Presidential obstruction of the agenda in Chile's Congress*

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Abstract

Unlike presidents with mostly (or only) reactive formal powers in the legislative arena, Chile's enjoys formidable proactive ones. Among them is the urgency authority. A bill declared urgent confronts legislators with a short deadline to discuss and vote it. Urgency, research has shown, correlates with the odds of bill passage, and most executive-initiated legislation becomes urgent at some stage. Comparing the Chilean urgency authority to others in the region reveals no penalty for non-compliance, leaving urgency messages as cheap talk unless presidents can persuade legislators that costs indeed exist. I inspect original data of the decision to declare legislation urgent in order to shed light on the disconnect between usage and institutional status. I do not answer what makes the urgency consequential satisfactorily, but the attempt manifests suggestive patterns and raises puzzles worth investigating in future research.

Threats are promises to inflict harm on someone unless he or she transfers welfare to whoever stated the threat. From an economic perspective, action in accordance with the threatener's wishes should follow so long as the harm exceeds the welfare transfer demanded—else the threatened person is better off enduring the penalty. Empty threats are those failing to fulfil the large penalty condition. Evidence of frequent compliance to empty threats would pose a puzzle for this strategic stylization of power relations (Dahl 1957, Friedrich 1941, Schelling 1960).

This chapter compares the urgency authority in Chile to those found in a few other constitutions of the Americas. A president with urgency authority can remove obstacles

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preventing floor consideration of legislative proposals. One striking finding of this institutional contrast is how Chilean urgency urgency messages carry no formal penalty whatsoever for non-compliance, and therefore have the status of empty threats to Congress, otherwise known as cheap talk.

Inspection of recent urgency message incidence reveals a strikingly high frequency: one of every five bills in Congress received some form of executive urgency in some stage (and often in many stages) of the legislative process; and more than two-thirds of executive proposals did. Adding layers to the puzzle, Congress in fact complied with a significant number of urgency messages. Why would presidents resort so remarkably frequently to the institutionally inconsequential urgency authority? And why would legislators comply so often with empty executive threats?

The chapter proceeds thus. Section 1 briefly reviews empirical studies of the urgency authority, spotting a major obstacle to measure its effects. Section 2 offers a theoretical framework to compare the urgency authority across constitutions. Highlighting two key institutional features—the reversionary policy and reversionary schedule applicable when the assembly misses the urgent deadline—reveals a fatal flaw in the Chilean (and possibly Mexican) variants, compared to the Brazilian, Colombian, and Uruguayan: urgency messages are cheap talk. The framework also shows that the existence of indirect costs—what (Neustadt 1990) calls presidential persuation—is one way to restore the Chilean institution's bite. Section 3 looks at urgency degrees, another feature of Chile's institution, and speculates about their potential to render the urgency authority consequential. Section 4 introduces an original dataset of bill histories and urgency messages in Chile in the 1998–2014 period. Many puzzles arise from the descriptive statistics on bill initiation, bill passage, and urgency usage. One is the disconnect between a possibly inconsequential institution and the remarkable frequency of its use. Section 5 inspects committee reporting following different types of urgency messages. Analysis shows that, far from inconsequential, the urgency authority indeed lets Chilean presidents determine legislative scheduling. Section 6 offers closing remarks.

1 The received wisdom

> [U]rgency powers... can have dramatic effects on executive-legislative relations, legislative organization, and the policy process more generally
> —Morgenstern (2002:438)

Scholars have paid little attention to the urgency authority. Shugart and Carey's (1992)

seminal monograph does not include it when computing the index of presidents' legislative powers. And while not addressing it directly either, Carey and Shugart's (1998) discussion of the delegation of unilateral authority to the executive offers clues of the logic behind the institution. Informational and valence asymmetries between Latin American executive and legislative branches create incentives for such delegation. Delays to reach agreement in assemblies offer further incentives by diminishing the value of policy (Baron and Ferejohn 1989), so rather than delegate proposal power within the chamber, legislators may find it preferable to let the president set the agenda.

As far as I am aware, Siavelis (2002) is the only systematic study of the urgency authority. Like Morgenstern's quote, he hypothesized the urgency power's game-changer potential. His study of Chilean executive-legislative in the first post-transition presidency revealed the amazing frequency with which urgency messages were issued by President Aylwin: slightly more than one-third of proposals in Congress received some form of urgency, and about 9 out of 10 of urgent bills were executive-initiated. Guided by semantics, he also sought to discover if urgent bills, in fact, circulated the steps of the legislative process faster than the rest, and whether urgency status increased the likelihood of bill passage. The study found mixed evidence at best. Among executive bills, consideration of urgent ones had somewhat shorter duration than the rest (medians of 134 and 160 days, respectively), but no palpable difference in success rates is appreciated (64 and 63 percent, respectively).

The negative finding may bear relation to three elements. In their study of budgetary congressional oversight of the executive, Berríos and Gamboa (2006) warn against overstating the Chilean urgency authority's importance, as non-compliance entails no penalty for Congress—the next section develops this argument. While this may explain the lack of effects, it begs the question of why the president resorted so frequently to an authority that seems inconsequential. In other words, why make so many empty threats?

Another is a failure to control for urgency degrees—elaborated in section 3—in the analysis. Alemán and Navia's (2009) systematic study of executive success in Congress in three post-transition presidencies finds some of the evidence sought by Siavelis. Controlling for bill characteristics (such as key policy domains, the chamber where the bill originated, the government's seat margin, and presidential agenda size), urgency degrees had quite different effects in passage. Higher degrees significantly associate with better probability of executive success, but the lower made no statistical difference. Since, as will be seen, low-degree urgencies were much more prevalent, conflating them washes the effect off the effect of the higher-degree.

Finally, selection bias is an obstacle to measure urgency authority effects. Presidents,

behaving strategically, are likely to target for urgency proposals that are markedly different from the rest in important ways, so the set of bills receiveing urgent status is not random. Like the Siavelis and Alemán-Navia studies, this chapter recognizes the endogeneity problem that arises but does not confront it methodologically. Until a more subtle identification design is proposed, findings must be taken with a grain of salt. The systematic study of the urgency authority in Chile that follows should contribute to pave the way to a solution.

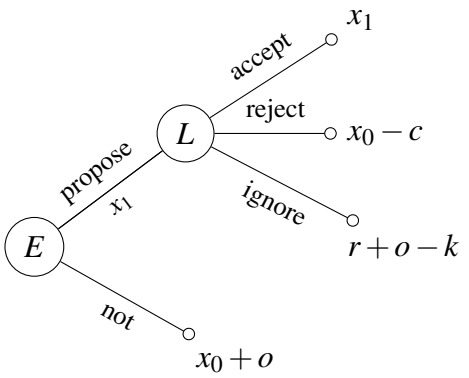
2 Costly scheduling and inaction

Five constitutions of the Americas give executives power to interfere, to some degree, with the assembly's voting schedule (Morgenstern 2002). The urgency authority varies considerably. In Brazil, the assembly must act on a bill deemed urgent withing 45 days, or else it takes precedence over legislative business. The president can declare any executive-initiated bill urgent at any time. And, since 2001, all executive unilateral policy (*medidas provisórias*) become urgent bills upon publication. In Colombia, urgent bills go to the top of the voting schedule immediately. In Uruguay and Chile, legislators must act within a pre-specified, short period. Failure to do so converts the urgent bill into law in Uruguay, although three-fifths of any chamber's membership can remove the project's urgent status. As said, in Chile the consequences of inaction are indetermined. And in Mexico since 2012, the president can propose up to two bills with urgent at the start of each biannual sessions period, which must scheduled for floor consideration within 30 days. As in Chile, how to proceed in case of legislative non-compliance is indetermined.[1]

Figure 1 extends the framework used throughout the book to ease the comparison of different urgency authorities. Key in the stylization is that rejection of undesirable executive proposals is costly for the assembly. The framework reveals similarities and differences between urgency authorities, and consequences for executive-legislative bargaining. It is set as a two-player game between the executive and the pivotal legislator. The former starts by proposing urgent policy x_1, or ending the game with the status quo x_0 unchanged. Terminal nodes in the game tree indicate the policy outcome (x_0, x_1, or r) and associated costs (all elaborated below). Costs are all borne by the legislator, whose payoff is the value of the policy outcome indicated and the value of the costs: in the case of the bottom terminal node, for instance, this would be $u_l(x_0) + o$ (where u_l is Euclidian utility).

Given scarce committee and plenary time, scheduling anything for consideration entails an opportunity cost o. Conceptually, o is the value of the best alternative policy that the

[1] Constitutional articles enshrining this authority are the following: Brazil 62 and 64; Chile 74; Colombia 163; Mexico 71; and Uruguay 168.7.



Case	r	c	k
Chile	x_0	0	≥ 0
Brazil (urgency), Colombia	x_0	0	$\geq o$
Brazil (MPs)	x_0	> 0	$\geq o$
Brazil (MPs up to 2001)	x_1	> 0	0
Mexico (4 bills yearly)	x_0	0	?
Uruguay	x_1	0	0

Figure 1: Urgency authority and costly scheduling and rejections

legislator might adopt if scheduled instead of proposal x_1. With an institution that no two (or more) proposals are scheduled simultaneously, considering x_1 inevitably postpones the consideration of the best alternative—indefinitely, perhaps, since the agreement to schedule it next may break down (Cameron 2000, Wawro and Schickler 2007). So, when no proposal is made, value o can be realized by the legislator in the bottom terminal node (he is free to schedule the alternative), adding up to the policy payoff.

If called to play, the legislator faces three actions to choose from, all leading to terminal nodes. For ease of exposition, costs other than o are initially set to zero ($c = k = 0$), cancelling out of the description. The restriction is relaxed afterwards. The legislator can accept the proposal, replacing the status quo with policy at x_1. The legislator could alternatively retain the status quo by rejecting the proposal. Both choices entail an opportunity cost due to the need to schedule the bill for acceptance or rejection. And the legislator could opt to ignore the proposal, policy reverting to a pre-defined reversion outcome r. Unlike the other alternatives, ignoring frees legislative time to schedule something else, and o adds to the value of the outcome.

Reversionary policy r varies across constitutions. The Uruguayan reverts policy to executive proposals declared urgent but not scheduled for a vote ($r = x_1$). The Brazilian also did in cases of unscheduled urgency by *medida provisória* up to 2001, when the constitution was amended.[2] The rest, including Brazil since 2001, revert to the status quo ante

[2] *Medidas provisórias* expire 60 days after publication. Before the reform, a Supreme Court ruling legalized the option of re-issuing MPs that had not been discussed and voted in Congress upon expiration, leading

($r = x_0$). Absent costs other than o (and leaving aside the possibility of $o < 0$), ignoring undesirable proposals dominates rejecting them, foregoing opportunity costs. This jibes with evidence of assemblies brushing aside undesired executive proposals by inaction rather than actual rejection.[3] The alternative reversion policy $r = x_1$ brings a drastic change in executive-legislative relations, as congressional inaction becomes a way of adopting urgent presidential policy more cheaply than through actual approval.

Relaxing the nil costs restriction brings further depth into the comparative framework. Cost $c > 0$ lowers the legislator's status quo value after rejection of the proposal. This cost is relevant for Brazil only, and will be elaborated in the next chapter. Suffice to say here that Brazil since 2001 conflates the urgency authority with executive unilateral power, and cost c is related to the latter only—arising from the difference in turning down policy recently set in motion and turning down a policy prospect.

Cost $k > 0$ mitigates, or even cancels, the value of the opportunity cost realized by ignoring the president's proposal. It arises from issue salience and what Neustadt (1990) called the president's power to persuade. Raising urgency conveys a sense of importance and of imperative immediate attention. By signaling presidential priority, coupled with a clever communication strategy, the urgency authority may place issues in the public agenda, increase media attention, and nurture public debate. An undesired proposal that could have easily been dusted under the carpet in normal circumstances will, as a consequence of increased salience, be harder to duck—adding a cost $k > 0$. And salience aside, cost k is magnified when the institution brings an urgent but unconsidered proposal to the top of the assembly's Day's Order, as in Colombia and Brazil. In both cases, constitutions establish a reversion schedule for legislative inaction: consider the urgent proposal, or nothing. At this point, continuing to postpone proposal x_1 subtracts value o once for every additional session until the proposal is considered, resulting in $k > o$.

The table accompanying Figure 1's game tree summarizes costs associated with rejection and ignoring urgent proposals in the five constitutions. Cost $c > 0$ is Brazil specific. Urgency non-compliance being the same as tacit acceptance when $r = x_1$, a zero cost is associated ($k = 0$). And reversion schedule pulling the urgent proposal to the top imply non-

to the instituion described in the text ($r = x_1$). The reform adopted 9/11/2001 limits presidents to one MP re-issue, with migration to the top of the voting schedule in case of congressional inaction. See Figueiredo and Limongi (1996).

[3]Executive bills that failed to pass in three legislatures overwhelmingly remained pending, as opposed to explicitly rejected or withdrawn. Of 549 failed executive bills in Brazil between 1995 and 2010, 67 percent remained pending; of 394 in Chile between 1998 and 2014, 71 percent remained so; and of 36 in Mexico between 2000 and 2012, 83 percent did. The highest rate in Mexico coincides with the most limited urgency authority, and lowest in Brazil with the least limited. Sources: Brazilian and Chilean data from databases in this and next chapters, Mexican executive bill approval is from `http://sil.gobernacion.gob.mx`, rejections kindly shared by Jeff Weldon.

compliance costs more than offsetting the gains of an opportunity cost foregone ($k > o$). In Mexico, the consequences of inaction remain indeterminate.

And key for this chapter is whether or not non-compliance costs different from zero arise in Chile and are large enough to offset opportunity costs ($k \overset{?}{>} o$). Failure to offset in the framework developped leaves the president's urgency as an inconsequential authority, as the next section demonstrates.

3 Variable urgency degrees

Presidential power is the power to persuade —Neustadt[4]

The constitution (art. 74) stipulates that the president can urge action on any bill (not just executive proposals) at any stage of the legislative process. The chamber receiving the urgency message is compelled to "discuss and vote" the bill before a deadline. The exception are urgency messages raised over bills in conference committee to resolve inter-cameral differences, requiring timely action from the committe and then each chamber.

The congressional organic law (arts. 26 and 27) defines the breadth of the interference, giving the president a choice of sending 'one month' (*urgencia simple* or 30 days), 'two week' (*urgencia suma* or 15 days), or 'act now' (*discusión inmediata* or 6 days) notices. The organic law was amended in July 2010, four months into the newly elected Legislature and concurrent presidential administration, substantially relaxing the deadlines for the 'act now' and 'two week' urgencies, originally set at 10 and 3 days, respectively. 'One month' urgencies remained unchanged. Issuing maximal urgency in the right circumstances—an act-now message attached to a bill in conference before 2010—gave each instance just one day to act: one for the conference to report a compromise bill, and one for each chamber to sequentially consider and push the bill to the floor for a vote (congressional practice is well summarized by the library of Congress at `http://www.bcn.cl/ecivica/formacion/`.) The president may remove the urgency at will, with immediate effects. Urgency messages expire at the end of the ordinary period on March 10th every year.

The constitution, it must be noted, sets only a floor for the urgency authority, defining one month urgency only. Higher degrees are set by the organic law. High-degree urgency is therefore vulnerable to congressional majorities, who might be inclined to relax the deadlines available if that were in their interest—as, in fact, was done in 2010. But the constitution (art. 66) also raises the bar for this by requiring the vote of four-sevenths ($\approx$ 57 percent) of each chamber's membership for organic law passage and amendment.

[4]Neustadt (199011)

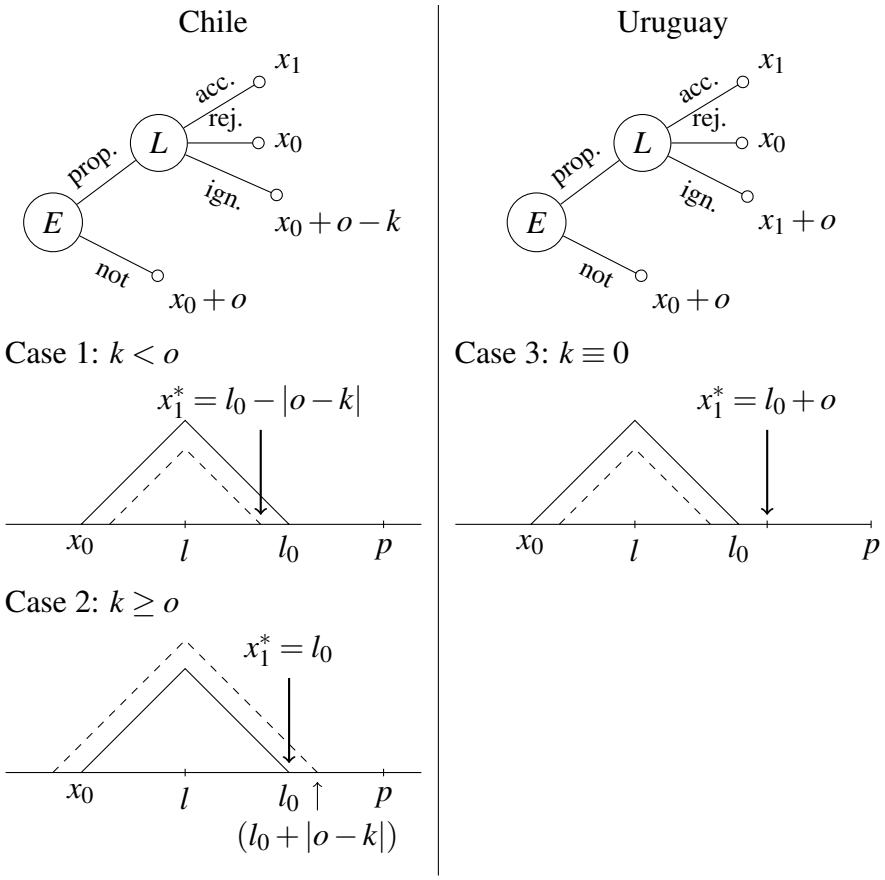


Figure 2: Equilibrium costly-scheduling proposals in three cases

While below the two-thirds membership needed for constitutional reform, no coalition has exceeded the organic law threshold in both chambers since the return to democracy.

Vagueness surrounds key aspects of the urgency authority. When a 30-day limit is set, for instance, no indication is given of whether those are calendar, business, or session days. I treat the messages in weeks rather than days given imprecision (and, when coding deadlines in the empirical sections below, arbitrarily rely on business days). More important, no formal reversionary course of action is defined, and no hint of rulings by the Constitutional Tribunal filling in the institutional void could be found. As seen in the previous section, I interpret indeterminacy as reversion to the status quo with no effect on the voting schedule.

In the absence of a formal penalty for inaction—like Uruguayan reversion to x_1, or placing Brazilian legislative business on hold until the urgency is heeded—only a sizeable cost k remains to prevent the Chilean assembly ignoring executive proposals: unless $k > o$, ignoring dominates rejecting an undesirable proposal. Like vetoes, explicit rejections can have position taking value, as shown in chapter **??**. And cost k may be key to remove (or, at least, minimize) executive disadvantage in the presence of opportunity costs.

To see this, I contrast Chilean and Uruguayan versions of the game in Figure 2, revealing how the size of k relative to o and the reversion point determine who is advantaged by the urgency authority. The Chilean institution, in the left panel, operates identically with or without an urgency message—although cost k may not arise without urgency, as will be seen. The Uruguayan institution, in the right, necessitates an urgent presidential proposal, or else the $r = x_1$ reversion does not kick in abd the game is identical to Chile's. Proceeding backwards, the Chilean legislator compares relative utilities $u_l(x_1)$, $u_l(x_0)$, and $u_l(x_0) + o - k$. With x_0 and costs o and k set exogenously, a baseline for the optimal reaction to the president's proposal can be derived. Giving players specific preferences relative to a status quo aides in seeing the bargaining logic and institutional effects. An interesting example, with room for inter-branch compromise in policy, is $x_0 < l < p$, analyzed graphically below the game tree in the figure. (I do not derive the full equilibrium, which is in line with the model in chapter **??**.) Using the book's standard notation and spatial payoffs, l_0 in the figure is policy leaving the legislator indifferent to the status quo (before netting any costs). If ignoring leaves the status quo intact, it also adds $o - k$ to the legislator's utility, and the net value of ignoring must therefore be read through the dashed indifference sets. Whenever the ignoring cost less than counters the opportunity cost (i.e., $k < o \iff o - k > 0$, as in the figure's case 1), the dashed-line indifference set falls inside the limits of the standard indifference set and ignoring gives a bonus, dominating rejecting. When the president calibrates a proposal at $x_1 = l_0$—which, in the standard game, prompts acceptance—the legislator is better off ignoring it (thus receiving x_0 at the dashed value, which is closer to ideal point l than the accepted proposal's value). Acceptance requires further presidential concessions: a proposal at $x_1 = l_0 - (-k + o)$ leaves the legislator indifferent, and is accepted.[5]

When $k \geq o \iff o - k \leq 0$ (as in case 2), the dashed line falls beyond the limits of the legislator's costless indifference set, and now rejecting dominates ignoring. In which case a proposal at $x_1 = l_0$ yields identical payoff to the status quo and is accepted, as in the standard game. And in case 3, where only cost o intervenes (and is assumed positive), ignoring dominates accepting, leaving the executive room to extract welfare from the legislator. Ignoring a proposal at $x_1 = l_0$, valued with the dashed line (which, given $o > 0$, is within the limits of the costless indifference set), dominates both accepting and rejecting. With that in mind, an alternative proposal at $x_1 = l_0 + o$, leaving the legislator indifferent, is also ignored (tacitly accepted) but with fewer executive concessions.

[5]This claim assumes that, when indifferent between accepting and not, the legislator accepts. Locating the proposal a tiny ε closer to the ideal, as in chapter **??**, achieves the same without this assumption, but is less economical in notation.

In sum, Uruguayan reversion to the urgent proposal always operates in favor of the executive, who gains policy influence directly proportional to the size of opportunity cost o. In contrast, Chilean reversion to the status quo can operate against executive influence. When the cost legislators pay for ignoring executive proposals cannot offset the opportunity cost of finite scheduling time, the legislator gains influence inversely proportional to $|o-k|$. Executive-legislative influence is re-balanced in Chilean-type urgency only when cost k is large enough to compensate the legislator's opportunity cost.

It is worthwhile to elaborate on two routes towards fulfillment of the balancing condition $o < k$: by lowering opportunity cost o relative to ignoring cost k, or by increasing k relative to o. Proposing genuine policy priorities—that is, labeling urgent an objectively urgent issue—drops the size of o. Given that genuine priorities are rare, if this were the only route then urgency messages would be rare, something that the Chilean evidence contradicts. The second route therefore seems more attractive. How can presidents increase the size of cost k?

Neustadt's (1990) study of the modern U.S. presidency offers elements connecting the urgency, and especially the president's qualification of the urgency, with the size of cost k. Urgency communicates presidential priority (Alemán and Navia 2009), a message that legislators may disregard, postponing the proposal's consideration. If no perils are in sight, legislators can safely choose to ignore the message, postponing the proposal's consideration. But, with the president involved, perils are likely, and legislators will need to quantify expected damages. "With hardly an exception, those who share in governing [under separation of power] are aware that at some time, in some degree, the doing of *their* jobs, the furthering of *their* ambitions, may depend on the President... Their need or fear is his advantage" (31, emphasis in original). Coupled with a clever communication strategy prompting vivid stories that illustrate and personalize national problems (what Neustadt calls happenings), the urgency can mobilize public opinion favorably for the issue (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). Ignoring the proposal becomes costly. So, all else equal, a 'two week' notice has a larger k (or, at least, never lower) than a 'one month, and an 'act now' message has a larger k (or, at least, never lower) than either other.

4 The data

The remainder of the chapter investigates the Chilean urgency authority empirically under the light of theoretical elements introduced. Data are from the Cámara de Diputados' web page (`www.camara.cl`). The source publishes detailed reports with bills' general traits: who proposed it, when, in what chamber, what it deals with, its status at the time of con-

List	1998–2002	2002–06	2006–10	2010–14
Cámara de Diputados				
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

[†] vacant seats dropped

Table 1: The president's status in Congress. Percent seats controlled by electoral lists in each chamber. The president's list in 1998–2010 was Concertación; it was Alianza afterwards. Regional list includes major-list splinters (from Christian Democrats and UDI). President's status in the Senate slightly and briefly oscilated above and below majority due to vacant seats. Source: prepared with information from `www.camara.cl`.

sultation, and so forth. The report also lists and dates the proposal's milestones in transit through the meanders of the bicameral legislative process: committee referrals, reports to the plenary, floor discussion and voting, navette to the other chamber, and more. Of direct relevance, all urgency messages received by the chambers are listed chronologically.

An original dataset was prepared by scraping the web page in November 2014 in search for the record (*boletín*) of every proposal made between 11 March 1998 and 10 March 2014, inclusive.[6] Years before 1998 antedate Internet publication and were dropped, as data completeness in the primary source remains to be verified. The period fully covers two Senates, four Cámaras, and three presidencies (plus the last two years of an earlier presidency). The span offers variance in the size and status of the president's coalition in Congress. Given electoral list voting unity since the return to democracy (Alemán and Saiegh 2007, Carey 2002), the seats they control are a good indicator of the executive's legislative support. As Table 1 reports, the president's coalition was always in control of the Cámara, but has controlled Senate majorities between 2006 and 2010 only (coinciding with the first Bachelet administration). By requiring 67, 60, and 57 percent votes of each chamber, respectively, constitutional reform, constitution-interpreting legislation, and organic laws therefore al-

[6] A query was sent to the congressional staff in October 2014 about the existence of an official API or FTP site where this well-structured data could be downloaded en bloc. There was no response, so an automated script was prepared to retrieve the information directly. The Cámara's web page is javascript-rich, an obstacle surmounted with `Python`'s Selenium library, putting together the bits and pieces of the scraping process. A commented version of the script and the dataset will be posted online upon publication. Data analysis was done with a multiplicity of `R`'s libraries.

Bills	by legislators	by president	by either
introduced	5,526	1,461	6,987
as %	*79*	*21*	*100*
passed	404	1,059	1,463
as %	*28*	*72*	*100*
as % of introduced	*7*	*72*	*21*
declared urgent (once at least)	349	1,013	1,362
as %	*26*	*74*	*100*
as % of introduced	*6*	*69*	*19*
declared urgent & passed	167	759	926
as %	*18*	*82*	*100*
as % of declared urgent	*48*	*75*	*68*

Table 2: Bills, laws, and the urgency authority 1998–2014

ways required votes across the aisle.

Table 2 offers a broad summary of bill introduction, bill passage, and urgency incidence in the period. Nearly seven thousand pieces of legislation were proposed, 412 yearly on average. Most proposals came from legislators, presidents introduced one bill for every four by members of Congress (79 vs. 21 percent). In terms of success rates, however, branch asymmetry inverts, a member turning one proposal into law for every three by a president (27 vs. 73 percent). And while members' success rate was dismal (7 percent), they still managed to add about four hundred statutes in the period due to the sheer volume of proposals made.

It is striking that one of every five proposals in the period was urgent. The 1,362 bills deemed urgent at some point in the legislative process attest to the Chilean presidents' rather lax definition of urgency. Note the close similarity of relative figures in the second (urgency) and third (passed bills) sets of table rows. The subset of urgent bills overlaps to a very large extent with the subset of bills passed. In other words, coincident with Alemán and Navia (2009), urgency and success correlate strongly: the passage rate of members' bills declared urgent skyrocketed to 48 percent, up from 7 percent altogether (the difference is small for executive bills). It is tempting to conclude that urgency improves bills' odds. But the reverse may hold, proposals with better prospects in Congress strategically receiving the bulk of urgency messages—the problem of selection bias discussed above (cf. Jacobson and Kernell 1983).

Table 3 inspects urgency messages to offer finer-grained evidence. The sheer number of messages is appalling: 13,558 in the 16-year period, reaching averages of 71 monthly messages and 10 messages for every bill declared urgent in the period. Message frequency

	1998–2002	2002–06	2006–10	2010–14	1998–2014
Part A. Individual messages					
Act now	5	5	3	3	3
2 week notice	14	13	9	12	11
1 month notice	24	18	13	6	12
Shorten deadline	2	3	2	5	4
Extend deadline	39	42	43	60	49
Withdraw (act now)	1	2	2	2	2
Withdraw (2 week)	6	9	13	8	10
Withdraw (1 month)	8	9	16	3	9
Total messages	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(1,218)	(1,821)	(4,908)	(5,611)	(13,558)
Part B. Urgency chains					
Act now singleton	8	8	4	5	5
Act now, extend	4	3	3	4	3
Act now, withdraw	1	1	1	2	1
Act now, extend, withdraw	2	4	4	3	3
2 week singleton	12	8	4	8	7
2 week, extend	9	9	4	17	10
2 week, withdraw	4	2	2	4	3
2 week, extend, withdraw	11	17	26	27	23
1 month singleton	11	5	3	3	4
1 month, extend	18	17	3	10	10
1 month, withdraw	2	3	2	2	2
1 month, extend, withdraw	19	23	44	14	26
Total chains	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(369)	(609)	(1,160)	(1,204)	(3,342)
Messages in mean chain	3.3	3.0	4.2	4.7	4.1

Table 3: Urgency messages and urgency chains. Chains (212 in total) initiated in the period but targeting bills proposed before are not considered.

rose substantially from every four-year Legislature reported to the next. President Bachelet (2006–10) was responsible for the steepest hike in urgency incidence, issuing almost three times more messages relative to the previous Legislature and pushing the monthly average above 100.

Also noteworthy is that just 26 percent of messages in the full period were original urgencies. An *original urgency* is a message compelling action on legislation with non-urgent status in the chamber. Among original urgency messages, 'act now' notice frequency (3 percent of messages) was one-fourth the frequency of 'two week' and 'one month' notices (11 and 12 percent, respectively). Non-original messages are those modifying the terms of a previously issued urgency. The literature has overlooked non-original urgency, which amounted to nearly three out of four messages in the period. Modifications included deadline changes and the withdrawal of the bill's urgent status altogether. Deadline changes mostly involved an extension of the period for bill consideration. Accounting for nearly half of all messages, deadline extensions were the modal message in every Legislature considered. Those cutting deadlines short were much rarer, 4 percent of all. And, with variance across Legislatures, urgency withdrawals were common too, two-fifths overall and nearly one-third in 2006–10. Urgency withdrawal is puzzling and suggests further dimensions of bargaining with the urgency authority not addressed in this chapter, but worth keeping in mind.

So many non-original messages imply that urgency chains are common.[7] An *urgency chain* is a series of chronologically connected urgency messages on the same piece of legislation, non-original messages adding links by modifying the urgency before the original deadline expires. Declaring legislation urgent is typically not a single shot affair. One example is legislation making split-couple parents equally responsible in rearing their children. The bill received a one month notice on 22 June 2011 (boletín 7007–18). As the deadline neared, the Cámara's Constitution, Law, and Justice committee requested more time to merge the proposal with two others; on 2 August, the deadline was duly pushed four weeks ahead. (I coded deadlines using working days, so the expiration was still ahead despite more than 30 calendar days had gone by.) Five other similar messages were issued, weaving a seven-link chain with a final deadline in March 2012.[8] As the Table's bottom reports, the average chain had 4.1 links (the longest reached 71).

[7]Formally, deadline changes consist of two paired messages in the source: one withdrawing the original urgency, another setting the new deadline. Paired withdrawal messages are excluded from the numbers reported, so as to retain only withdrawals actually terminating a bill's urgent status.

[8]Messages in the primary source were coded as extra chain links whenever issued on or before a bill's urgency deadline and sent to the same chamber. In most cases, the new message was paired to a withdrawal message, easing chain identification. For (relatively few) cases not reporting the paired withdrawal message's date, using calendar instead of business days might reclassify some messages out of chains.

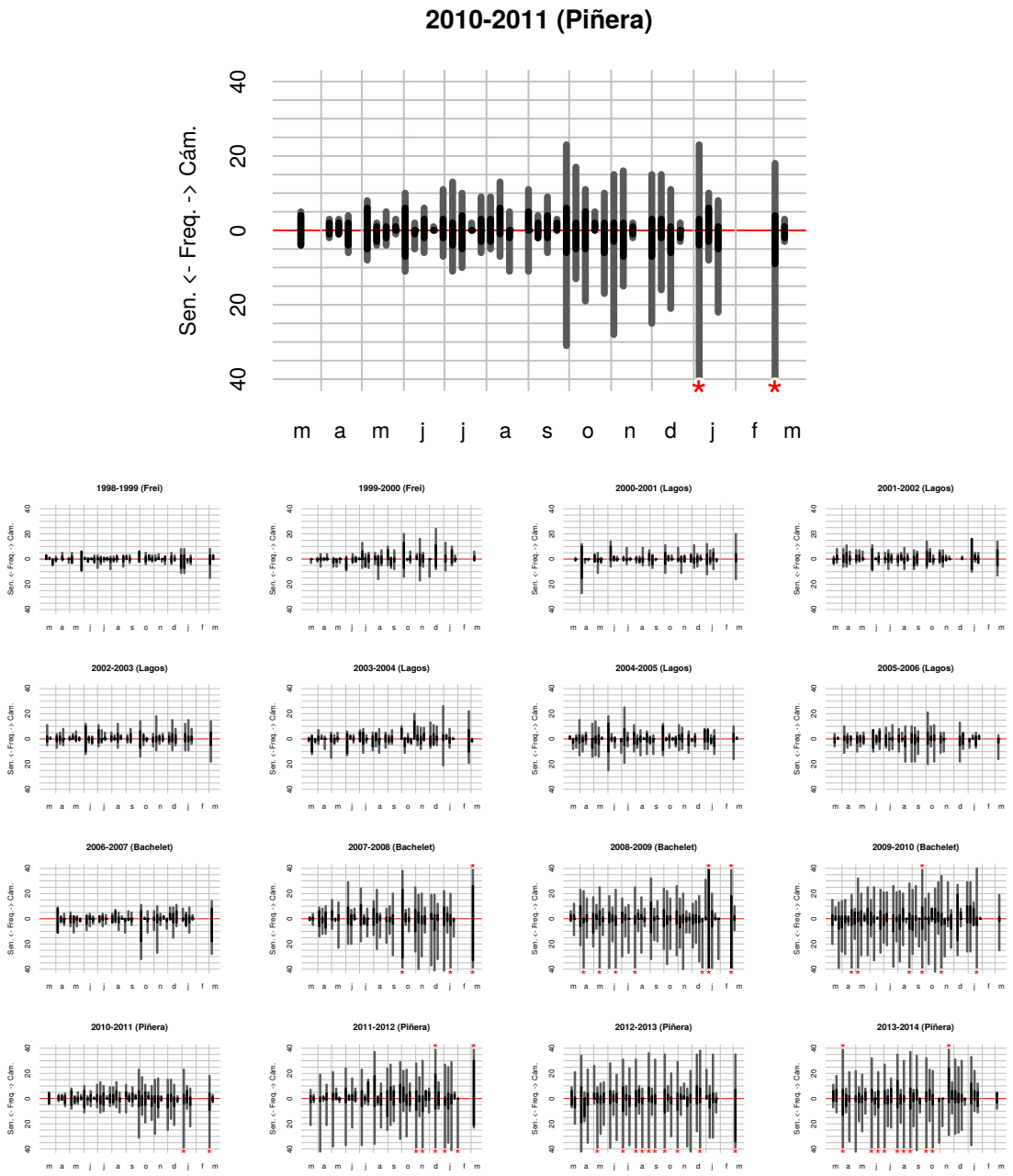


Figure 3: Weekly urgency messages by legislative year. Cámara histogram above, Senate below the zero line. Black portion of bars indicates original urgencies, gray portion indicate deadline changes and urgency withdrawals. Asterisk atop column indicates off-the-chart urgency message frequency.

	Percent Concertación sponsors							
Urgency raised by	0%	1–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–99%	100%	All	N
Concertación presidents	*21*	*3*	*10*	*15*	*13*	*39*	*100*	228
Right president	*26*	*4*	*18*	*12*	*12*	*26*	*100*	121

Table 4: Sponsorship of urgent member bills. Entries are relative frequencies of Concertación sponsors among bills declared urgent by presidents elected by a given list. The first entry reports that 21 percent of bills declared urgent by a Concertación president had not a single sponsor elected by that list; and so forth.

Chains offer a better perspective of the rise in urgency usage. The 170 percent surge between the 2002–06 and 2006–10 Legislatures was, in fact, due to declaring 90 percent more legislation urgent, the rest attributable to substantially longer chains (4.2 links on average, up from 3). The 2010–14 hike is mostly due to longer chains (4.7 links on average), as the chain frequency increase was negligible. Plotting weekly urgency messages in the period, as Figure 3 does, reveals how original urgency incidence changed little over the years, unlike non-original messages. Each panel in the figure (one of which is zoomed above to provide detail) reports one legislative year as two super-imposed histograms, one for Cámara and one for Senate messages (both positive scales, red asterisks marking off-the-chart counts). The black portion of columns count original urgency messages, the gray count deadline changes and withdrawals. Note that the evolution of black central segments had some tendency to grow in both chambers from year to year. But that change looks minute compared to how the gray fringes expanded. Urgency-wise, Presidents Bachelet (2006–10) and Piñera (2010–14) had relatively quiet first years in office, using the authority much more often after the second, and especially after the third year. Piñera's more insistent messages to the Senate than the Cámara, as seen in the red star asymmetry, coincided with a lack of majority in the chamber.

Figure 3 makes the time scarcity very plain. If the urgency authority were consequential, the abundance of messages would pose a genuine scheduling problem for legislators and legislative parties. Is there scheduling time left for member proposals? Not taking the February Summer break into account (when Congress rarely convenes), the Cámara in the median legislative year had just 4 weeks free of original urgency messages, and none free of urgency messages of either type.

Saturating the agenda with urgent executive bills inevitably plunders scheduling time to consider members' pet projects.[9] In such circumstances, the urgency authority gives presi-

[9]Berríos and Gamboa (2006) quote the executive's legal chief of staff describing a general goal in the Executive branch to have, at most, ten urgent projects in each chamber at once and thus "prevent blundering congressional work (*evitar entorpecer el funcionamiento de Congreso*)" (fn. 25). It is an optimistic assess-

dents another asset for vote-buying, granting members' projects urgent status in exchange for supporting presidential proposals short of votes in the chamber. Table 4 has evidence consistent with this possibility: controlling for the percentage of signatures by legislators belonging to Concertación parties in the proposal reveals that presidents often granted urgent status to opposition bills. Of member bills declared urgent by Concertación presidents (1998–2010), 21 percent fell in this category, and 26 percent by the right-of-center administration (2010–2014). Another promising area for future research.

5 Urgency predictors

A systematic analysis of data in Table 2 is revealing. The units of observation are individual bills. The dependent variable equals 1 for bills that were urgent at any point, 0 otherwise. Multivariate analysis includes a set of controls for bill features and another for session traits. The first group includes *Member bill*, equal 1 if proposed by a legislator, 0 if by the executive. The strong negative bi-variate association between the proposing branch and the urgency authority should remain when other factors are held constant. *Hacienda referral* equals 1 for bills referred to the powerful Finance committee, 0 otherwise. Standing rules mandate that legislation authorizing expenditures, regardless of issue area, must be referred to and reported by Hacienda (the next section elaborates its status as a control commitee). Hacienda referral therefore controls for a subset of generally important proposals. And *Introduced in Senate* equals 1 for bills initiated in the upper chamber, 0 otherwise. By virtue of being smaller, enjoying longer terms, and not being firmly in the president's coalition control during most of the period, bills sent to the Senate might present systematic differences in urgency usage.

Included among session features is *Senate minority*, equal 1 if the president's coalition had fewer than 50 percent of upper chamber seats when the bill was initiated, 0 otherwise.[10] *Pres. term remaining* and *Year remaining* measure the percentage of executive and legislative terms, respectively, remaining at bill initiation.[11] With presidential terms cut from six to four years in length starting in 2006, the Bachelet (2006–10) and Piñera (2010–14)

ment of presidential self-restraint, to say the least. If the urgency authority were consequential, presidents who have taken the chamber's schedule hostage might be a better analogy than self-restraint.

[10]Parties in the presidential and opposition coalitions were tied throughout most of the 1998–2006 Senate (majority briefly oscillating back and forth in the first years due to member indictments, impeachments, and deaths in both coalitions). Ties are coded as *Senate minority* = 0.

[11]*Pres. term remaining* and *Year remaining* were normalized to ease convergence of the mixed effects model (as discussed in `http://stackoverflow.com/questions/23478792/warning-messages-when-trying-to-run-glmer-in-r`). Normalized measures were used throughout for model comparability.

terms were both perfectly coincident with concurrently elected Cámara's term. But the end of the Frei (from 1998 to 2000) and beginning of the Lagos (from 2000 to 2002) terms, however, overlapped a common Legislature, providing leverage to separate effects, if any, of the legistative and executive electoral timetables on the urgency. The temporal trends in the longitudinal urgency incidence plots are so distinctive that they should remain significant when other factors are controlled. And *Relax deadlines* equals 1 for bills initiated in July 2010 or later, 0 otherwise. It ought to capture any systematic shift in urgency usage attributable to the reform relaxing deadlines of 'Act now' and 'two week notices' five months into the 2010–14 Legislature.

Table 5 reports model fit.[12] The logit regression model performs satisfactorily: a likelihood-ratio test of overall fit (not reported) rejects the hypothesis that an intercept-only fit is as good as the model with predictors at the .001-level or better. Predictors correctly classifiy 89 percent of the observations. Coefficient estimates confirm that, other things constant, member proposals are less likely to receive urgencies than executive proposals. The negative estimate is significant at the .001-level (p-values are reported in parentheses) and has, by far, the largest in absolute value. Model 2 specifies this variable more finely, distinguishing member bills with presidential coalition sponsors only (i.e., the sole sponsor or all co-sponsors belong to parties in the president's coalition at initiation), with opposition sponsors only, or with a mixture of both. While bills of all three sponsoring profiles were less likely to become urgent than executive bills, differential size varied considerably. Not too surprisingly, opposition-only projects had the largest negative differential relative to executive bills. But, surprisingly, the smallest belongs not to presidential-coalition-only proposals, but to those with *mixed* sponsorship. This is another hint that presidents may buy support for difficult policy accross the aisle while using the urgency authority as a form of payment. **Maybe bring/discuss Table 4 here!

Bills referred to the Hacienda committee also show relatively large, statistically significant, but positive coefficient. This is evidence that projects involving budget authorizations are likelier to be the targets of the urgency authority. The next section inspects this more carefully. And bills initiated in the Senate, where presidents confronted larger opposition contingents that even had majority status, are also likelier urgency targets. Note that the coefficient of Introduced in Senate is the only one achieving a sizeable hike from model 1 to model 2, more than doubling in size when controls for member-bill sponsorship are added. Presidential vote-buying with urgencies seems to have stronger bases in the more difficult Senate.

Of session traits at initiation, only the time trends returned significant coefficients.

[12] Models estimated with `R` base's `glm` and library `lme4`'s (Bates, Maechler, Bolker and Walker 2015).

	DV: Bill received urgency message			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Member bill	-2.990^{***}			
	$(<.001)$			
Member bill pres. coal.-sp.		-2.974^{***}	-3.077^{***}	-3.056^{***}
		$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$
Member bill mix.-sponsored		-2.530^{***}	-2.646^{***}	-2.622^{***}
		$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$
Member bill opp.-sponsored		-3.603^{***}	-3.706^{***}	-3.686^{***}
		$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$
Hacienda referral	1.761^{***}	1.783^{***}	1.759^{***}	1.764^{***}
	$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$
Introduced in Senate	0.182^{*}	0.412^{***}	0.395^{***}	0.398^{***}
	$(.058)$	$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$	$(<.001)$
Senate minority	0.122	0.162	0.371^{*}	0.309^{*}
	$(.444)$	$(.313)$	$(.076)$	$(.089)$
Pres. term remaining	0.104^{**}	0.110^{***}	0.083^{*}	0.087^{*}
	$(.014)$	$(.010)$	$(.073)$	$(.051)$
Year remaining	0.078^{*}	0.080^{*}	0.085^{**}	0.083^{*}
	$(.066)$	$(.059)$	$(.049)$	$(.052)$
Relax deadlines	0.229	0.176	0.174	0.138
	$(.172)$	$(.301)$	$(.548)$	$(.508)$
Constant	0.117	0.113	0.262	0.234
	$(.468)$	$(.488)$	$(.215)$	$(.223)$
Effects	none	none	fixed	mixed
Observations	6,987	6,987	6,987	6,987
Log$L$	$-2,056$	$-2,029$	$-2,019$	$-2,024$
% correct	89	89	90	90

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01 (p-values in parentheses)

Table 5: Urgency determinants. Dependent variable indicates urgent bills. Model 3 includes fixed Legislatura effects (not reported). Model 4 estimates separate error terms by Legislatura. Method of estimation: generalized linear model (model 4), others with logit.

Other things constant, bills were likelier to become urgent earlier in the term and earlier in the legislative year. The apparent contradiction of the patterns in Figure 3 is explained by the distinction of non-original urgency messages, where most of the temporal growth action is, but are disregarded by a dichotomous measure of the urgency as is analyzed by these models.

Two more specifications were fitted to check model robustness. Given that observations from four Legislatures with important differences in the types and the volume of proposals considered (Alemán and Navia 2009) are pooled, heterogeneity could affect inference. So model 3 includes fixed Legislature effects (dummies equal 1 for bills initiated in each Legislatura, not reported in the table). And model 4 estimates separate errors for bills in each Legislature (a so-called mixed effects model, Gelman and Hill 2007262,302). With the exception of Senate minority, gaining in size and achieving significance with Legislature effects—evidence that the 2010–14 term, the only one fully with presidential minority status, as opposed to shorter lapses in 1998–2002, had bigger inter-chamber differences in urgency incidence—changes estimates are small. The simpler urgency models are quite robust.

6 Urgency chains

Understanding the urgency authority predictors in bills proposed for consideration in Congress will aide the interpretation of the next pieces of analysis. Units here are not bills but urgency instances, in search for observable consequences in the legislation they target. If the urgency authority were consequential, it would prompt action in the chamber where the bill awaits consideration. Moreover, the action should happen within the deadline established by the president.

Many actions can follow an urgency call: the bill is marked in committee; one or more committee reports (called *informes* in Chile) are drafted and adopted; the bill is reported, with possible revisions or even a negative advise, to the floor; a positively-reported bill is scheduled in the Order (Orden del Día); the plenary considers, possibly amends, and eventually votes the bill's passage; among many more. Analysis will focus on one specific step from the large set: *committee reports*. Reports are observable steps in the bill histories collected. If report contents are, unfortunately, unavailable, the drafting committee and report's date are included. Since urgency messages are also dated, synchronicity can be verified systematically.

Committee reports are also a good choice to search for urgency authority effects because only exceptional cases of three kinds should not get one (or several, in case of mul-

tiple referrals). Unless the floor votes an exception unanimously, every bill in Chile is referred to a standing or special committee upon first introduction to each chamber. Bills with such exception are one kind. Another are bills previously reported when the urgency call is made. Last are bills discharged from committee for direct floor consideration. No explicit discharge procedure could be found in the congressional standing orders, but presumably is the same—unanimous consent—to consider a bill without prior committee referral. Bills with no such exceptions called urgent will be reported if the authority is indeed consequential. Moreover, taking urgency degrees into consideration, the finer expectation arises that bill reporting should occur *before* the given deadline expires. Inconsequential urgency authority would retain committees potential as formidable gatekeepers in their policy jurisdiction, as failure to draft a report would prevent the proposal from progressing in the legislative process (Cox and McCubbins 1993, Fenno 1973, Shepsle and Weingast 1987). A consequential urgency authority, on the contrary, would undermine committees' negative agenda power, by forcing them to open the gates of bills they would rather not have the floor consider.

As mentioned, the Hacienda committee has special status in the Chilean Congress and deserves attention. Hacienda stands apart from other standing committees as it has jurisdiction over *every* bill authorizing spending in any domain. Moreover, the unanimous exception rule is inapplicable to Hacienda bills.[13] So, for instance, a proposal restricting labor benefits to certain among state health workers (boletín xxxx) was referred to both the Public Health and Hacienda committees because a small appropriation for verification by the Labor Bureau was required. Hacienda committee members, working in tandem with Finance Ministry staff (Alemán and Navia 2009), may or may not appropriate funds from the budget in their report to the floor. Not unlike the Appropriations and Rules committees in the U.S. House, Hacienda has the status of a control committee, a key asset for agenda control (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991). Because Hacienda reports are mandatory, only previously reported bills would not get one upon an urgency call.

Due to the frequency with which deadlines are adjusted, expecting a timely reports for every message is unreasonable, even if the urgency authority were consequential. The relevant units are therefore not urgency messages but urgency chains: reports should antedate the final deadline set by a chain of messages. This section presents multivariate analysis of urgency messages in the period to assess predictors of timely committee reports. A subset of chains from bills that were referred to the Hacienda committee is analyzed separately from the full set of chains. The dependent variable equals 1 if a report (an Hacienda report in the chain subset) is observed on or before the deadline set by the final message in the

[13] Standing rules (Ley orgánica del Congreso) arts. 17 and 21.

chain (business days used for computation); equals 0 otherwise.

The Hacienda speacification, a superior design to assess urgency effects, is discussed first. Overall model performance is satisfactory. The null that predictors do no better than a constant-only estimation is rejected at levels orders of magnitude below .001 (not reported). It predicts correctly 81 percent of the chains observed. And the coefficient estimates in Table 6 offer an interesting perspective. Predictors in the right side include indicators for urgency message types. Two mutually-exclusive dummies measure the original urgency message's degree: *2 week notice* and *4 week notice* (equal 1 if the first, or only, message in the chain is of the said type, respectively, and 0 otherwise). There are also indicators for reiterated messages. *Change deadline* equals 1 if at least one message extending or cutting short the original deadline is chained to the first urgency message; equals 0 otherwise. And *Withdraw urgency* equals 1 if the final message in a chain dropped the bill's urgent status; equals 0 otherwise.[14] Compared to act now messages (the omitted category), two week notices are likelier to trigger an Hacienda report, an effect significant at the .006 level. Given that multi-link messages are controlled separately, this effect is attributable to the original message only so, other things constant, presidents improved the odds of Hacienda reporting the bill through singleton chain more by opting for two week notices instead of act now. And one month notices were no less successfull than act now messages in this respect (effects are statistically indistiguishable). Less surprisingly, changing the deadline had a positive and significant effect in the probability of observing a timely Hacienda report. Most deadline changes brought more time for consideration, often adding several links to the chain, with palpably better odds of getting a report. Withdrawing the bill's urgent status did the same.

Also in the right side are the predictors used in the urgency models (minus the Hacienda referral dummy because that is controlled differently here), aiding interpretation of the next set of results. *Senate minority* and predictors listed below in Table 6) are defined for chains instead of bills: Senate minority equals 1 if the oppsition had majority status when the chain started and 0 otherwise; and so forth. As in the urgency models, Presidential term and Legislative year remaining were normalized for the sake of the mixed effects estimation. Other things constant, member proposals predict Hacienda reports better than executive ones. With fewer member bills selected for urgent status, those that were received a statistically significant boost in the chances of getting a timely report. And model 6, with controls for bill member sponsorship, reveals that the effect is fully attributable to

[14] An alternative specification with 11 mutually-exclusive dummies (Act now singleton; Act now with deadline modified; Act now withdrawn; and so forth) produced essentially identical results in a much less parsimonious equation.

	Hacienda report before deadline				Any committee report before deadline			
	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
2 week notice	0.471*** (.006)	0.470*** (.006)	0.458*** (.008)	0.468*** (.007)	0.656*** (<.001)	0.661*** (<.001)	0.660*** (<.001)	0.661*** (<.001)
1 month notice	0.028 (.878)	0.033 (.856)	0.016 (.932)	0.030 (.867)	0.203 (.152)	0.206 (.146)	0.202 (.155)	0.206 (.146)
Change deadline	0.457*** (.002)	0.455*** (.002)	0.472*** (.002)	0.458*** (.002)	0.392*** (.001)	0.388*** (.001)	0.394*** (.001)	0.388*** (.001)
Withdraw urgency	0.344*** (.009)	0.341*** (.010)	0.411*** (.003)	0.353** (.011)	0.164 (.117)	0.168 (.107)	0.193* (.074)	0.168 (.107)
Member bill	0.631** (.050)				−1.075*** (<.001)			
Member bill pres. coal.-sp.		0.190 (.709)	0.129 (.800)	0.179 (.726)		−1.255*** (<.001)	−1.248*** (<.001)	−1.255*** (<.001)
Member bill mix.-sponsored		0.530 (.398)	0.632 (.315)	0.549 (.384)		−1.088*** (<.001)	−1.074*** (<.001)	−1.088*** (<.001)
Member bill opp.-sponsored		1.057** (.049)	1.089** (.043)	1.063** (.048)		−0.746*** (<.001)	−0.731*** (<.001)	−0.746*** (<.001)
Chain in Senate	0.293** (.021)	0.295** (.020)	0.303** (.017)	0.296** (.020)	0.471*** (<.001)	0.472*** (<.001)	0.472*** (<.001)	0.472*** (<.001)
Senate minority	0.344 (.251)	0.346 (.248)	0.220 (.532)	0.324 (.299)	0.196 (.382)	0.192 (.393)	0.173 (.516)	0.192 (.393)
Pres. term remaining	0.274*** (<.001)	0.275*** (<.001)	0.289*** (<.001)	0.277*** (<.001)	0.303*** (<.001)	0.308*** (<.001)	0.315*** (<.001)	0.308*** (<.001)
Year remaining	0.107* (.092)	0.104 (.102)	0.098 (.122)	0.103 (.106)	0.012 (.810)	0.011 (.822)	0.009 (.847)	0.011 (.822)
Relax deadlines	−0.589* (.057)	−0.605* (.051)	−0.463 (.468)	−0.589* (.066)	−0.057 (.809)	−0.088 (.708)	0.080 (.863)	−0.088 (.708)
Constant	1.015*** (.002)	1.022*** (.002)	0.995*** (.008)	1.002*** (.002)	1.041*** (<.001)	1.044*** (<.001)	1.047*** (<.001)	1.044*** (<.001)
Effects	none	none	fixed	mixed	none	none	fixed	mixed
Observations	1,837	1,837	1,837	1,837	3,342	3,342	3,342	3,342
Log*L*	−852	−851	−849	−851	−1,454	−1,451	−1,451	−1,451
% correct	81	81	81	81	82	82	82	82

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01 (p-values in parentheses)

Table 6: Urgency chains and timely committee reports. Dependent variable indicates committee reports before the urgency chain's final deadline. Models 1–4 include chains of bills referred to Hacienda committee only, models 5–8 all chains. Models 3 and 7 include fixed Legislatura effects (not reported). Method of estimation: generalized linear model (models 4 and 8), others with logit.

opposition proposals, as the coefficients for bills sponsored in full or in part by presidential coalition members are statistically indistinguishable from zero. That presidents showed a tendency to choose opposition projects among a select group of member bills called urgent is remarkable, but the effect this had in their progress in the legislative process is even more remarkable (the biggest coefficient in the table, in fact). Presidents systematically rewarded some opposition members and their projects. Rewarding coalition members was possibly done by executive initiation of their pet projects.

Urgency chains had significantly better odds of compelling timely Hacienda action in the Senate than in the Cámara, even if Senate opposition control of the Senate had no effect. This confirms inter-chamber differences hinted by the urgency models, presidents using the urgency authority not just more often but also with better results in the upper than the lower. Significant time trends are also patent, urgency chains started earlier in the presidential term (and, mostly non-sigificantly, earlier in each legislative year) getting timely Hacienda reports more probably, other things constant, than those started later. And unlike urgency models, the reform relaxing deadlines in 2010 had a significant effect (at the .1-level or better), the likelihood of timely reports *dropping* in the subsequent period. As the institutional change happened just months into the last Legislature and presidency in the dataset, with the opposition always in control of the Senate and the first non-Concertación post-transition president, the effect is over-determined to jump to conclusions about it.

Analysis of the full set of chains in models 9–12 has mostly similar estimates to the Hacienda chains. This is evidence of model robustness, to different specifications but also to analysis of more numerous and less controlled data. But a difference worth noting are the coefficients of the *Member bills* variables. Compared to those referred to the Hacienda committee, those declared urgent among the full set of member bills in the period were significantly less likely to get a timely committee report than executive bills with the same status, although the least hurt among member bills were those sponsored by the opposition.

All said, there is evidence that movement in the assembly, in the form of committee reports, follows urgency authority usage, and the timing appear driven by deadlines that presidents set unilaterally. A complement of the findings are regressions of weekly reports on lagged weekly urgency messages.[15] Using messages instead of chains operates a raise

[15]The general form is $nReports_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 nUrgencies_t + \beta_2 nUrgencies_{t-1} + ...$, where *nReports* and *nUrgencies* are weekly reports and urgencies observed, respectively; t is the current week; $t-1$ the week before; and so forth, up to four lags. Also in the right side are controls (reported in the appendix only) for the percentage of the current legislative year remaining at week t and a dummy distinguishing the 2010–2014 legislature from the 2006–2010 baseline. Weeks when the chamber did not meet were dropped, adding any of that week's reports to the closest next week with a session. Bill histories date reports when officially received by chamber staff (when they entered the so-called *cuenta*, the official tally), which may be days before plenary announcement. The algorithm coded these dates incorrectly, explaining reports dated in session-less weeks.

	Effect on committee reports ($t = 0$ is current week)									
	Exec. bills					Member bills				
Urgency type	$t = 0$	1	2	3	4	$t = 0$	1	2	3	4
Hacienda-referred executive bills										
			(13)					(14)		
Act Now	++	+	−−				++			
2 week notice		++		−−		++	−	++		
1 month notice				++	++					
Shorten deadline		++								
Hacienda-referred member bills										
			(15)					(16)		
Act Now						++	++			
2 week notice			(not estimated)					++	++	
1 month notice										
Shorten deadline										
Any executive bill										
			(17)					(18)		
Act Now	++	++	−−							
2 week notice		+	++			+				−−
1 month notice										++
Shorten deadline										

++, −− : $p < .05$; +, − : $p < .1$ (one-tailed tests)

Table 7: Effect of weekly urgency messages on Cámara's committee reports, 2006–2014. Entries report sign and significance of selected regression coefficients. Negative binomial method of estimation.

of the bar, yet also detects a signal. Analysis covers the 2006–2014 period (when chains became longer than before) in the Cámara only (where estimated urgency authority effects are milder in the previous models). As before, Hacienda and all committees regressions were produced. The median Cámara session week in the period had one bill reported by Hacienda and four by any committee (with deviations of 1.5 and 5.9, respectively). When counting weekly urgency messages, the right side makes a distinction of 'act now', 'two week', 'one month' messages, and messages imposing a shorter deadline than originally set. When a bill receives an 'act now' notice, an effect should be observed almost immediately, in the current week or the next at most. Other urgency degree effects should not necessarily be so immediate. Given the limited nature of the dependent variable (a count), negative binomial regression was used for estimation (Cameron and Trivedi 1998).

Table 7 is a synthesis of the results of five model specifications, reporting just the signs and significance of key coefficients (see the appendix for the full set of results). Regressions

The same could happen for weekly urgency messages, corrected likewise.

taking executive- and member-initiated bills' reports in the left side were fitted separately. They are reported in each of the table's columns. When regressing Hacienda reports, only messages targeting bills specifically referred to that standing committee in the Cámara were counted in the right side. So model 13 gauges the potential effect that raising urgency for Hacienda-referred executive bills has on Hacienda's reports of executive bills. Model 16 does the same for member bills. In order to investigate if executive bill urgency also has an effect on member bill reports—possibly delaying them, as the president obstructs the top scheduling slots—model 14 takes model 16's dependent variable but model 13's predictors. Models 17 and 18 seek how executive bill urgencies (regardless of referral) potentially affect reports (regardless of committee).

Expectations are directional: urgencies should associate with hikes in reporting, so one-tailed tests were used—double plus/minus signs indicate standard .05 significance; a single signs .1 significance; and no sign lack of statistical significance. Results of individual message analysis are consistent with consequential urgency authority. Other things constant, 'act now' messages in models 13, 16, and 17 grow in tandem with reports issued the very same week or the next (i.e., weeks 0 and 1). Urging immediate Hacienda committee action is followed quite immediately by above average Hacienda reports of proposals. And softer urgency associates with later increments in reporting, very clearly in model 13, less so in models 16 and 17. Week 2's negative sign in model 13 is notable: a slump follows Hacienda's reporting surge. When the obstruction is behind, time is not devoted to Hacienda-referred executive bills, but to other business. Could that be the item that the executive obstruction stopped? And model 14 shows that messages urging Hacienda to schedule executive bills makes ripples in the committee's *member*-bill reporting. 'Act now' messages bring member-bill reporting up in week 1, 'two week' messages see reporting up in weeks 0 and 2, down in week 1. This is not conclusive evidence, but it does suggest the Hacienda committee squeezes member proposals obstructed by the president's self-prioritizing before and immediately after urgent business is considered. Inspection of Hacienda committee scheduling and activity should prove illuminating in both respects.

Close section...

The results of the regression analyses conform with a view that the urgency authority in Chile is consequential. Qualitative inspection of the issues declared urgent, of the urgency messages and their content (especially the recommendations that the messages communicate), and of committee reports themselves will shed light on whether or not, and how cost k is supporting a consequential urgency authority in Chile. The level of urgency results certainly do.

7 Closing remarks

Use the flowchart as part of the synthesis...

The study of the urgency authority in Chile is inconclusive. From the theoretical perspective, the authority appears inconsequential unless presidents can persuade legislators that it is in their interest to act fast despite no formal penalty for non-compliance. The empirical perspective suggests otherwise. Chilean presidents rely on the urgency authority constantly, so much so that very little scheduling time seems to remain for non-urgent business. And there is evidence that urgencies produce above average committee reports in due time.

Yet the chapter is far from showing that the costs of ignoring and rejecting presidential proposals are responsible for restoring the urgency authority's bite. Patterns of bolder effects for higher urgency degrees are consistent with a perspective assuming that degrees are directly related to cost size. But that remains to be shown. And the over-use of low-degree urgency remains a mystery.

The excursion into urgency authority institutions in the continent reveals an institution worth studying more carefully. The next chapter inspect urgency authority in Brazil, where it is related to executive unilaterlism. Unlike Chile's, the Brazilian reversionary outcome and agenda play in favor of executive influence.

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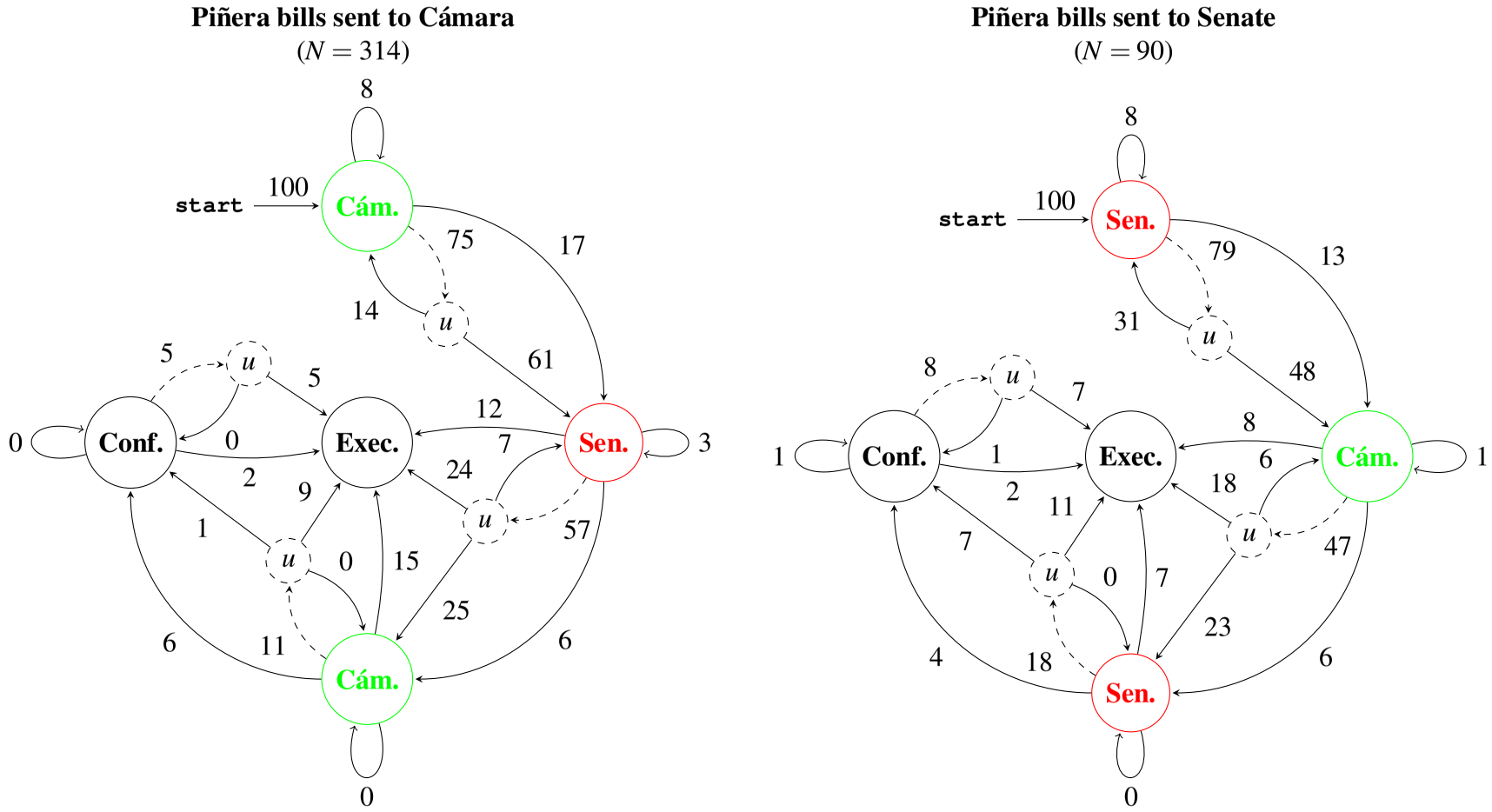

Figure 4: Paths of executive bills in Congress. Cám. Sen. Conf. and Exec. refer to Cámara de Diputados, Senate, Conference committee, and executive's desk, respectively. Numbers are all relative to base 100 (i.e., freq.$\times 100/N$), rounded to nearest integer.

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