(Morgenstern 2002)

Or perhaps **irrelevant** in the face of opposition:
schedule now \neq passage

Under-investigated (Chile only?):

- 60 % exec. proposals 1990–94 urgent (Siavelis 2002)
- Speed of consideration: urgent 29.0 weeks rest 29.7
- Strongly associated with likelihood of passage
(Alemán&Navia 2009)
- Methodological obstacles: right censoring, selection bias...

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- 2 Model searching
- 3 Data
- 4 Prelim analysis
- 5 Where next?

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Presidential v. **parliamentary** democracy

(Bagehot 1867, Wilson 1884, Lijphart 1984, Linz 1990, Shugart&Carey 1992, Cheibub 2007)

Will focus not of pros and cons
but on
how **decisions** are made
under **separation of power**

Application to presidential system,
generalizes to SoP in other forms

Presidentialism: two principles decision-making

- ① **Concurrent consent** between the branches
 - executive veto
 - congressional veto
- ② **Unilateralism** of one over the other
 - veto override
 - executive decree

Principle 2 restricted, otherwise cancels principle 1

Unilateralism overlooked in early literature
pressure boiler with no safety valves (Linz 1990)

Veto & unilateralism side-by-side

<i>Authority by which...</i>	<i>Executive branch</i>	<i>Legislative branch</i>
... branch rejects a proposal by the other	executive veto	legislative veto
... branch over- comes a rejection by the other	unilateralism	veto override

Veto & unilateralism side-by-side

<i>Authority by which...</i>	<i>Executive branch</i>	<i>Legislative branch</i>
... branch rejects a proposal by the other	executive veto Ch.3 veto in US states Ch.5 stunts Chile/Mex.	legislative veto Ch.8 reacting to executive decrees in Argentina
... branch over- comes a rejection by the other	unilateralism Ch.6 urgency in Chile Ch.7 exec. coalition	veto override (Ch.4 hopeless vetoes in Brazil)

① Comparative politics: irreconcilable differences

- Harbingers of democratic breakdown? (Linz&Valenzuela 1994)
- But see Cheibub (2007), Saiegh (2011)...

② American politics: tactical maneuvers of normal democracy

- **bargaining ploys**, reputation of toughness (Cameron 2000)
- **publicity stunts** for voters (Groseclose&McCarty 2001)
- But see Sundquist (1986)...

Polarization, **incomplete info.**, and **position-taking**
compete to explain veto incidence

American exceptionalism?
Shorten gap with comparative field

Theme: what are vetoes?

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schedule now \neq passage

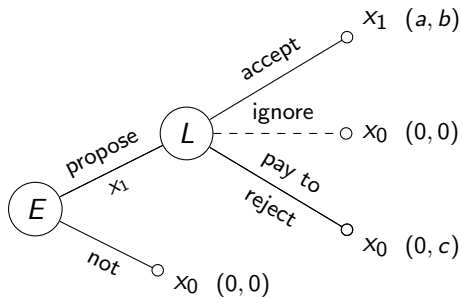
① Imperfect negative agenda control

- Could majority cartel operate? (Cox&McCubbins 2005)
- Committee gatekeeping \rightarrow silent death (Weingast&Marshall 1988)

② Dilatory tactics

- Worsen legislative bottleneck (Cox 1987)
- Filibusters: exploit impatience of those next in line (Wawro&Schickler 2007)

Costly rejection



Parentheses are gains v. status quo

- Legislator and executive each have pet projects
- Two rounds, one project only can be scheduled (rejection takes time)
- Policy now better than later

Case	Agenda (outcomes)	Policy	Discounted payoff
1	<i>abef</i> (both pass)	(a, b, e_0, f_0)	$a + \delta b$
2	<i>eabf</i> (<i>e</i> rejected)	(a, b_0, e_0, f_0)	δa
3	<i>efab</i> (both rejected)	(a_0, b_0, e_0, f_0)	0
4	<i>eabf</i> (both pass)	(a, b_0, e, f_0)	$e + \delta a$

$$e + \delta a > 0 \iff \delta > -\frac{e}{a}$$

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www.camara.cl very sharp

Scraped with Python's Selenium library → bill histories 1990–2014

The screenshot shows the website of the Cámara de Diputados de Chile. The browser window title is 'Cámara de Diputados de Chile - Mozilla Firefox'. The address bar shows the URL 'camara.cl/ley/ley_detalle.aspx?prmID=498&prmlBL=2035-06'. The page title is 'Proyectos de Ley'. The main content area displays details for a bill: 'Modifica la ley Orgánica Constitucional de Municipalidades, con el objeto de establecer sistema de elecciones separadas de alcaldes y concejales.' The details include: Legislatura: 335, Fecha de ingreso: martes 03 de junio de 1997, Estado: Tramitación terminada (Ley N° 19.737 - D.Oficial 06/07/2001), Numero de boletín: 2035-06, Materia: Alcaldes, Elecciones Municipales, Municipios, Iniciativa: Mensaje, and Cámara de origen: Senado. Below this, there is a table with tabs for 'HITOS TRAMITACIÓN', 'INFORMES', 'OFICIOS', 'INDICACIONES', 'URGENCIAS', 'AUTORES', 'VOTACIONES', and 'VETO'. The 'HITOS TRAMITACIÓN' tab is selected, showing a table with columns: Fecha, Sesión, Etapa, Sub-etapa, and Documento. The table contains four rows of data.

Fecha	Sesión	Etapa	Sub-etapa	Documento
03 de Jun. de 1997		Primer trámite constitucional / Senado	Ingreso de proyecto	Ver
03 de Jun. de 1997	1ª / 335	Primer trámite constitucional / Senado	Cuenta de proyecto. Pasa a Comisión de Gobierno, Descentralización y Regionalización	
21 de Abr. de 1998	9ª / 337	Primer trámite constitucional / Senado	S.E el Presidente de la República incluye proyecto en la Convocatoria a Legislatura Extraordinaria.	
09 de Jun. de 1998		Primer trámite constitucional / Senado	Primer informe de comisión	Ver
09 de Jun. de 1998	3ª / 338	Primer trámite constitucional / Senado	Cuenta de primer informe de comisión	

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HITOS TRAMITACIÓN	INFORMES	OFICIOS	INDICACIONES	URGENCIAS	AUTORES	VOTACIONES	VETO
Fecha Inicio	Fecha término	N°Oficio	N°Mensaje ingreso	N°Mensaje retiro			
02 de May. de 2020		Suma	0020501				
18 de Abr. de 2001		Suma	419-343				
10 de Abr. de 2001	04 de May. de 2020	Suma	395-343			0020501	
14 de Mar. de 2001	11 de Abr. de 2001	Suma	332-343				401-343
13 de Mar. de 2001		Discusión inmediata	322-343				
06 de Mar. de 2001	13 de Mar. de 2001	Simple	290-343				322-343
16 de May. de 2000		Discusión inmediata	437-341				
16 de May. de 2000	16 de May. de 2000	Suma	413-341				437-341

The president's status in Congress

Coalition	1998–02	2002–06	2006–10	2010–14
Chamber of deputies				
President's	58	53	51	50
Opposition	42	48	47	48
Regional			3	2
Total	100	100	100	100
Senate				
President's	50	50	55	45
Opposition	50	50	45	55
Total	100	100	100	100

Coalition unity (Carey 2002, Alemán&Saiegh 2007)

Bills, laws, and urgency 1998–2014

Bills	by legislators	by president	by either
introduced	5,533	1,469	7,002
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as % introduced	7	73	21

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as %	27	73	100
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declared urgent	351	1,016	1,367
as %	26	74	100
as % introduced	6	69	20

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as %	27	73	100
as % introduced	7	73	21
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as %	26	74	100
as % introduced	6	69	20
declared urgent & passed	167	762	929
as %	18	82	100
as % declared urgent	48	75	68

Total urgency messages \approx 8,200
Bills declared urgent \approx 1,350 only(!)

Number of messages	Bill freq. %
1	16
2	18
3	11
4	8
5-10	25
11-20	14
21-71	9
Total	100
(N)	(1,367)

Q: Re-declared urgent after non-compliance?

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A: Doesn't seem so, deadlines change/drop a lot

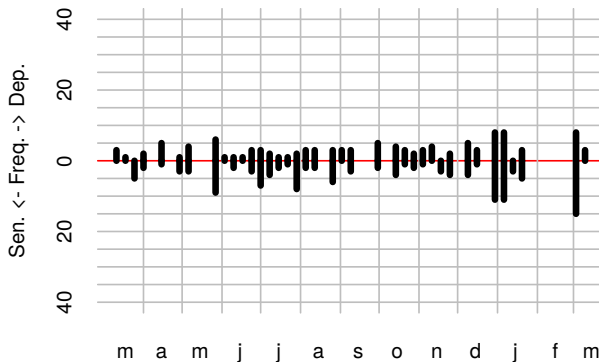
	1998–2002	2002–2006	2006–2010	2010–2014
Act now	5	6	3	5
2 weeks notice	17	16	16	26
4 weeks notice	30	24	20	13
Shorten deadline	2	1	1	3
Extend deadline	26	30	27	39
Withdraw (act now)	1	2	2	2
Withdraw (2-weeks)	7	10	14	9
Withdraw (4-weeks)	11	11	17	3
Total messages	100	100	100	100
(N)	(1,279)	(1,915)	(4,964)	(5,689)

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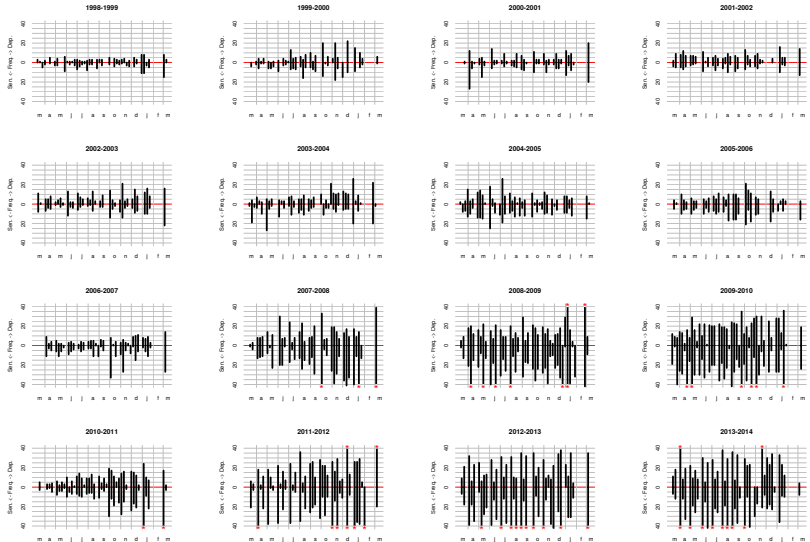
Weekly messages in one legislative year

1998-1999

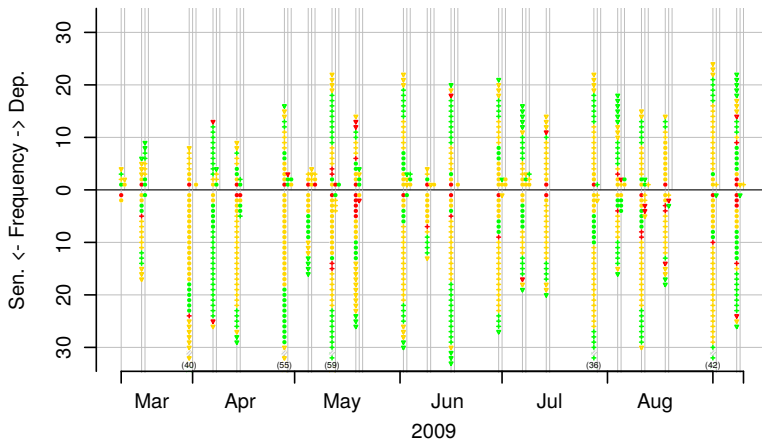


(Two histograms: deputies above, senate below **zero** line)

When everything is urgent... nothing really is

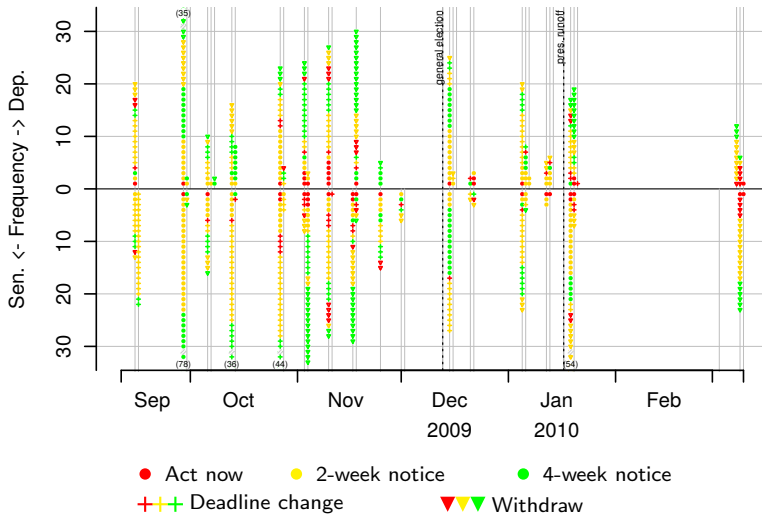


Daily messages 2009–10



● Act now ● 2-week notice ● 4-week notice
+ + + Deadline change ▼ ▼ ▼ Withdraw

Daily messages 2009–10



Lend a helping hand

25 % urgencies were for MC bills

Q: Where these coalition-sponsored?

A: Not always!

Concertación sponsors	Urgency raised by	
	Concertación presidents	Right president
0 %	21	26
1–25 %	3	4
26–50 %	10	18
51–75 %	15	12
76–99 %	13	12
100 %	39	26
Total	100	100
(N)	(230)	(121)

Suggests vote trading?

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100 %	39	26
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(N)	(230)	(121)

Suggests vote trading?

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Reversion is indeterminate, so deadline may be pure suggestion

Q: Does action follow an urgency?

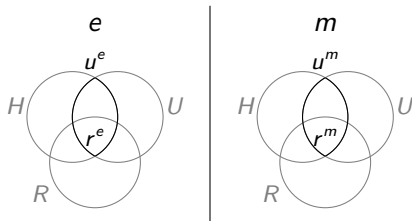
Q: Is it punctual?

Committee reporting may be good step to trace movement

- Some urgencies may target bills in post-committee bottleneck—not all/most
- Urgency compels a floor vote, so reporting committee(s) must consider and report
- Bills with authorization must be referred to Hacienda committee, no exception

Message	Report observed within deadline		
	% yes	% no	N
Act now	63	37	475
2-week notice	27	73	2192
4-week notice	25	75	1678
Deadline shortened	41	59	241
Deadline extended	23	77	3454
Withdrawn	6	94	211
All	27	73	8251

Three event count models

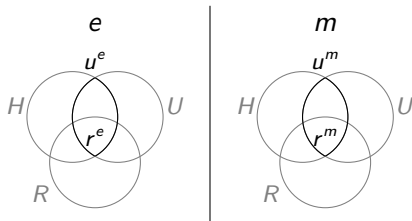


IndVar	DepVar	
	r^e	r^m
u^e	Mod. 1	Mod. 2
u^m		Mod. 3

Weekly counts: $r_t^e = \beta_0 + \beta_1 u_t^e + \beta_2 u_{t-1}^e + \dots$

Negative binomial regression

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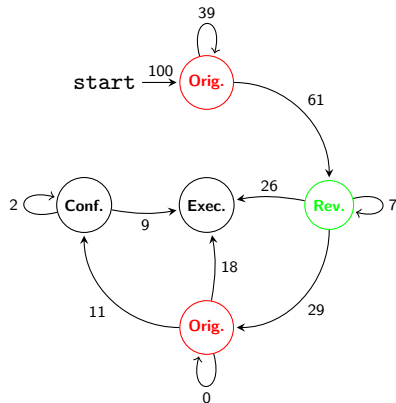
Message effects on Hacienda reports, Cámara

Type	Weekly reports					Weekly reports				
	$t = 0$	1	2	3	4	$t = 0$	1	2	3	4
		1: $u^e \rightarrow r^e$					2: $u^e \rightarrow r^m$			
Act Now	++	+	--				++			
2-week notice		++		--		++	-	++		
4-week notice				++	++					
Shorten deadline		++								
		3: $u^e \rightarrow r^{\bar{m}}$					4: $u^m \rightarrow r^{\bar{m}}$			
Act Now						++	++			
2-week notice		(not estimated)						++	++	
4-week notice										
Shorten deadline										

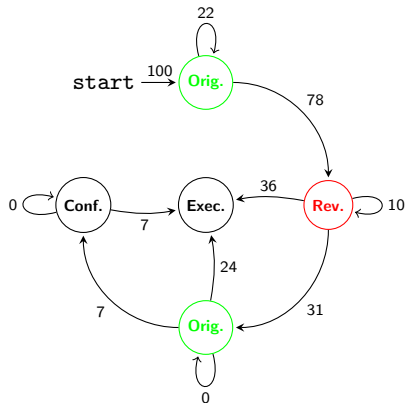
Determinants of bill urgency

	<i>DV=1 if urgent, else 0</i>	
	(1)	(2)
MC bill	-2.978***	
MC bill, opp.-sponsored		-3.597***
MC bill, mix.-sponsored		-2.517***
MC bill, pres. coal.-sp.		-2.969***
Hacienda	1.761***	1.782***
Senate majority	-0.304***	-0.302***
Introduced Senate	0.184*	0.415***
Pres. term remaining	0.004***	0.004***
Year remaining	0.003	0.003*
Constant	-0.047	-0.113
N	6,987	6,987
LogL	-2,057	-2,029
% predicted correctly	89	89

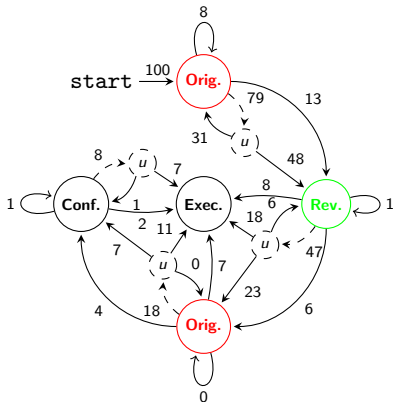
Sent to Senate ($N = 90$)



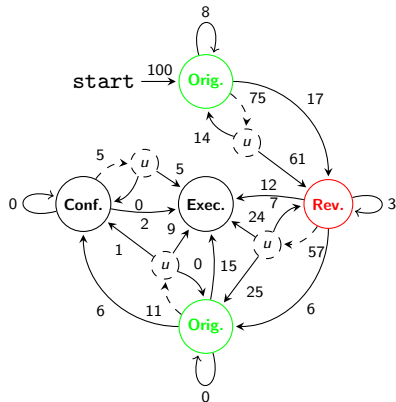
Sent to Deputies ($N = 314$)



Sent to Senate ($N = 90$)



Sent to Deputies ($N = 314$)



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- One in five messages withdraw an urgency
 - ① Which exec. proposals not urgent?
 - ② How do MC proposals become urgent?
- Forest out of sight? Model hunting
 - ① Gains from trade and credible commitment?
 - ② Dilatory tactics, scheduling?
 - ③ ...

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