MICHELLE BACHELET: THE RISE OF THE *SUPRA-MADRE* FROM THE

CHILEAN BODY POLITIC

by

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ABSTRACT

Although the number of female leaders worldwide has yet to achieve par with that of male leaders, a growing number of female heads of state and female candidacies for that position signal that transformations are underway. Among them is Chile's current president, Michelle Bachelet. Her first election generated significant debate since she possessed none of the qualities considered essential for eligibility. Attempts to lend logic to the contradictions imposed by that event are still largely inconclusive. This study investigates a deeper root system in Chilean history for causal factors with trajectories that lead into the twenty-first century. Under consideration are ways in which women attain political power, their management of power, and the role of the body politic in both of those. The latter part of the study establishes correlations between recent developments in the Chilean political landscape of female leadership and similar developments across the globe.

During Bachelet's first election, media coined the term—the "Bachelet Phenomenon"—to reference her unprecedented and improbable attainment of the presidency. This research consults a diverse body of resources to offer one interpretation of that. The findings contribute new perspectives to the existing body of literature that can be expanded by future research.

DEDICATION

Support for this project came from many sources. The list is lengthy but it is appropriate that some contributors be named. With heartfelt gratitude, I dedicate it

—to my soul mate and spouse, Larry Moran, who has been the wind beneath my wings throughout the journey. He remains unequaled as a sounding board, counselor, cheerleader, and financial manager. His sacrifice has been that precious, nonrenewable commodity—time. May the completion of this project serve as a meager recompense for the countless evenings, afternoons, and holidays spent alone.

—to my parents, Lawrence and Corine Taylor, who graced me with the wings of a life-long learner. Without their gifts of passion for possibility and insatiable curiosity, the journey would have been delayed indefinitely.

—to my children who inspired the flight. Their lives are testimonials that adventure is out there, always, at any age.

—to my family, friends, and colleagues who provided checkpoints along the way. They kept it real.

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INTRODUCTION

THE RISE OF THE *SUPRA-MADRE*[1] FROM THE CHILEAN BODY POLITIC

The highest exercise of imagination is not to devise what has no existence, but rather
to perceive what really exists, though unseen by the outward eye—
not creation, but insight.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

0.1 Purpose of the Study

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, four women were elected to the

highest position of political power in their respective Latin American governments.

By 2016, one of the four had won a second term, two had completed their terms, one

had been indicted for finance fraud, and one had been impeached. Both the positive

and negative components of their legacies provide an observable dynamic of what is

still a relatively exceptional event not only in Latin America but also in the world:

governance by a female head of state. Farida Jalalzai's statement, "No scholar has

offered an in-depth analysis of the paths and actions of women presidents in Latin

America" (*Women* 2), validates the relevance of research in this field. Although the

span between the onset of my research (2013) and the present (2017) has seen an

increase in scholarly production of interest to the topic, there are still gaps: "it has

become clear that more links need to be made between the women leaders and the

political contexts that they are operating in" (Waylen, *Gendering* 23). In contrast to

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[1] This term is discussed in chapter three.

Jalazai's 2016 comparative study of female leaders across the region,[2] this study

narrows the focus to one female head of state set apart by both the highly publicized

and less conspicuous contradictions embedded in her two elections. With the intent to

decipher those contradictions and fill some of the lacunae in scholarship noted by

Farida Jalalzai and Georgina Waylen, my research examines the dynamics of the

relationship between one female executive—Michelle Bachelet—and the political

context from which she emerged and in which she governs.

0.2 Antecedents of the Study

Bachelet voiced awareness of the exceptional nature of her first election as she

took occupation of La Moneda[3] in 2006: "Quién hubiera pensado, hace veinte, diez o

cinco años, que Chile elegiría como Presidente a una mujer?" (Martínez). A rhetorical

analysis offers points of entry into the inferred dissonances. Who among the

electorate—male, female, young, old, liberal, conservative—envisioned a Bachelet

presidency? What converted the unimaginable into the conceivable for the electoral

majority? What accommodations evolved over twenty years? Why is Chile a site of

low probability for this occurrence? Why are "presidente" and "mujer" stated as

semantically opposite? The answers engage an eclectic assemblage of disciplines:

social transformation theory, gender and feminist studies, cultural anthropology,

history, media and leadership studies, and political science. Across disciplines,

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[2] *Women Presidents of Latin America: Beyond Family Ties?* New York: Routledge, 2016.
[3] La Moneda is the official residence of the President of Chile.

responses to the questions are equally diverse as political analysts, social scientists, and academicians have yet to achieve consensus.

The presidential race of 2005 generated widespread skepticism about the election of a female head of state and scant rationale for the election of Michelle Bachelet. As leader of a predominantly Catholic nation, Bachelet is a professed agnostic. Chile, a nation rooted in traditional family values, was the "last country in the Western Hemisphere to legalize divorce" in 2004 (Rohter, *Divorce*). Bachelet, a divorced mother of three children, bore her third child out of wedlock and came to power without a spouse. The principal competing candidates in 2005, Sebastián Piñera and Joaquín Lavín, capitalized on their status as married men with large families. The conservative ideologies permeating the Chilean political context factored greatly in their campaigns, yet Bachelet, a Socialist, won the majority. Chilean candidacies are typically supported by broad scale party endorsements and emerge from the elite; Bachelet's met neither of these criteria. In spite of Chile's designation as a *machista* culture*,* Bachelet prevailed over both male candidates, one a Harvard-educated economist and billionaire, the other a seasoned politician with well-established networks. International media, literature, and Bachelet herself repeatedly placed these incongruities at the forefront of commentary before and after the first election. The second election (2013) intensified the conversation, when Bachelet became the first candidate of either gender to win two elections by popular vote since 1932.

Similar sociopolitical tremors throughout the region signal a breach of the glass ceiling of male-dominated politics once deemed infrangible. Due to gender

quota systems, increasing numbers of women serve in governments.[4] An

unprecedented number of female candidates ran in Brazilian mayoral races in 2012,

quite possibly as a consequence of the "Dilma effect;"[5] in Panama in 2014, four

women were selected as running mates by presidential candidates (Viñas 47).[6]

According to UN Women and Inter-parliamentary Union data (2012), "women of the

Americas rank second only to those in Nordic Europe for their nearly 23 percent

female representation in parliament" (Marino). This momentum serves as a catalyst

for more women to run for office; even those that do not win gain exposure and

experience as political actors.

     The biographies of female political leaders in the region reveal both common

and uncommon denominators. Dilma Rousseff (Brazil), Lidia Tejada (Bolivia) and

Michelle Bachelet (Chile) were imprisoned and exiled as young adults by

dictatorships. Laura Chinchilla (Costa Rica), Violeta Chamorro (Nicaragua), Mireya

Moscoso (Panama), and Bachelet studied abroad. Isabel Perón and Cristina Fernández

de Kirchner (Argentina), Rousseff, Tejada, Bachelet, and Chinchilla held government

posts before assuming the presidency. Perón, Moscoso, and Kirchner served as First

[4] By January 2014, sixteen countries in Latin America adopted gender quota systems (Etoniru); Chile joined that number in 2015.
[5] The "Dilma effect" references the notion that Dilma Rousseff's presidency increased accessibility to political office for women in Brazil (Phillips). It has yet to be determined how Rousseff's impeachment on 31 August 2016 impacts future female political endeavour in the region.
[6] On 3 August 2016, controversy erupted when Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega's campaign announced his wife's bid for vice president. The opposition criticized this as a strategy to gain excessive control; Ortega defended it as "a symbol of gender equality" (Gidda). On 10 January 2017, Ortega was reelected; his wife, Rosario Murillo, is vice president ("Daniel"). Rumors of Ortega's ill health raise the question of a future presidency for Ms. Murillo in what resembles a "family dictatorship" reminiscent of the Somoza era (Pretel and Alper).

Ladies prior to their presidencies. At least one did not complete secondary school, while others obtained university degrees. Some are of European heritage, while others descend from Hispanic (*mestizo*) bloodlines. Some were born into privilege, while others experienced poverty.

The variables in these backstories emphasize the difficulty of applying conclusions reached by an examination of a single leader to the larger group. Bachelet possesses an uncommon base of credentials as a medical doctor, a Minister of Health, a trained expert in military strategy, a Minister of National Defense, the executive director of UN Women,[7] the first female president of Chile (2006-2010), and the current president of Chile for a second term as of 2014. At the personal level, her early socialization was unconventional in its context.[8] Her shared experiences of imprisonment, torture, and exile under the Pinochet regime add symbolic value to the Bachelet portrait. Notwithstanding these unique factors, it is not my objective to idealize Bachelet as a heroic figure, or to portray her as a prototype for women who pursue political power in Latin America. The objective is to detect and decipher processes of social transformation at work in the collective that enabled Bachelet's ascent at a point in time in the sociopolitical landscape of Chile. This study does not resolve all the dissonances. It does, however, consider that the present in conjunction

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[7] Bachelet's appointment to the UN Women agency for gender equality and female empowerment fulfills a legacy. It was the proposals of "international multi-lateralism, peace, social democracy, and women's equal rights" by Latin American women at a conference in 1945 that "gave birth to the United Nations . . . [and] its Commission on the Status of Women;" the main protagonist, Brazilian Bertha Lutz, declared it "a Latin American contribution to the constitution of the world" (Marino).
[8] I elaborate on this in chapter three.

with its past has been shaped by human agency in a manner that lends a reasonable degree of comprehensibility to Bachelet's political attainments.

0.3 Additional Rationale: The Broader Scope

Statistics show that conferring great political power on women has yet to become part of the established order: the total number of female world leaders reached twenty-four in January 2015.[9] In lower positions, the numbers improve. Surprisingly, it is not developed nations that achieve the highest ratings. Latin America shows noteworthy progress towards a more even distribution of political power across genders.[10] In a 2014 worldwide ranking based on the number of women serving in the lower or single house of a congress or parliament, Cuba ranked third out of 188 countries, following Rwanda and Andorra, respectively. Nicaragua, Ecuador, Mexico, Argentina, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Bolivia, Peru, and the Dominican Republic all preceded the United States (84th), with Venezuela at a close 89th (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2014).[11] These statistics suggest that perceptions about sociopolitical structures in the region may rest on unstable constructs. External literature and media convey a degree of incredulity that developing nations surpass developed nations in female political representation;

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[9] Data from Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, "Women in Politics: 2015."
[10] More than three decades earlier, Elsa Chaney remarked on the independent nature of Latin American women's pursuit of empowerment: "North Americans would do well neither to expect nor to advise Latin Americans to copy the style of women's liberation in this country. Whatever they do, Latin American women themselves will decide their own course of action in the context of their own culture and aspirations" (*Supermadre* 11).
[11] I use the United States for comparison due to its ranking as a leading developed nation.

internal commentary conveys a degree of skepticism about actual receptivity to

female political leadership. Perceptions and preconceptions have a part to play. Social

imaginaries inform attitudes and attitudes inform behavior but, while "feigning

permanence, social imaginaries are nonetheless temporary constellations subject to

constant change" (Steger, *Globalisation* 3). The fluid nature of imaginaries increases

the potential for discord between what communities voice as their reality and the

reality that they live. It is this discord that forms one tributary of rationale for this

study.[12]

0.4 Structure of the Study: Hypotheses and Methodology

Due to its eclectic scope, the exposition is coordinated by four main

hypotheses that cluster diverse elements into a coherent matrix. The following

description of the interaction between change, time, identity, and social

transformation informs the first hypothesis.

> The casual links between category change and interactional and
> institutional change are often complex, with time lags. There may be
> gradual disruptions of cognitive categories over time, underlying
> concepts that are put into question, inchoate cultural unease, and new
> practices that allow old concepts to fade into irrelevance, and these
> subtle changes provide the underlying conditions in which new
> categories suddenly become fore-grounded in practice, new self-
> definitions are crystallized and major institutional change occurs.
> (Todd 430)

Consistent with this description, specific elements of human history unfolding in

present-day Chile merit a location or reexamination of the turning points preceding

them. The hypothesis that "historical residue" (Sewell) predisposed the Chilean

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[12] I expand this idea in chapter four.

imaginary to the election of a female president is situated upon the understanding that changes enacted by historical episodes maneuvered beneath the surface for a time before their emergence as detectable phenomena.[13] This is sustained by Pierre Bourdieu's premise that "the habitus—embodied history, internalized as second nature and so forgotten as history—is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (56). I dissect the first hypothesis by examining historical records, primary sources, and recent revisions of historical points of view that shed light on shifts in cultural attitudes about the status of women and their agency in Chile from the late nineteenth century to the present.

The second hypothesis supposes fundamental shifts in the sociopolitical structure that cultivated receptivity to the Bachelet candidacy. This approach stands in direct opposition to early interpretations of the "Bachelet Phenomenon," a media term for the spectacular nature of Bachelet's political ascent. To illustrate, Bachelet's first election in a culture widely defined as *machista* was cast by some as a "populist product of media marketing" (Vogler, *Michelle*). The circumstances of the second election contest that interpretation: Bachelet was reelected following a runoff vote with a competing candidate, also a woman. What incited the Chilean populace to break faith with the status quo at the polling station not once, but twice? It is unlikely that machinations of media on a relatively short-term schedule could effect the kind of deep alterations to the status quo represented by these two elections. In order to decipher this behavior, an identification of long-term causal factors with links to social transformation is needed.

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[13] William H. Sewell, Jr. (2005) is credited with the concept of "historical residue." This is discussed in more detail in the first chapter.

The third hypothesis proposes that departures from the norm germane to the Bachelet elections are sustainable. I maintain that no substantial reversal of gains in female poltical ascendency occurred between the two elections. This challenges the theory that after a crisis is resolved by women in leadership, women leaders may be relegated to positions of lesser power, while men retake what they consider to be lost territory (Chaney, *Supermadre* 23-25, 105, 165). I validate my application of this theory with evidence that Bachelet's elections occurred at critical political crossroads. Related to this theory and the issue of sustainability, if specific conditions of a critical nature open a path to the female acquisition of executive power, does a future absence of those conditions effectively close it?

The fourth hypothesis is that Chilean society is neither as traditional nor conservative as portrayed. The complexity of this debate continues to frustrate attempts to categorize contemporary Chilean society. I argue that an erroneous reading of it contributes to some of the myths surrounding Bachelet's elections. That erroneous reading also impacts Bachelet's governance in the twenty-first century. The evolving convolutions of that relationship have resulted in a reformulation of cabinets and agendas multiple times in both presidential terms.

Due to its qualitative nature, this study draws from a broad range of resources: newspapers, essays, academic journals, magazines, historical documents, interviews, documentaries, literature, conference proceedings, government data, personal testimonies, memoirs, political caricatures, videos, autobiographies, and biographies. Empirical evidence provides the multiplicity of lenses required to interpret how the social imaginary manifests itself through expectations and perceptions superimposed

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on gender consciousness. While theoretical expositions are valuable tools of

interpretation, authentic stories and conversations add value to the human factor

needed to complete the picture:

> It is the very fixation of an image as "natural" which lends it
> its power. Yet this fixation occurs in fluid processes, and it is only by
> examining the processes whereby the images are evoked and
> crystallized that we can hope to grasp them and relate their meanings
> to social experiences. Narratives and discourses—as well as
> discursive practices—are all significant loci for the production of
> gender imagery, and thus represent an important access to these
> social phenomena. (Melhuus and Stølen 1)

The result is a hybrid form of scholarship where informal, authentic material

constructs a symbiotic relationship with scholarly, theoretical production. Both are

needed to fully comprehend the protagonists in their setting.

My approach is largely informed by the social transformation theory posited

by historian William H. Sewell, Jr., with additional consideration given to scholarship

by sociologist Erik Olin Wright. This is supplemented by extensive cross-referencing

to work by specialists in related fields. These points of reference function as devices

for an analytical juxtaposition of the power afforded women in politics in actuality in

Chile with commonly held assumptions about women and political power viewed by

some as inviolable cultural dictates. At work in those assumptions is the alleged

immutability of the ideological hegemony:

> Some accounts of ideology and culture make the hold of dominant
> ideologies and cultural forms seem so powerful that it is hard to see
> how meaningful challenge can occur. And some accounts of the
> repressive capacity of the state make it seem that even if people were
> somehow to break out of the straightjacket of the hegemonic ideology,
> they would never be able to organize collective actions capable of
> seriously threatening dominant classes and elites without triggering
> levels of repression that would render such challenges futile. (Wright
> 202)

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I maintain that the Bachelet elections are a culmination of, and not the act of, what

Wright refers to as a "break[ing] out of the straightjacket." Contrary to the belief that

Bachelet's "election represents a cultural break with the past" (Rieff), the first chapter

establishes that it is precisely the past that supplied the requisite "meaningful

challenge" for the body politic to achieve a "cultural break."

0.5 Summary of Chapters

In chapters one and two, I address the first hypothesis by examining

antecedents in Chilean history that provided, intentionally or not, a favorable

environment for women to achieve status over time and political advancement in

recent decades. The chronological division forms three segments; in each segment,

the following serve as signposts:

(a) What principle internal and external influences affect the status of women,

    politically and socially?

(b) What factors appear to abet the ascent of women to positions of political

    power?

(c) Is there evidence of social transformation related to female attainment of

    political power?

Chile functions as a veritable petri dish for this line of inquiry in that it has been

piloted by more than one political ideology during the indicated time periods. In the

second half of the twentieth century alone, the range of ideologies is expansive: a

democracy, a socialist state, and a dictatorship. I maintain that a deep consideration of

these contexts is essential to arrive at any fully informed conclusions about Bachelet's

political ascendency. I substantiate that position by demonstrating how "meaningful challenge" (Wright 202) enacted by human agency in Chile's both far and recent past provoked changes that opened a path for Bachelet's political ascendency. Those changes are contextualized by points of origin. The more obscure ones emerge as "cumulative *unintended by-products of the actions* of people operating under existing social relations," with the more obvious ones as the "cumulative intended effects of *conscious projects of social change* by people acting strategically to transform those social relations" (207).

The second chapter assesses specific micro- and macro-events that were in place or that materialized during the first Bachelet term (2006-2010), along with those that impact the second term as of March 2014. Emphasis is placed on the dynamic of temporality in providing a window of opportunity for the election of a female candidate. Wright reasons, "for radical transformation to occur conditions must be ripe . . . contradictions and gaps in the processes of social reproduction must create real opportunities" (208). Which "contradictions and gaps" created those opportunities for Bachelet?

Chapter three posits an interpretation of Bachelet's backstory in light of some fundamental shifts in Chilean female identity. Isolating the features of an overarching definition of female identity is hampered by Chile's diverse demographic. Ethnicity, economics, access to education, social and civil status, age, and lifestyle are all features that divide Chilean women into subgroups. Logically, women that live in high rises in Viña del Mar experience a much different life than women that live in remote huts in the Andes or women that inhabit shantytowns in areas of urban sprawl.

The distinct struggles of indigenous groups also create distinct sociopolitical kinships. Chile's reputation as a highly class-conscious society, even among citizens with a more "progressive view" (Spooner 19), is an integral part of the variables. For purposes of containment, I reference Chilean women as an aggregate insomuch that they experience similar social and cultural constraints germane to this study.

Chapter four examines the core of social expectations relevant to Bachelet's negotiation of the largely masculine domain of politics and addresses the third hypothesis of sustainable departures from the norm. How do women gain entry into political domains, which areas are perceived as "off limits" for women, and how do social norms related to gender and space mutations tolerate or accommodate the trespassing of those limits? The latter part of this chapter looks at the groundwork for Bachelet's political achievement. Is it a carefully orchestrated cause by select political actors with a specific agenda, or a serendipitous confluence of ripe temporal and spacial conditions? In either case, does this increase the potential for future female access to power? Or is this the premiere of a new Chile with a new script, enacting what Norberto Bobbio describes as "la formación y la expansión de las revoluciones silenciosas, como . . . la transformación de las relaciones entre los sexos, que es quizás la mayor revolución de nuestro tiempo"? (31).

Chapter five takes a more detailed view of Bachelet as a female politician in a sociopolitical environment formulated by and for a masculine model. I address the fourth hypothesis by exploring how perceptions about women and political leadership

in Latin America are—or are not—underpinned by social reality.[14] How does

Bachelet represent and manage power in a masculinized setting? Does she pioneer a

new way of doing politics or replicate the established formulas of male predecessors?

This chapter utilizes media sources, literature on leadership, surveys, and personal

commentary by both Bachelet and those close to the political processes in Chile. A

discussion about Bachelet's leadership performance from various perspectives is

followed by observations about how politics is shaped by the hands of a female

administrator.

During the initial stage of my research, Bachelet served as executive director

of UN Women. Her first presidential term was a brief section of her vitae and there

was no indication of a second term. The windfall of a second term (2014-2018) gives

a broader lens perspective of transformations at work in the Chilean body politic. The

current political climate indicates that Chileans have increasingly higher expectations

of government and less tolerance for failure to satisfy them. Courting a restless

electorate while making deep structural changes to a political system in flux is a

precarious position. In 2011, Bachelet advised the new government of Egypt: "the

public's dissatisfaction with the government can turn into dissatisfaction with

democracy, . . . democratic recovery is an epic endeavour" (Bachelet, *Pathways*).

Even though data in chapter five confirm that several male heads of state in

the region have received poor performance reviews, it is doubtful that this will

impede the political pursuits of men. What is probable is that whether Bachelet is

ultimately judged a success or a failure, she will be judged not only as a Chilean

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[14] I cross-reference studies done in other countries for the sake of comparison. Some
elements appear to be universal.

citizen who served as president, but also as a woman who served as president. Claire Boothe Luce, United States congresswoman (1942) and first American woman to hold a foreign ambassadorship, aptly stated the case: "Because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed. If I fail, no one will say, 'She doesn't have what it takes.' They will say, 'Women don't have what it takes' " (Donelly 23).

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY AS AGENCY IN THE CHILEAN ELECTIONS OF 2005 AND 2013

The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

— Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Michelle Bachelet's swift emergence as a serious contender for the presidency, heralded by media as the "Bachelet Phenomenon," was "initially dismissed as a passing trend" by some observers ("The Bachelet Phenomenon"). In the postelection wake, speculation arose as to whether it signaled a social transformation in progress, a capricious shift in electoral behavior, or a culmination of postdictatorial malaise.[15] Explanations confined to a relatively short-range timeline failed to fully reconcile the discrepancies between Bachelet's biography and the standard sociopolitical profile of Chilean political candidates. This chapter takes a more elongated approach by excavating Chile's historical substrate for potential contributions to the scaffolding of Bachelet's political ascent.

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[15] Playwright Ramón Griffero alludes to the roots of the malaise: "Having directed all of my creative energy against a dictatorship, the change to democracy has produced in me an almost existential crisis" (qtd. in Nelson 232). For a discussion of Chilean postdictatorial malaise, see Tomás Moulián's *Chile actual: anatomía de un mito.* Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2002.

1.1 A Longer Historical Point of View

The view from the threshold of the twenty-first century gave little indication

of the unprecedented events soon to take place in Latin American politics. A news

release on 16 January 2006 articulated the confusion generated by one of them—

Bachelet's first election:

> The time has come to conduct a far-reaching analysis to explain
> yesterday's result and its inability to offer a credible alternative to the
> majority of the electorate . . . [the rightist opposition] should look
> inwards, searching out the roots of the problem and what to do about
> it. ("Chilean Press")

Analysts posited numerous reasons: the novelty of a woman president, Bachelet's

personal attributes and charisma, the disengagement of the electorate from political

mechanisms, the mythical appeal of a maternal figure, the need for a symbolic agent

to heal wounds inflicted by the regime, and the promotion of progress symbolized by

gender equity (Reel; Velasco, *Michelle*; Mora and Ríos; Manz; Bucciferro, *Chilean*).

Most of the media commentary referenced a recent past for causal factors.

Hans Schoenmakers's assertion that "the use of power and political behavior (in all

its varieties and nuances) cannot be analyzed satisfactorily without describing and

analyzing the historical and constantly changing cultural context" (5) suggests a much

deeper root system for the Bachelet Phenomenon. In my view, incorporating the

narratives of a more distant past is necessary to effectively contextualize the

dissonances and position the Bachelet Phenomenon on a detectable trajectory. An

observation by Waylen on institutional change supports this:[16]

> At first, many intitutionalist scholars tended to focus primarily on
> rapid, externally driven institutional change, for example, through

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[16] Waylen includes the executive office in the concept of institution.

> exogenous shocks such as wars or revolution, but more recently
> scholars have argued that gradual internally driven change warrants
> greater attention. (*Gendering* 25-26)

I trace Waylen's "gradual internally driven change" along a trajectory comprised of three temporal segments in Chilean history. The first segment, the mid-nineteenth century to the turn of the century, is addressed in the first chapter. The following segments, the early twentieth century to the *coup d'état* (1973) and 1973 to the second election of Bachelet in 2013, are addressed in the second chapter. Each segment is examined for currents of change produced by precise push-pull factors related to the signposts enumerated in the introduction.[17] I intersect these factors to demonstrate how they allow for the evolution of female agency in Chile, keeping in mind "long-term trends reassert themselves in situations where they seem to have been eclipsed by more pressing political processes" (Sewell 9).

A synechdochical representation of executive female leadership in Latin America is encumbered by current reality: female presidencies are largely single occurrences in most countries, they are few in number as a whole, and they occur in countries with substantial demographic and sociopolitical diversity. Therefore, this exposition of historical precedents to the Bachelet elections does not center primarily on commonalities among female leaders or their political institutions. It centers on select circumstances as *materia prima* for the scaffolding of Bachelet's political ascent. Those are the early support for the education of women and their subsequent

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[17] (a) What principle internal and external influences affect the status of women, politically and socially? (b) What factors appear to abet the ascent of women to positions of political power? (c) Is there evidence of social transformation related to female attainment of political power?

economic engagement as instrumental in the construction of female agency, the specific effects of collective trauma on the sociopolitical structure, and the impact of transnational exchange on female identity and empowerment.

1.2 The Veiled Agency of History

The role of historical substratum in social transformation is not a novel concept. Octavio Paz addressed it as the "presente oculto," emphasizing that "la historia y sus acontecimientos y protagonistas aluden a otra historia oculta, son la manifestación visible de una realidad escondida" (290-91). In the late twentieth century, anthropologist Helen Icken Safa refuted the idea of women's activism in Latin America as a response to a "current economic and political crisis in the region" by insisting that it stemmed from "a broader historical trend toward the breakdown of the traditional division between the private and public spheres" (354-55). Chilean sociologist Julieta Kirkwood dedicated her life's work to the recuperation of the "historia invisible" of early feminist efforts in bringing about social change. Bachelet's own analysis of the Bachelet phenomenon recognizes its historicity as "a result of the political evolution, social and anthropological changes that have taken place in this country over the past years. Also, the role that women have played in politics for a long time" (qtd. in "The Bachelet Phenomenon").

Sewell's (2005) theory of social transformation provides a suitable matrix for my theoretical framework in that it interfaces disciplines that analyze behaviors of communities with the study of historical processes. The premise is that social temporality, understood as the "unfolding of human action through time," is imbued

with "historical residue" (6-9). Personal and communal histories are comprised of events that fade from memory, partially or completely, some that are undervalued or exaggerated, and others that are misinterpreted or exploited. A study on power relationships in diverse historical contexts explains why predictions of which events will emerge as pivotal are difficult (Scott). Events that generate major change are not exclusively the most acclaimed: "under the appropriate conditions, the accumulation of petty acts can, rather like snowflakes on a steep mountainside, set off an avalanche" (192). Following James C. Scott's reasoning, both petty and momentous events are inextricably absorbed into the fibers of lived human experience, where their cumulative affect may generate both long- and short-term consequences. Adam Moore summarizes the end result by designating actual transformation as "breaches in the customs of a social order" (297). It is the identification of those breaches that offers insight into the current electoral behavior of Chilean citizens.

1.3 The Backdrop: Women, Politics, and Historical Legacies

While the number of females in government posts is growing worldwide, it is far from achieving parity with that of men. Data reveal persistent barriers across time. Prior to the twenty-first century, women were not entirely excluded from positions of public office, but those positions were often secondary roles in support of masculine enterprise (Hincapié). Even as larger numbers of females entered professions commonly populated by males, politics remained at the far margins of an "appropriate" range of career options; the socialization of females ensured that few would aspire to government posts (Schwindt-Bayer; French and Bliss). For those who

achieved candidacies, sources of financial backing were scarce, mentors were uncommon, and apertures for entrance into the ruling political parties were narrow ("Women;" Buvinic and Roza 12-14).[18] Those whose elections were facilitated by husbands or male relatives entrenched in the system could be viewed as lacking merit (Murray, *"Introduction"* 14-15).[19] The combined forces of gender inequality and the propagated ideal of a patriarchal template led to a general consensus among theoreticians that few, if any, women would occupy the highest rungs of government in Latin America in a near future. Politics held, and holds, first position among the most difficult public domains negotiated by the female gender (Molyneux).

When seen through a convex lens, the visible history of Latin American female agency tends to converge on a narrow point that maximizes "la subordinación y discriminación de la mujer" (Gaviola et al. 15). Some historians portray the nineteenth century in Latin America as "a period of progress for women;" others like Elizabeth Dore argue that states "increased more than decreased gender inequalities" by establishing policies that reinforced patriarchal models (Dore, *One Step* 5). Dore's position, supported by research encompassing all of Latin America, proves problematic for this study in two respects. First, it makes little allowance for Chile's "mantle of exceptionality—the notion that Chile is somehow different from its Latin American neighbors" (Hutchison et al. 1). History substantiates that notion to a

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[18] Businesswoman and 2016 presidential candidate of Iceland Halla Tómasdóttir takes the positive view that insufficient campaign funding forces women to "innovate and do politics differently." Her use of live Facebook sessions and Snapchat to communicate with the electorate benefited her campaign. As an independent, and "outsider," she earned the second highest vote percentage.
[19] Chapter three bears out that gender quotas produce a similar bias.

degree.[20] Second, it minimizes the considerable gains classified as "las disímiles manifestaciones de rebeldía y resistencia de las mujeres que cotidianamente producen rupturas y fisuras en el andamiaje institucional, sea doméstico, sexual, social o político" (Gaviola et al. 15). As this chapter establishes, even discrete processes have allowed for the embryonic stages of female empowerment to evolve on a long-term schedule in Chile. Overt or immediate manifestations are not necessary as proof that change has transpired. Social anthropologist Anna María Fernández Poncela confirms this aspect: "El que el cambio sea imperceptible o apenas perceptible, no significa que no exista o que no se produzca" (22).

Collective imaginaries perform a dual role as progenitors that reproduce systems of relationships in cultures and as offspring that reinforce those systems. The consistency of that reproduction has led to the conclusion that "el papel de las mujeres, a lo largo de la historia y en la contemporaneidad, ha sido y es narrativa construida culturalmente" (17). The role that women play as active participants in that construction creates a labyrinth at the interpretive level when trying to determine which are constructed *for* women and which are constructed *by* women. It is further complicated by the reality that the "narrativa" is mutable: "historical events tend to transform social relations in ways that could not be fully predicted from the gradual changes that may have made them possible . . . they reshape history, imparting an unforeseen direction to social development" (Sewell 227).

I propose that the outcome stated by Sewell as "an unforeseen direction to social development" stems from the fact that collective imaginaries are not fixed for

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[20] This notion is discussed in more detail in this chapter.

all time, nor do they represent all "stories" within a given context. Among the subsets is a "hidden transcript"— "those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript" (Scott 4-5). Hidden transcripts as change agents can initiate a gradual surfacing of "supervivencias," "reinterpretaciones," or "readaptaciones" (Poncela 20) of the public transcript. To state the case, the inclusion of a female presidential candidate on the 2005 Chilean election ballot did not suddenly introduce gender issues as a sociopolitical focus. They preceded that event by decades, with Bachelet's candidacy synchronizing a time and space when their urgency could no longer be denied (Bucciferro, *Michelle*). According to Wright, "any plausible strategy for the fundamental emancipatory transformation of existing institutions of power, inequality and privilege, . . . has to have a fairly long time horizon. There is simply no short-term strategy that could plausibly work" (209). Attempts to locate the origins of the Bachelet Phenomenon in a relatively recent past ignore the historical residue and its hidden transcripts as effective prologues to an informed dialectic. The following sections of this chapter highlight historical events that I believe form a synergistic relationship with the Bachelet elections.

1.4 The Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Turn of the Century

The priority assigned to education by a society provides a "key to a broad range of social phenomena" in that education "involves value formation and reflects the concerns of a society" (Yeager, *Women's* 150). This has meaningful application to the Chilean setting, where the development of female agency can be linked to the

"concerns of a society" for the education of females. Chile became the "first Latin American nation to establish a system of public instruction" and "established the first normal school in Latin America" in 1842 (Schiefelbein and Farrell 228). The initial exclusion of the female population from opportunities created by these measures raised the objection by future president Manuel Montt that "if we organize only the education of men and ignore women then we are doing less than half our job" (qtd. in Yeager, *Religion* 217). Within a few decades, the priority given to female education by Montt and other progressives yielded results. Near the end of the nineteenth century, institutional support for the education of females in Chile and their access to higher education represented a main rupture in "routine practice," one that Kirkwood marks as "la primera experiencia política real de las mujeres . . . la primera puerta derribada por las mujeres en tanto género" (Kirkwood, *Ser* 86-87). The protagonists of this rupture were both male and female. Documentation reveals the robust nature of the struggle that engaged female educators, politicians, journalists, academicians, and the Catholic Church in a prolonged heated debate prior to the removal of barriers to education for women (Manríquez). In his essay *La mujer. Sus deberes políticos y sociales* (1872), proponent Máximo Ramón Lira noted the connection between female education and political agency: "When her intelligence and activity are part of public progress and prosperity, then it will not be very difficult to get her some participation in the issues of the State" (qtd. in Manríquez). Primary sources from the period underscore that "ideas about modernity that included a political system based on popular sovereignty" were central to Chilean support for female education (Manríquez).

Data reveal additional circumstances conducive to the development of female agency. Chile, along with Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, is designated as a country where women "first found their strongest voice and audience" in the late nineteenth century, a voice that gained intensity as an advocate for social reform (Bergmann et al. 2).[21] Education as a "central theme in debates about Chile's identity and future . . . redefined nation and nationalism to include the majority and used the school system to groom the people including women for eventual citizenship" (Yeager, *Religion* 217). Chile's late nineteenth-century political goal of "order and progress" corresponded to higher numbers of women in universities and the public workforce (*Confronting xv-xvi*; *Women's*). Those numbers promoted civic engagement, resulting in proactive opposition to measures that threatened female rights and liberties in the early twentieth century (Dore, *One Step* 11, 25, 39-40). Female education also garnered support from visionary policy makers who saw the education of both sexes as the "linchpin of an ambitious strategy to revamp and modernize every aspect of Chilean society" (Yeager, *Women's* 49). Ann Pescatello's estimation of Chile as a country with a "longer history of public concerns for females than in sister nations" (*xv*) explains part of the rationale for the policies and practices favorable to female advancement.

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, architect of Chile's pedagogic system in the nineteenth century, "saw the position a society afforded its women as the best measure of civilization" (Socolow 15). His insistence that educated women could

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[21] I find an interesting correlation between the early efforts of women in three of these countries and women elected as heads of state almost a century and a half later: Michelle Bachelet of Chile; Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina and Dilma Rousseff of Brazil.

better prepare future citizens and fortify the project of building a great society secured

for them a degree of validation as symbols of "Republican Motherhood" (14).[22]

Academic leadership provided the main thrust behind Sarmiento's ultimate objective

"to modernize and reform a traditional society" (Yeager, *Women's* 150), but it did not

act alone. The record shows that "Chile has throughout its history been at the

forefront of 'liberal' social thought in Latin America and the translation of that

thought into policy," with early governing bodies "willing to innovate in both politics

and education in an attempt to build a new and democratic society" (Schiefelbein and

Farrell 228-29). Maxine Molyneux describes a similar flexibility in the sociopolitical

sphere where

> liberal governments were not patriarchal monoliths, and women were
> not the passive objects of their policies. As women became more
> autonomous, more articulate, and less accepting of the authority of
> husbands and fathers, . . . reformers (both socialist and liberal
> modernizers) sought to bring legal provisions in line with the new
> reality. (47)

Subsequent to Sarmiento's tour (1845-1848) of educational systems in the

United States and Europe (Criscenti 79), a series of determinations led to a major

aperture for women. At Montt's invitation, members of the order Religiosas de los

Sagrados Corazones de Jesús arrived from France in 1853 to instruct future female

educators.[23] The following declaration of their present objectives mirrors those of the

past:

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[22] This idea resurfaced and gained momentum in the mid-twentieth century when
motherhood was reframed for the lower classes as "la posibilidad de la satisfacción
física y emocional de esa experiencia femenina como una responsabilidad estatal
(social) y no como un producto lateral de la función maternal" (Lavrin 78).
[23] The RSCJ also taught female students in boarding schools and free schools of the
Sacred Heart across Chile.

> We continue crossing frontiers, looking for remote places where we can educate, . . . empower women, . . . searching for spaces in organisations, communities, neighbourhoods, parishes, institutions and schools, the Church and civil society where small transformations are possible. We are confident that education is a means of renewing society, . . . discerned and planned action finds its way into history, and is modified and recreated in dialogue with the challenges posed by our present-day world . . . (Luza and Villegas)

Viewed as progressive in their methodology, the RSCJ "set out to give young women a classical education—not common in their day" and established a new standard for female education ("Brief"). Their deliberate promotion of female role models instead of "using men as models of emulation" (Yeager, *Religion* 233) worked in conjunction with Sarmiento's goal of developing transformative female influence. Beginning in 1856, these didactic channels were used by the Catholic Church to foster the "political mobilization of Catholic women," as women were recruited to "fill the gaps created by the absence of men"—a "space that was larger than one would expect"— and as a "solution to the priest shortage" (*In the Absence* 224, 241). Although understood as stopgap measures, these could have cultivated receptivity to the presence of females in masculine spaces performing masculine roles.

Gertrude Yeager's view that "by harnessing the energy of female youth, the Catholic Church sanctioned new roles for women that prepared them for fuller participation in civil society" validates that possibility (241).

Chilean women had an additional ally in Miguel Luis Amunátegui, Minister of Education. His protest that great sums of money supported the education of men while "centavos" were invested in women, and his advocacy of women's access to superior education represented an "official concern for women's education" that was "unique in nineteenth-century Latin America" (Yeager, *Women's* 149, 152). Women

were not passive beneficiaries: "Chilean women in the 1870s took to the streets and

campaigned politically to get access to higher education" (Fuentes 251). In 1877, the

University of Chile became the first university in Latin America to accept female

applicants.[24] An article published in the newspaper *El Deber* on 21 February 1877 in

Valparaíso warned of negative consequences:

> The first women who'll obtain a professional title in Chile will not
> only suffer the bitter censures of the enemies of education, but will
> have to fight with great effort against all sorts of obstacles inherent to
> such a serious transformation of our habits. (qtd. in Manríquez)

As a defining moment for women, "fue decisivo en el despertar de la conciencia

feminista y en el nacimiento de una inquietud colectiva respecto del cuestionamiento

del papel que las mujeres ocupaban dentro de la sociedad" (Mira 158). In 1887, two

Chileans became the first women in Latin America to receive medical degrees; in

1892, another Chilean became the first woman in South America to receive a law

degree (Manríquez). Their intellectual formation involved more than the standard

curriculum. From its very beginnings, the University of Chile was promoted by Bello

as "a center not only of learning and knowledge but also of political activism and

dissidence" (Hutchison et al., *Honorable* 124). Political scientist Hillel Soifer

questions why the policies of Montt and Bello were "so broadly implemented while

similar policies" advocated by influential leaders in other Latin American countries

"failed to make an impact" (165). I attribute this to the solidarity among principal

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[24] This distinction is qualified as the formal inclusion of women in higher education at
a national level. In 1810, María Dolores Egaña Fabres took philosophy courses at the
University of San Felipe in Santiago, Chile; as the daughter of a professor and a
singular case, she was admitted when no reason could be found to deny her
application (Vidal). In 1874, a Peruvian woman took university courses but did not
receive a diploma (Manríquez).

decision-makers like Sarmiento and Bello, their cultural diversity as exiles with time spent abroad, and their progressive views of a more equitable society. More importantly, it confirms the exceptionality of Chile's educational focus.

One year after the University of Chile opened its doors to women, the struggle for gender equity gained global status at the first International Congress on Women's Rights in Paris (Tholozany). For two weeks, speakers presented on "historical, educational, economic, moral and legislative" themes, with published versions of presentations made available (Offen 152). The first item on a list of resolutions stated, "The adult woman is the equal of the adult man." This declaration qualifies as a "public unveiling of the hidden transcript" (Scott 223, 227).[25] The potential for ideological cross-pollination among attendees cannot be overstated, given the range of themes—"government-regulated prostitution, and the double moral standard, equal pay for equal work, the politics of housework, government subsidies for mothers, unionization, and the relation of war to women's subordination" (Offen 152). It follows that "las opiniones expresadas en público fueron sólo un índice de una realidad mucho más amplia" (Lavrin 72), when taking into account Chilean women's access to literature on the status of women.

Chilean women constituted part of the intellectual exchange surrounding debates about the status of women in the emerging republic:

> Desde el siglo XIX, las chilenas conocen las teorías de emancipación y comienzan a organizarse por la educación y su derecho a decidir por sí mismas. Martina Barros Borgoña tradujo y publicó el libro de John

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[25] I suggest that John Stuart Mill's essay *The Subjection of Women* (1869), translated into Spanish as *La esclavitud de Ia mujer* (1873), was the first public declaration of the hidden transcript related to the status of women and precedes the congress in Paris (1878).

Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, con el título *La esclavitud de Ia mujer* (1873), en La Revista Chilena, fundada y dirigida por quien sería su esposo, Augusto Orrego Luco. La publicación del libro abrió la polémica pública sobre los derechos de las mujeres en plenas discusiones sobre el tipo de Estado y República que buscaba darse Chile. (Saldaña 89)

Conversely, several works by Latin American female writers had circulation in France. Among them were those by Peruvian Socialist Flora Tristán, published in France in the late 1830s;[26] works by Argentine journalist, Eduarda Mansilla de García, written in French, Spanish, English, and German in the late 1800s; and a key work by Colombian Soledad Acosta de Samper, *La mujer en la sociedad moderna*, published in Paris in 1895 (D. Meyer). Records indicate that in Latin America "close ties with French culture and language had existed since the late nineteenth century when positivism was in vogue" (Camnitzer 35).[27] According to Yeager, "Chileans were well versed in the debates concerning female roles which raged in France and used them selectively when formulating policy" (*Female* 430). The transnational exchange that challenged long-held perceptions about the status of women endowed it with a global persona (Valdés, *De lo social* 31). No single perspective could then dictate a female identity for Chilean women: "in the formation . . . of any cultural identity the idea of the 'other' is crucial and globalization puts individuals, groups, and nations in contact with a series of new 'others' in relation to whom they can define themselves" (Larraín 23).

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[26] Chilean women were aware of these authors. While in exile in Chile, Magda Portal was asked by Chilean female Socialists to write a paper about Flora Tristán for a conference in 1944 (Busse 25).

[27] The RSCJ incorporated English and French as second languages in the curriculum for Chilean females in the nineteenth century (Yeager, *In the Absence* 221). This would expand their access to literature on the topic of female status.

What began as an appeal for equal access to education and recognition as citizens incrementally put into question practically every relationship where power was a factor (Valdés, *De lo social* 31). This outcome adheres to Wright's rationale for the role that education plays in "belief formation" as a precursor to social transformation:

> Of the various aspects of ideology and belief formation that bear on the problem of social reproduction and potential challenges to structures of power and privilege, perhaps the most important are beliefs about *what is possible* . . . Such beliefs are formed in part through education, the media and other processes by which people are told what is possible. (200)

In sum, access to diverse sources of information increased the range of possible resolutions to the "woman question" in Europe, North America, and Latin America and invigorated the evolution of female agency.[28]

Expanding international networks resulted in an unexpected source of sponsorship for the education and advancement of Chilean women. Latin America was anxious to dispel their image "as an intellectual and cultural backwater" (Bockelman 489). To attract European immigrants, educators and politicians propagandized Chile as a progressive nation that valued the intellectual contributions of women (Mira 151).[29] The courting of European immigrants also served the

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[28] During the last part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth, "the woman question" became a controversial discussion of "women's suffrage, . . . changing political, economic, and professional roles for women and of social and sexual liberation" (Utell).

[29] This strategy repeats itself in the twentieth century when Latin American democracies "ansiosas por mejorar su legitimidad internacional y obtener la confianza de los inversores extranjeros . . . adoptaron de buen grado las políticas de promoción de la igualdad de género alentadas por las Naciones Unidas y la Organización de Estados Unidos. Como resultado, las mujeres latinoamericanas obtuvieron grandes progresos durante los 90 . . . " (Franceschet, *El triunfo* 15).

objective of "reestablishing a transatlantic cultural community to counter the encroachment of 'Anglo-Saxon' values in their societies" (Bockelman 487). This was not entirely successful. British travel writer María Graham wrote during her sojourn in Chile (1822) that "English tailors, shoemakers, saddlers, and innkeepers hang out their signs in every street; and the preponderance of the English language over every other spoken in the chief streets would make one fancy Valparaíso a coast town in Britain" (133). At mid-century, a Chilean census numbered 20,000 immigrants from Argentina, England, France and the United States. Their activity in the economic and educational sectors "left a permanent mark on the country" (Collier and Sater 94-95). The Chilean female population felt the impact as the sociopolitical orientations of immigrants diffused to a degree the preponderance of a single perspective of female status. Molyneux credits the "immigrants from Europe" with the dissemination of feminist ideas that appeared in Chile and other countries in the late nineteenth century, ideas that fueled demands for "changes consonant with their [women's] absorption into education and employment" (44).

Sociologist Teresa Valdés references the partnership between female education and the changes in progress: "El espacio universitario comienza a ser un lugar de reflexión y acción que no está ajeno a las transformaciones sociales" (*De lo social* 9). Women gained entrance into universities and access to the world of ideas disseminated through multiple venues, increasing their contact with the public spaces of masculine preeminence. As women competed in the classroom and in professional or vocational workspaces with male colleagues and coworkers, traditional configurations of female identity were tested. The Spanish reformer Concepción

Arenal addressed this in her widely circulated treatise *La educación de la mujer* (1892):

> Es un error grave, y de los más perjudiciales, inculcar a la mujer que su misión única es la de esposa y madre; equivale a decirle que por sí no puede ser nada, . . . Lo primero que necesita la mujer es afirmar su personalidad, independiente de su estado, y persuadirse de que, soltera, casada o viuda, tiene deberes que cumplir, derechos que reclamar, dignidad que no depende de nadie, un trabajo que realizar, e idea de que la vida es una cosa seria, grave, y que si la toma como juego, ella será indefectiblemente juguete.

The declaration of woman as a complete entity apart from the roles of wife and mother was a radical message with its expanded view of a woman's purpose in both private and public spheres (Lavrin 77).[30] As an intellectual, wife, and mother, Arenal advocated the integration of women into public space as a holistic approach to the human experience.[31] She participated in debates, wrote extensively on the education and status of women, and advocated social reforms to the penal system. Arenal's efforts are relevant to the Latin American context through her connection to Acosta de Samper: they were co-participants at a conference in Spain in 1892 (Kaminsky 8; Hincapié 88).

Literature on the agency of women owes much to Acosta de Samper, whose private press published literary works by women from various walks of life:

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[30] In 1842, universities in Spain did not accept female applicants. When Arenal demonstrated aptitude for the study of law, she was permitted to audit classes, while wearing male attire, but was not awarded a diploma. She wrote an award-winning essay under her son's pseudonym and published additional works under her husband's name (Irizarry 8). Arenal's essays display an impressive grasp of the emerging fields of sociology and criminal anthropology (9-11). Her literary production amounts to numerous books and some 464 articles (Pérez and Ihrie 30).
[31] In 1884, a book edited by Theodore Stanton in New York made Arenal's views available to North Americans: *The Woman Question in Europe: A Series of Original Essays*. New York: G. P. Putnam's sons.

"revolucionarias, trabajadoras, misioneras caritativas, pensadoras, doctoras, políticas, artistas, escritoras, y educadoras a través de Europa y América" (Cuesta 124). Her essays *Aptitudes de la mujer para ejercer todas las profesiones* (1893) and *La mujer en la sociedad moderna* (1895) articulate the terms of equality sought by women. The latter work includes a testimony to female competence in the form of detailed biographies of female leadership in Europe, the United States, and Latin America, with ample reference to Arenal. Given that their publications had circulation throughout Europe and Latin America (Cuesta 128), I conclude that these women served as ideological benefactors of and collaborators with the Latin American female population by sowing the early seeds of sociopolitical agency.

Ten years after Chilean women entered university, the next phase of gendered advancement experienced a more official inclusion in the national agenda. Women received invitations from the Partido Radical de Chile in 1888 and from the Partido Democrático in 1889, but limitations placed on their involvement led them to abandon these parties in favor of establishing their own (Valdés, *De lo social* 40).[32] As women extended their sociopolitical borders, one writer noted the concurrent weakening of the patriarchal system. In his work *Raza chilena* (1904), Dr. Nicolás Palacios addressed this as a combination of two factors—the "inmigración latina" and the dominant "oligarquía afrancesada"—whereby Chilean society was acquiring a new identity as a "raza de sicología matriarcal" (Subercaseaux 248). Palacios labeled

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[32] In a similar situation, the focus of parties on self-preservation and personal ambition in the 1960s was a deterrent to party affiliation among women: "la mujer sabe que las soluciones que ella podía encontrar no serán escuchadas dentro de un partido político . . . la mujer chilena se mantiene a una prudente distancia de los partidos. No se trata aquí de una apatía de la mujer" (Klimpel 124-25).

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it a "fenómeno de feminización de la sociedad chilena" (Subercaseaux 248). His

opinions generated substantial criticism at the time, but current research lends some

credence to them. Molyneux confirms the weakening of patriarchal authority in the

late nineteenth century, attributing it to the "combined assaults of modernity and the

mobilization of women within protest movements;" in the early twentieth century, she

attributes it to a view by "liberal elites" that the patriarchal model was "out of step

with the modern world that Latin America sought to join" (39, 47).

By the end of the nineteenth century, modernity acquired a female identity.

Acosta de Samper's publication *La Mujer*, in circulation in Chile in the 1890s,

declared the woman as "the basis for universal progress" (F. Miller 190). This claim

reflected the national agenda developed during the first decades of the nineteenth

century: "El período pos-independentista representa además un marcado interés . . .

en la condición de la mujer y en su educación para fomenter así el progreso de las

nuevas repúblicas" (Hincapié 84). The high level of female participation in several

congresses on scientific themes reflects this intensified focus. They were not passive

spectators. It was noted that female teachers from Chile voiced "their opinions, as

well as their difference in opinion, from those held by the educators of the opposite

sex, with a freedom and frankness that is quite surprising to anyone who might fancy

that no phase of the feminist movement had yet reached Latin America" (Pernet 665).

An observation by Chilean photographer and artist Jorge Opazo supports this

portrayal: "The Chilean woman's judgment and temperament 'have made her

emancipate herself before any other [woman] of the continent' " (Schell 64). Chile's

exhibit of national resources at the 1901 Pan-American exhibition in New York

featured portraits of women alongside those of steam engines and warships, confirming further commentary by Opazo that "they constituted one of the nation's key resources and defined a part of Chilean national identity" (64).

These and other historical vignettes affirm that the representation of "Latin American women as backward or passive or weak" is "strongly contradicted by the data . . . on the personality traits of the Latin American woman" (Jaquette, *Female* 222). Amanda Labarca's declaration before the United Nations (1952) that Chilean women were "free of any inferiority complex and realize that the way to success is open to them on the same terms as for men" (*United Nations* 68) reinforces the point. While Labarca's declaration seems overstated, its implications cannot be completely discounted in view of data from 1976: "the proportion of females in semiprofessional and higher-level occupations in Chile exceeds the rates in Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Hungary, Belgium, the United States, France, Netherlands, and Iran" (Passow et al. 182). Six years later, another study found "no evidence of systematic discrimination against women within the educational system. Women in Chile have more access to high-level occupations than do women in most other societies" (Schiefelbein and Farrell 244).[33]

Efforts of women to improve their status achieved a measure of solidarity in 1910 with the first Congreso Femenino Internacional in Buenos Aires attended by representatives from several South American and European countries (F. Miller). It was Chile that showed exceptional support for its female citizens as "el único

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[33] These data represent women with access to resources. While sufficiently large numbers benefited from institutional support for education and employment opportunities, it is probable that others remained marginalized.

Gobierno extranjero representado oficialmente" (Vertua). Among the concerns

addressed were "igualdad de derechos civiles y jurídicos," "divorcio absoluto," "las

horas de trabajo (ocho para adultos y seis para niños)," and "la educación general

obligatoria" (Vertua). Similar congresses were effective in raising the level of

awareness and in proposing strategies for the advancement of women, but more

deliberate efforts were needed.

After completing studies at the Sorbonne and Columbia University, Labarca

returned to Chile in 1915 determined to convert into action a dialogue for change in

the status of women (Pernet 666-67).[34] Admittance to the Sorbonne was a unique

opportunity for a woman of her time, but the sojourn in France was not

unprecedented.[35] In the nineteenth century, a Latin American presence was

established in Paris when "considerable numbers of women traveled to the city,

sometimes passing through, often staying for long periods of time" (Fey 83).

Historian Brian Bockelman observes that Latin American "elite women often found

European residence to be a welcome escape from the confining social relations of

their own societies" (489). Historian Ingrid Fey reinforces Bockelman's observation:

> As the quintessential model of modernity for Latin American elites at
> the turn of the century, Paris also provided a model of modern values
> and attitudes regarding acceptable female behavior. Participating in
> Parisian culture could acquaint women with behavioral patterns not yet
> accepted by their own societies . . . Parisian society enabled women to
> both reaffirm and challenge Latin America's expectations for them. (87)

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[34] Labarca arrived in Paris in 1912; French feminist Hubertine Auclert died in Paris in
1914. I have not been able to confirm personal contact between the two but it seems
plausible that Labarca was familiar with Auclert's writings.
[35] In 1914, the number of foreign women registered in courses at the Sorbonne was
1,707 (C. Jones 39).

Labarca was impressed with the progressive ideas of female advancement in Europe and North America, but she recognized the need to craft a modified version "more domestic, more closely linked to the future of the home, the family, and the children" (Yeager, *Confronting* 147). It was a "formula that reconcile[d] the interests of the community with those of the individual," promoting a model for women's activism more compatible with Chilean culture (Pernet 670-71). Elvira López's doctoral thesis *El movimiento feminista* (1901) may have laid some groundwork with its argument that "feminism in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay was not the struggle of women against men. Rather it was a battle to gain economic and educational opportunities similar to men's" (Korrol).[36] An approach that could "build new forms of social empowerment in the niches, spaces and margins" where there was no "immediate threat to dominant classes and elites" (Wright 211) offered a greater prospect for success at a time when radical face-to-face confrontations with entrenched power could jeopardize support from both genders. Labarca's tactical discourse of patriotic consensus served to avoid dissension by encouraging women to "forge peace, tranquility, well-being, and the greatness of our country" (Pernet 668).

The need to achieve solidarity fit into a larger design concerned with more than the advancement of Chilean women. It sought to model a sociopolitical environment where "national consciousness and unity were profoundly connected to the construction of a 'world culture' " (Boschetto-Sandoval 121). Historian Iñigo García-Bryce depicts early twentieth-century Latin American politics as "more fully understood in an international context, taking exile communities into account as

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[36] López was one of the first two women to receive the doctorate in Philosophy in Argentina.

political actors. These networks contributed to create what Jussi Pakkasvirta has termed a 'continental consciousness' " (683).[37] Labarca's sojourn abroad, while not an exile experience, informed her broader objectives in much the same way and reflects Bachelet's transnational objectives as executive director of UN Women.

Lavrin affirms that "la politización de la mujer" had taken place at mid-twentieth century, signaling the advent of a more expansive role for women, but that role as interpreted by even the most "antitradicionalistas" would maintain at its core the feminine qualities most valued by conventional society (Lavrin 81). For the growing numbers of educated women, "intellectualization . . . did not displace the concept of a feminine personality with its natural aptitudes and sensibility" (79). They chose to act as "agentes legítimos del cambio" under the banner of moral guardianship (78). The goal was not liberation of their sex at any cost to existing social structures. The goal was progress through the betterment of families and, in turn, society as a whole. Some six decades later, this is not far removed from Bachelet's agenda.

Reformers like Labarca faced the dilemma of how "to maximize female power by retaining sex-role differences" (Jaquette, *Female* 222) in a highly heterogeneous population. As Jaquette insists, "there is no such person" as the Latin American woman (222). Within the range of traditional roles, the strategies of indigenous, rural women to effect change to their status could differ greatly from those of professional, urban women (Bose and Acosta-Belén). Each group would

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[37] Similarly, Bachelet's experiences as an exile and executive director of UN Women appear evident in her promotion of Chile as part of a larger, globalized human citizenry.

negotiate its own set of limitations and opportunities for female empowerment as circumscribed by the unique features of their social context. Above all, any change under consideration was subject to the conventional wisdom that "lo tradicional se toma como lo correcto," with the caveat that stability must be achieved before liberty could be attained (Lavrin 82). This orientation was contested by unforeseen complications in the twentieth century, yet it was precisely the complications that allowed "the deliberate strategies of collective actors to 'ripen the conditions' " (Wright 207-08).

The next chapter demonstrates the interplay between those conditions and the evolution of Chilean female civic engagement in the twentieth century. In the first decades, Labarca's pursuit of an improved status for women gained key advocates that were able to establish themselves in formal political arenas of elected public office. This, along with additional developments presented in chapter two, nurtured an awareness of female potential in the role of citizen. Based on the following discussion, I propose that without the combined forces of early female civic engagement and the sociopolitical repercussions created by the Allende and Pinochet administrations, a Bachelet presidency in 2006 would have been unlikely.

CHAPTER 2

THE POLITICS OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Al fin y al cabo, el miedo de la mujer a la violencia del hombre es el espejo del miedo del hombre a la mujer sin miedo.

—Eduardo Galeano

2.1 The Early Twentieth Century to the *Coup d'état* (1973)

The men come and go, but the women stay put; they are trees rooted in solid ground.

—Isabel Allende

The political record of the female population in twentieth-century Chile is characterized by a single dynamic—activism—with the year 1913 marked as "el despertar de la conciencia feminista" (Mira 158; Pardo 1-2; Franceschet, *Women* 41-42). The word "political" is semantically problematic in this context. Female activism in Chile during the twentieth century was not generally viewed as political despite its political consequences. It was largely considered a natural extension of the maternal role, hence apolitical (Nathanson 251; Lavrin 78). Early efforts to reshape mechanisms of domestic and national authority were perceived as necessary to protect women's rights of citizenship and, by extension, those of their children (Rosemblatt). In this process, "women both used and subverted gender-specific understandings of citizenship" (263).

As the inauspicious beginnings of female activism in Chile confirm, "small differences in initial conditions can create big differences in final outcomes" (Teske 116). The year 1913 coincides with a lecture tour of several Chilean cities by Belén

de Sárraga Hernández, a female medical doctor from Barcelona and spokesperson for women's rights. Inspired by the "nuevas ideas de la liberación femenina," founder of the Socialist Workers Party Luis Recabarren organized the tour on behalf of the female gender to "educarla, librarla del fanatismo religioso y de la opresión masculina" (qtd. in Pardo 2). A positive reception by the working class and others anxious for reform led to the establishment of the Centros de Mujeres Librepensadoras Belén de Sárraga. These forums for discussions of working conditions, political goals, and other issues affecting women's daily life were of short-lived duration but similar organizations soon replaced them. More important than their longevity was their role in social mobilization as a preliminary phase in the struggle for change.

Social mobilization can occur when "major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior" (Deutsch 494). Relevant to this process is the need for individual knowledge to become mutual knowledge in order for groups to articulate a collective consciousness of power that leads to action (Pinker; Crespi). Before the participation of significant numbers of women in the workforce at the onset of the twentieth century, the potential for female social mobilization was limited. In proportion to increased female participation in the paid labor market, the potential for power through mutual knowledge increased. Participation in paid labor also invested women more fully in the political processes that forged policies governing the work force. Organizations that incarnated the concerns of women provided a public space for the articulation of what was possible

and gave an audible voice to the female body politic, converting them into distinguishable political actors.

> Así, lo público/político ha sido un espacio en el que se desenvuelven determinados actores políticos y sociales que tienen como fin último conquistar o participar del poder instutuido, que en esta sociedad es excluyente y estrecho. (Gaviola et al. 214-15)

Although there was a growing awareness among women that they were not powerless, the form that their empowerment took was critical for far-reaching success:

> The dispositions of habitus predispose actors to select forms of conduct that are most likely to succeed in light of their resources and past experience . . . [and] orients action according to anticipated consequences . . . [based on] an unconscious calculation of what is possible, impossible, and probable for individuals in their specific locations in a stratified social order. (Swartz 106)

Chilean women proved astute in their assessment of circumstances, creative implementations of resources, and choices of methods. It exceeds the scope of this study to enumerate the record of organizations and activism initiated by Chilean women in the 1900s, but a survey of the spreadsheet data gathered by Valdés (*De lo social*) portrays a nation of women with an energetic history of social mobilization. Between 1911 and 1947, some twenty-seven organizations of sociopolitical nature were formed, in addition to a radio program and at least eight newspapers and magazines intended for a female readership. Printed media urged women to take ownership of their emancipation through active participation in their intellectual development and integration into society where representation could be achieved

(Lavrin 78).[38] The Catholic Church played a role in this through the AJCFCh,[39] the

"largest and best-organized female association in Chile" in 1929, by keeping

members abreast of "social and religious dimensions of political issues important to

women" (Yeager, *In the Absence* 230, 241). Members received training in

"organizing and marching in mass rallies, publishing a journal, public speaking,

forming nation-wide networks and house-to-house canvasing" (241). I propose that

this training could well have groomed Chilean females for the major confrontations

looming on the horizon in the final decades of the century.

The promotion of female intellectual development created a new field of

conflict for those who saw it as a threat to the stability of home and society at large

(Covarrubias 625-26; Friedman). Labarca's comment on the reaction to the *Círculo

de Lectura de Señoras* bears this out:

> A simple Reading Circle was for the social and political bigots the
> incarnation of the devil, because without a doubt we would read books
> 'against morality and convention,' whose very acquaintance would
> break down the family traditions so honorably preserved from colonial
> times. (qtd. in Chaney, *Supermadre* 74)

Luisa Zanelli López relates that the formation of the *Club de Señoras* "causó una

verdadera revolución en este país" but the opposition—conservatives, clergy, and

press—was unsuccessful when "las damas demostraron entereza de carácter i el Club

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[38] Luisa Zanelli López details the activities of the *Liga de damas chilenas* that met
weekly to present and discuss topics such as social and charity work, syndicates,
restaurants and boarding houses for laborers, education, family, and society. She also
references the *Círculo de Lectura de Señoras* (Ladies Reading Circle) established by
Labarca as the first organization for women of "un carácter puramente intelectual,"
modeled after the "países cultos recorridos" during Labarca's sojourns. Readings
covered literature from the Golden Age of Spain to the reader's present (early 1900s),
with original compositions by members encouraged through funded writing contests
(155-68).
[39] Asociación de la Juventud Católica Feminina de Chile

se formó" (189-90). Women competing on an intellectual plane with men embodied

an aberration strong enough to earn the epithet "anti-natura" (Lavrin 79-80;

Kirkwood, *Ser* 87).[40]

Near the end of the third decade, Lavrin documents "un cambio notable en la

percepción del espacio femenino," with women experiencing more personal freedom

and "una nueva orientación [donde] la casa y el hogar sirven de trampolín intelectual"

(81). In my view, this corresponds to an earlier milestone reached in 1935 when

literate women in Chile age 21 or older, with five years residency in one locale,

gained the right to vote and run for office in municipal elections. Interestingly, a

perspective taught in graduate school late in the twentieth century contests the link

between female suffrage and female agency:

> Women do not figure in the geometry of power relations. Even voting
> by women is essentially an apolitical activity, a means whereby
> women, who tend to be moralists, hence conservative, support those
> political parties that appear to confirm their values rather than promote
> their interests. Promoting interests is a political activity; preserving
> values is non-political. (Elshtain 112)

I find this gendered categorization of apolitical and political activity untenable.

Studies of female voting patterns in Latin America do reveal a conservative bent, with

early election outcomes in Chile favoring the right in compliance with a traditional,

maternalistic worldview (Baldez, *Nonpartisanship*; *Why Women*). Nonetheless, it is

difficult to prove that preserving values is non-political when performed by the

female gender and, by inference, that promoting interests is political and largely a

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[40] As late as 1962, Chilean author Felícitas Klimpel noted the tendency to gloss over
women's accomplishments with the language of masculine imagery: "es tan hábil
como un hombre," "su inteligencia es masculina," and "su alma es varonil" (37).

male objective. I propose that the two are inseparable: values inform interests and vice versa. Voters of either gender, informed by their values, promote an interest through the act of voting, thereby reinforcing their values.

2.2 The Politics of Activism: "What Does it Matter? They are Only Women!"[41]

The right to vote in local elections did not immediately offset the balance of power with respect to ideological leanings, but it did initiate a shift in local power relations as women became more invested in political processes and won elections. This shift was dramatized in the tangible form of political caricatures. Richard Walter brings this to light with illustrations from newspapers of the period (*Urban*). One illustration features Adela Edwards de Salas ascending the steps of city hall dressed in black, her masculinized profile looking backward at the child-sized figure of Larraín, president of the conservative party. He grasps the folds of her skirt like a desperate toddler (675). Another drawing depicts the Radical Party as a headless figure beneath a guillotine bearing the words "voto femenino" (676). These and similar portrayals testify to a growing female political engagement in the first decades of the twentieth century, an engagement that was characterized by a measure of boldness. In 1935, the first year that women voted in municipal elections, Elena Doll de Díaz used radio broadcasts to promote female candidates and encourage voter participation (Walter, *Politics* 210).[42] It proved effective. Edwards de Salas was

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[41] This was voiced by a Chilean parlamentarian in response to an inquiry about the political affiliation of female participants in the March of the Empty Pots of 1971 (qtd in Baldez, *Why Women* 85).
[42] The use of radio for political campaigns began to take hold in the 1920s. For a more detailed discussion, see Delli Carpini.

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elected to the Santiago Council with more votes than any other candidate, male or

female.[43] Although Doll de Díaz clarified that women's activism had no interest in

instigating a battle of the sexes aimed at displacing men in public positions, there

were assertive attempts to rectify the deficiencies of male leaders (Walter, *Urban* 671,

677). Female council members demanded that a female advisor be appointed to the

mayor of Santiago when he was judged derelict in his civic duties. Walter notes that

> those women who did win office established precedents and patterns in
> this period that made them role models for others to follow . . . they
> proved as capable and competent as their male colleagues (in some
> instances clearly more so) . . . They also introduced women's voices to
> speak for women's issues . . . [and] made important contributions to
> the development of democracy and social justice, which Asunción
> Lavrín has identified as one of the most important legacies of 1930s
> feminism in the Southern Cone. (*Urban* 698)

That legacy was particularly evident in Chile, where its women were

described as the most socio-politically active among their Latin American

counterparts; in 1945, Peruvian activist and writer Magda Portal declared them more

progressive than women in other countries of the region (Chaney, *Supermadre* 6-9).

Labarca's speech to the United Nations (1946) credited education with the fact that

Chilean women, representing one third of the paid labor force, had more professional

opportunities than most women in Latin America (Schell 67).[44] Consequently, it

could be assumed that female education and participation in the paid labor market

expedited the obtainment of suffrage, but this is not the case. Two points of interest

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[43] Much like the Bachelet case some eight decades later, women who won this round
of elections were upper class, but their electoral support was middle and lower class
(Walter, *Urban* 673).

[44] Labarca was part of that legacy as the first woman to be named "professor
extraordinaire of psychology" in the University of Chile and in the Americas in 1922
(D. Meyer 135). She continued to influence through her writing while in exile during
the Ibáñez del Campo dictatorship.

emerge regarding suffrage in Latin America: neither economic status nor literacy

rates factored in early suffrage for women. One of the poorest countries in the region,

Ecuador, was the first to grant women the vote (1929). The last countries to grant

suffrage to women, Colombia (1954) and Paraguay (1961), had literacy rates of over

71 and 68 percent, respectively, at mid-century. With literacy already a requirement

for voting in municipal elections, Chile's literacy rate exceeded 82 percent when

women gained the right to vote in national elections in 1949 (Jaquette, *Female* 222-

23).

I find the following conclusion of how regional female suffrage was achieved

does not coincide with later research by Claudia Rojas Mira on the Chilean

circumstances of the time:

> Women certainly did not "win" the right to vote: by and large they were
> simply handed that right in most Latin American countries by
> conservative male leaders who saw women as a conservatizing force in
> the electorate or, at least, believed their vote would prove no threat to the
> status quo. (Chaney, *Supermadre* 341)

The leading protagonists were not pawns of political power; they were educated,

vocal, and, in many cases, professional women from the middle and upper classes

with status. Mira asserts that the vote was not a "regalo" handed over as a concession

by the Congress or the president; rather, "a través de sus organizaciones y sus actos

de presión (manifestaciones, concentraciones, peticiones públicas, etcétera) y de

promoción (charlas y boletines informativos) las mujeres conquistaron su derecho al

voto" (167). One champion of the cause in 1932 was well known. Chilean Nobel

Laureate Gabriela Mistral promoted suffrage as an intentional strategy for female

empowerment:

> The important thing is not to vote as assistants, but rather as women who long to contribute a little *feminization to democracy* . . .We must carry on the work of those tried and tested matriarchs and not burn our femininity in the crater of politics. Only by acting as women can we save life and the world . . . Perched on high, we will go to the elections, not merely as voters, but as *candidates*. If we vote, but only for men, we will continue to be relegated, without really taking control of the steering wheel . . . Some leaders will come forth from our multitude of women . . . Chile will someday choose a woman to be the President of the Republic. (268-69)

In spite of political upheavals between 1970 and 1995, women established some 32 organizations with specific sociopolitical objectives (Valdés, *De lo social*). By 1970, Chile boasted one of the highest female university enrollments in the world, making up almost half of the total enrollment in Chilean universities (Chaney, *Mobilization* 482; *Supermadre* 59). The Chile that Salvador Allende began to govern in 1970 was the culmination of a 40-year stretch of well-preserved institutional mechanisms, resulting in "one of the most politically stable countries in the Third World" (Goldberg 94). Allende's policies eroded those mechanisms to the extent that the very measures designed to underpin his administration served to undermine it (107). The female activism credited with his political decline effectively coopted the Marxist model that "encouraged the formation of local mass organizations to provide a more mobilized popular base of support" (107). It was not a decline quietly orchestrated at the polling stations; it was staged audibly in the streets, with mostly militant mothers as protagonists.

In her account of Chilean female advancement from 1910 to 1960, Felícitas Klimpel finds the low level of female electoral participation following the hard won battle for suffrage puzzling. After reflection on what concern would politically activate women, she concludes, "Uno solo se perfila con toda claridad. Su

preocupación por los problemas de la familia" (125). It was prophetic. In the first

wave of mass protests December 1971, thousands of women marched into downtown

Santiago banging empty pots and pans for hours to protest food shortages.[45] President

Allende failed to grasp the connection between this and a previous event. As the

women marched, Fidel Castro finalized a month-long visit in Chile. Seven years

earlier on the eve of the 1964 election, Castro's sister had warned Chilean women of

the consequences of leftist politics via a radio broadcast. As part of the United States

Scare Campaign, the intent was to replicate the outcome of the 1958 election when

the female vote determined the victor. Allende lost the 1964 election based on the

female vote.[46]

Allende's Socialist agenda claimed to improve the political status of women,

but it was the conservative platform that mobilized them (Jaquette, *Female* 228-29).

When the military took control on 11 September 1973, "conservative women . . .

viewed the defeat of Allende as their victory; they defined themselves as key

protagonists of the anti-Allende struggle" (Power, *Most* 117). Victims of police

aggression became "heroines of the anti-Allende movement . . . and the symbol of the

Chilean people's repudiation" of Marxism (118). The progress of female agency at

this juncture in Chilean history is less ambiguous than the adjective assigned to its

actors and methods. Both Teresa Donoso Loero's *La epopeya de las ollas vacías* and

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[45] In a speech after the march, Allende framed it as a class-motivated act carried out by women that "had never experienced hunger, cooked a meal, or washed a pot in their lives;" his strategy failed by actually "reinforcing its political significance" (Baldez, *Why Women* 83, 85)

[46] Allende was aware of the female body politic's ability to wield power from below. He was known to remind his party, "All the elections we lose because of the women's vote" (Chaney, *Mobilization* 482).

María Cristina Correa Morandé's *La guerra de las mujeres* insist that anti-Allende protagonists were apolitical because they "acted out of patriotism and love for nation and family" (Power, *Most* 122).[47] I find this posture compromised by Donoso Loero's use of the militaristic terminology "guerra de las mujeres," "trincheras," and "armamento femenino," while naming the Chilean woman as "el alma de la Resistencia" and "la mujer deconocida que combatió en las calles de su país por darle la libertad" (Power, *Most* 119, 121-23).[48]

The first opposition to Allende's election in 1970 in the form of a mock wake was followed by more street demonstrations, participation in strikes with miners and truckers, massive distribution of petitions and pamphlets, active solicitation of financial and physical resources to sustain the opposition, and the issuance of a "manifesto that rejected the results of the election" (118, 124-25). I argue that Donoso Loero's statement, "No cabía duda: el personaje más revolucionaria que produjo este Chile contemporáneo fue la mujer" (qtd. in Power, *Most* 125), in conjunction with the subversive nature of actions taken by women question its categorization as apolitical.

The birth of the movement Poder Femenino in 1972 further contests the apolitical nature of women's involvement as they carried out an intensive program to obstruct Allende's objectives (Noonan 95; Jaquette, *Female* 228-29). In Margaret Power's interpretation, Donoso Loero's Chile is a "matriarchal society" that "does not represent a challenge to male power;" it incites women to act on the basis of their "invisible" power, forcing men to fill their natural role of "male supremacy" (*Most*). This interpretation conflicts with methods utilized by other organizations like

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[47] Both books were published in 1974 and endorsed by the Pinochet regime.
[48] "Armamento femenino" refers to the empty pots used in the protest march.

Solidaridad, Orden y Libertad in 1972, when both men and women engaged in highly

organized clandestine operations with extensive networks of communication,

recruitment, and information gathering (Crummett). Women established a black

market to support truck driver strikes, "assembled home-made stink bombs . . .

patrolled the streets, threatening physical violence to the establishments of

strikebreaking merchants . . . [and] operated a clandestine plant to manufacture

miguelitos"—spiked orbs thrown under the tires of vehicles (106). Personal

testimonies attest to female medical assistance to the opposition, active harassment of

government employees, appeals made "door-to-door to convince stockholders not to

sell to the government, and conducting parent-teacher rallies" (106). Their activism

was rewarded. By 1973, the number of women elected to Congress exceeded all

previous records. That same year, tens of thousands of women gathered in front of the

presidential residence to demand Allende's resignation. It was this confluence of

factors that produced the observation by Chilean journalist Hermógenes Perez de

Arce that "women in Chile show much more resolve than the men. They are more

courageous and this manifests itself in politics" (qtd. in Baldez, *Why Women* 90).

A major dissonance cast women as the protagonists in "reclaiming political

space" as they "experienced the contradiction between a public discourse that

valorized both women and their nurturing roles, and the reality of a dictatorship that

daily violated these principles through its policies of terror, disappearances, and

repression" (Franceschet, *Women* 26-27). Women were able to foreground demands

by sidestepping normal channels of negotiation through political parties and

legitimizing their opposition on grounds of family survival. Christine Bose and Edna

Acosta-Belén believe that "redefining the meaning associated with domesticity to include participation and struggle rather than obedience and passivity" created a "new collective gender identity," whereby women claimed and commandeered a space beyond the private sphere (234, 236). Jennifer Todd provides a theoretical undergirding for this claim:

> More radical, society-wide identity change is provoked when socio-political changes bring the elements of collective identity categories into evident contradiction for whole populations. The individuals are forced to re-sort the elements of their identity . . . It is a particularly sharp form of dissonance, where the world is not ordered as they had come to expect . . . key elements of the old identity-categories may be eroded . . . (439-41)

Here, the "evident contradiction" surfaced in the cleavage between a perspective of these women as powerless and a discourse that partially credited them with the demise of a government perceived as all-powerful (Power, *Transnational* 30).

The mechanics of Todd's theory are manifested in the conditions created by the Allende and Pinochet governments wherein women gained power in the vacuum created by the absence of male leadership, a vacuum where "old identity-categories" were "eroded." This is evident in the contempt expressed for the inaction of men by both Donoso Loero and Correa Morandé, the former ascribing it to matriarchal social dynamics that made men passive and resigned, and the latter ascribing it to men's detachment from the reality of what was taking place (Power, *Most*).[49] Correa Morandé portrays the Chilean mother as protector and educator of her "somewhat naïve and trusting husband," whose "infantile and irresponsible behavior" she must

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[49] Interviews conducted among Chilean men show that men did not view female activism as an indictment of their failure to act; at the same time, journalist Pérez de Arce stated, "Women dared to go into the streets and they weren't afraid. Men were afraid" (Power, *Right-Wing* 372).

"condone, conceal, and correct" (Power, *Most* 26). Graphic media of the time

reflected this imagery:

> Editorial cartoons drew the women who marched as well-fed
> amazons—more powerful, more courageous, and often physically
> larger than their husbands. They depicted men as smaller, weaker, and
> meekly compliant with their wives' demands. (Baldez, *Why Women*
> 90)

Under the post-Allende regime, the situation depicted by the caricatures persisted.

Alice Nelson describes the setting of narratives by two Chilean authors, Diamela Eltit

and Pía Barros, as "a society feminized by the use of military violence" (151).[50]

As women assumed the primary responsibility of procuring basic necessities

for family survival, the gap in positional inequality contracted in proportion to a

diminished dependence on men as providers and leaders (Jackson). Its full affect is

confirmed by Robert Jackson's work on female status: as female lives experienced

profound changes in education, jobs, rights, and citizenship, "men's advantages over

women declined" (254). In place of resignation and retreat, the female collective

chose direct action. Direct action can include "all forms of active nonviolent struggle

for rights or for justice through means which involve assertiveness, open

confrontation of oppression or exploitation, and risk to those undertaking the action"

(Carroll 3). With each collective effort, women enacted a "transformación del poder

simbólico de las mujeres" by the " 'normalización' de su presencia en la esfera

pública" (Mora and Ríos 136).

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[50] Nelson elucidates this point: conservative women feminized the Allende
government with slogans that referred to Allende as impotent and the military as
"maricones;" the Pinochet government feminized Chilean society with policies
designed to protect a supposedly defenseless, vulnerable community against the
attacks of leftist ideology (28-29).

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Changing perceptions of female status were not confined to a single social class although Vania Bambirra describes the Chilean middle-class woman as "privilegiada" compared to other women in the region (4). Their participation in domestic and professional decision-making that made them less "servile" gave an impression of Chilean society as matriarchal (5). But on a larger scale, "both men's and women's attitudes towards traditional female roles were challenged," with some claiming that it "changed the machismo of the Latin American man" (Crummett 113). Here, a definitive assessment of female status is complicated by scholarship. For example, one conclusion in the late seventies insists that Poder Femenino's efforts, allegedly motivated in large part by upper-class women to preserve a privileged lifestyle, "did not improve the condition of women, instead their efforts ceased with the installation of a fascist dictatorship committed to the oppression of vast sectors of Chilean society" (113). An extended timeline invalidates that conclusion: Poder Femenino paved the way for a second wave of female opposition instrumental in deposing the dictatorship.

Women could operate with greater autonomy since they were not enmeshed in networks oiled by the obligations of party loyalties. This "allowed both Poder Femenino and Mujeres Por la Vida to build alliances and mobilize the support of thousands of women precisely at points at which the parties were deadlocked and unable to reach accord" (Baldez, *Why Women* 6). Political processes were impacted: "by entering into politics on the basis of their domestic duties, those women who brought mothers' and housewives' perspectives to political action were seen as redefining politics and the concept of the political actor" (Friedman 48). I suggest

that this action not only altered the relationship between genders but also between the state and citizens, and ushered in on a long-term schedule the "emergence of a new civilian political class, distanced from the old ideological confrontations and clearly oriented toward the construction of a new consensus" (Martínez and Díaz 7). Chaney summarizes this period with the thought that "Nowhere else in the world have events conspired to make women's political participation so vital an issue as in Chile" (*Mobilization* 482). It is no less vital in the twenty-first century and, in my view, has synthesized conditions conducive to the Bachelet elections. A discussion of those conditions follows.

2.3 From 1973 to the Second Election of Bachelet (2013)

> *"Dame Señor, la perseverancia de las olas del mar, que hacen que cada retroceso sea un punto de partida para un nuevo avance."*

—Gabriela Mistral

The Chilean state of affairs in the early seventies falls easily within Robert Jackson's (2010) four conditions that foster social transformation in the collective. The first, similar to Pinker's concept of power acquired by the transfer of knowledge from individual to mutual, relies on a communal articulation of cultural unease. Research by sociologists Armand and Michèle Mattelart in the 1970s found that "the majority of urban and rural women of all classes in Chile believed they should organize at the neighborhood level" (149, 153). That disposition created a multiplicity of women's organizations that provided ample platforms from which to voice concerns and formulate strategies for specific action. Over time, those organizations

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evolved into intentional activism with political engagement. The second condition

relies on the resources available to the collective and their freedom to implement

them. The methods used to exploit resources bypassed restrictions placed upon citizen

activism during the regime and allowed the populace to exercise power from below

through noncompliance. The third condition, related to the efficiency and stability of

the organizational structure, was met by an unprecedented solidarity and impetus for

survival among the participants. The fourth—the achievement of objectives without

posing a direct threat to the dominant power —speaks to the astute nature of both the

physical and psychological forms of direct action adopted by Chilean women to

thwart the regime's oppressive measures (Jackson 184-85).

Even though their nonviolent methods were, strictly speaking, an opposition

to power, they were not immediately perceived as a credible threat by the power

itself. Allende and Pinochet were both blindsided by the ultimate outcome of female

opposition. The Allende experiment proved that women could acquire and exploit

power from below. In its wake, the Pinochet regime acknowledged that "la mujer

chilena" had "played a central role in liberating Chile from Marxism" (Baldez, *Why

Women* 14). At the same time, the regime failed to recognize her potential for

liberating Chile from despotism. A testimonial from the Allende period points to the

presence of a new collective consciousness and a transformation of female identity:

> We became "liberated" to a certain extent in that we saw ourselves as
> persons with vital roles to play in society. We were important persons
> for the first time in our lives. We were tired of being treated like
> helpless, brainless individuals. We disliked being considered second-
> class citizens! . . . we had acquired independence; in this respect we
> can never go backwards. Each woman felt she was "el poder
> femenino." We would say to ourselves, "I am woman power." (qtd. in
> Crummett 112)

On Bachelet's inauguration day 11 March 2006, thousands of women filled the

streets, each wearing a replica of the presidential sash and voicing a parallel

sentiment: Bachelet's victory was every woman's victory.

In the years following the coup, the very oppression that sought to

"depoliticize men" and control their behavior as citizens politicized women and

matured them as citizens (Jaquette, *Women's* 4). It also diminished social distinctions

among women (Nelson 50-51). One analysis finds that "los años de la dictadura

hicieron posible un movimiento de mujeres fuerte, visible en el espacio público que—

a pesar de su heterogeneidad—fue capaz de articular una fuerza unitaria que le dio

legitimidad pública a sus demandas y propuestas" (Ciorino 71). More specifically, a

coalition emerged among "working-class women, who organized together with

middle-class feminists and women human rights activists to link their demands for

democracy and social justice to demands for women's rights" (Kirkwood, *There* 482-

83). Earlier stages of unification can be traced to the founding of MEMCH,[51] as

evidenced in an interview in 1943 with lawyer and cofounder Elena Caffarena.

> I think that until the MEMCH appeared, women's groups, more than
> mass organizations, were just groups of leaders, exclusive and elite
> groups, . . . something happened that had been unimaginable before
> then: women of all social classes worked together and in perfect
> harmony. There were maids working alongside doctors, lawyers next
> to peasants, high-class ladies alongside domestic workers, artists and
> writers next to women from the villages, who were often illiterate but
> understood the realities and problems of a hard life. (qtd. in Hutchison
> et al., *Emancipation* 316)

The remaking of a society, in this case by the regime, "not only creates

fragmentation but also allows for multiple sites of contestation" (Munck 149).

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[51] Movement for the Emancipation of Chilean Women

Women used this situation to advantage by organizing in ways that were more diverse and intentional than their predecessors. Marisa Revilla classifies these efforts as subsistence, reactive, and gender demands. Subsistence organizations sought to provide basic necessities for human survival by setting up communal soup kitchens, gathering clothing for distribution, and assisting families with unemployed or absent (exiled, deceased, incarcerated) breadwinners. This type of outreach was an extension of the maternal role of nurturer. Reactive organizations were clearly linked to the political as they gave aid to the families of victims and organized formal protests of human rights violations. Gender-motivated organizations linked the personal with the political as women claimed the right to equality as citizens and as persons (Revilla).

The first category indicted the government for its abuse of the patriarchal model; the second and third categories practiced direct confrontation with authority. Men were involved to a lesser degree in these activities, given that they had greater reason to expect repercussions in the form of job loss, physical punishment, and even loss of life.[52] Women were able to operate as "invisible members of the opposition" while the government focused on more explicit conflicts (Nelson 50). However, the assurance that their gender would provide immunity proved false as women also became targets of persecution (Kirkwood, *Ser* 55). The not-so-random acts of defiance became more significant as women collectively defied the role of compliant female touted by the dictatorship. Their outright rejection of the "unconscious automatism of obedience" (Evers 51) put into question the official value system, threatening the legitimacy of a patriarchal code that violated the very norms it

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[52] Data show that 95 percent of the "disappeared" in Chile were male and largely from the working class (Nelson 50).

claimed to sustain. Women not only practiced an altered state of political action; they began to forge an altered identity for all Chileans as they fought their way towards emancipation as citizens. Tilman Evers sees this as the essential work of socio-political movements: "identity is a do-it-yourself matter that cannot be given to us by someone else—even less can it be passed down from the heights of political power. It has to be constructed from below, on the base of a conscious and self-determined social practice" (58).

The measures taken by Pinochet to maintain control created fault lines that allowed women to insert themselves more solidly into political terrain. The dismantling of the Chilean Congress unseated the old hierarchy with its entrenched political network and short-circuited the power grid of political parties. Three months into the coup, the Junta took control of Chilean universities, expelling professors and students that brought politics into the classroom (Andreas 124), and outlawed political organizations and trade unions (Clark; Drake and Jaksić 4). Community elections were next on the list of cancellations. As these measures shut down formal political arenas, they opened up spaces for women's organizations to operate autonomously (Franceschet, *Women* 210-11).

The forced diaspora of tens of thousands of Chileans, intended as a punitive factor by the Junta, proved to be a positive factor for the future of Chilean politics as Chileans relocated and assimilated in societies with diverse ideologies.[53] Political scientist Katherine Hite elaborates: "exile allowed thinkers to reflect a good deal on past positions and to be engaged in networks of international debate which lent

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[53] Pieper-Mooney estimates the number of exiles at approximately 200,000 (*Forging* 615); Cosgrove places it at over one million in over 140 countries (123).

distance and perspective to their views" (317). As female exiles returned, they brought "ideas of the feminist movements of Europe and the United States," ideas considered to be subversive and, thereby, censored (J. Fisher 185-86). The term "feminist" held a negative connotation on two levels. First, feminist objectives were thought to benefit primarily middle- and upper-class women, and, second, they threatened societal stability as potential sources of tension within the family (195, 205). However, feminist efforts did gain receptivity where they "identified with the struggle against the dictatorship" and formed bonds with the working class (206).[54]

The collective trauma created by the regime's repression produced unexpected outcomes. Hite establishes that "traumatic political experiences possess the ability to challenge the very core of individual political identity [and] can be the catalyst for ideological transformations as well" (323). In retrospect, the regime exacerbated its own downfall as it forced citizens to defend their rights as a collective. Baldez reinforces the point:

> The state incorporated women on the basis of their putatively natural affinity for the military regime; in this context, however, different female constituencies began to mobilize against the regime, . . . offering yet another reinterpretation of women's proper roles. (*Nonpartisanship* 285)

Women, by their own admission, were not engaged in a "new way of doing society" but, rather, a "new way of doing politics" and that translated as "power" (Evers 47). The "reinterpretation" that gave birth to "maneras distintas de hacer política" for women in the late twentieth century anticipated a leadership style more in sync with

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[54] Bachelet's bond with working-class women was a primary source of support in her first election (Franceschet and Thomas 192).

the demands of the twenty-first. That process was enacted when Bachelet, as an exile, brought to the table "un nuevo estilo y liderazgo, . . . capaz de renovar la forma de hacer política" (Valdés, *El Chile* 256). The degree of success achieved by her approach is discussed in later sections of this study.

The female solidarity achieved in opposition to Allende was initially fragmented under Pinochet due to the prohibition of formalized group activity. This was not altogether a setback. Paradoxically, it removed barriers to the ways in which women carried their cause forward. Before the military coup, "party affiliation determined what people believed, where they went to school, where they worked, even how they dressed and where they vacationed" (Baldez, *Why Women* 27). The absence of these parameters to choices presented new options, some of them subversive. In 1983, sixteen female representatives from different parties formed the coalition Mujeres Por La Vida. Its precise objective was to end the dictatorship. Increasing violations of human rights, combined with the scarcity of basic necessities, ripened the conditions for a shift in leadership roles. Jo Fisher comments on this shift: "Survival had become the main issue for millions of families and it was women, often burdened by demoralized, chronically unemployed husbands" that responded (29).

The first responses took the form of organized communal kitchens and clothing depositories. These actions were labeled as "open defiance" and "subversive," placing them at the "centre of resistance to military rule" (32). María Elena Valenzuela credits this development with the formation of a "substitute political arena," wherein the "concept of 'politics' expanded to include the daily universe that had been invaded by the dictatorship" (170). The blurring of boundaries

between public and private space allowed related issues "to become more visible and political," which led to demands that were unquestionably "anti-authoritarian" and "anti-patriarchal" in nature (170). Whereas a majority of women were not directly invested in specific movements, a "visibility to women's demands" was achieved (171). Education became instrumental in providing a platform for this process:

> Chilean feminists introduced a theoretical understanding of the authoritarianism in the Chilean nation and family, and sought to sensitize women to the machista-patriarchal culture existing all around them . . . feminism found its strongest proponents amongst university-educated professional women, for authoritarianism and domination in the universities encouraged resistance and opposition. International connections between Chilean intellectuals and Western feminists, combined with the contributions of women returning from exile with their experiences and feminist ideas, generated new ways of understanding the oppression.[55] (Dandavati, *Engendering* 52-53)

As women evolved into an effective force to delegitimize the regime, they entered into a new stage of their relationship with the political sphere:

> If the individual dissatisfactions or frustrations were transformed in 1983 into collective action followed by protest and rebellion, this was because, . . . there had been a change among the actors . . . Resistance to this superior power therefore cannot be suggested in terms of rational-instrumental strategies; it must take the form of an affirmation of a body of superior ethical values that can be demonstrated only by expressive action of an extraordinary type. (Martínez and Díaz 21)

Women, particularly mothers, acting upon a "body of superior ethical values"—the preservation of human life and dignity—were the new actors. In an ironic twist, the regime trained nearly three million women to more effectively execute their role of "good wives, mothers, and homemakers," a role that subsequently mobilized them

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[55] The climate of censorship that "prevented any competing messages from being publicly expressed" (Baldez, *Nonpartisanship* 19) makes the dissemination of information categorized as subversive an exceptional circumstance.

against the regime and put an end to the "feminist silence" that had prevailed during the twenty years leading up to the dictatorship (M. Valenzuela 166).

Women's efforts to ameliorate the suffering of fellow Chileans through projects like communal soup kitchens were not solely empathetic in nature. They included instruction for survival—for example, how to prepare meals with limited resources—along with informative sessions on health, politics and rights. Women were confronted daily with the intrusion of the political in their lives. This may partly explain why voter participation tends to be greater for women than for men in Chile. I believe that Chilean women not only value the vote as a personal right, but also as a guarantor of female citizenship and the continued well being of the state, hence the family. Hillary Hiner affirms "these gender-based strategies have even been identified by some scholars as signaling not only a new approach to resisting and contesting authoritarian rule, but also as a means of re-conceptualizing civil society and citizenship in democratic nation-states" (6). As women adopted more aggressive measures to provide for the populace what the government denied it, they exercised power from below as "not a thing but a process of interaction among human beings" (Janeway 10-11). In this sense, the reconfiguration of how power is channeled may initially occur as a critical response to shifts in synergies instead of deliberate challenge.

A report by the United Nations attributes to Chilean society an "almost compulsive desire for obtaining and maintaining order and a deep-rooted fear of chaos" (Palet and Coloma). This offers one explanation for the lag in overt acts of opposition during the earliest phase of the dictatorship. The restoration of equilibrium

following the Allende upheaval took priority, but that priority was truncated as civil

liberties were systematically stripped or restricted (Baldez *Nonpartisanship* 8, 10, 16-

18, 21-22). It was, antithetically, the most difficult of times that provided the most

beneficial conditions for female advancement. The dismantling of major institutions

created new crises that reactivated women's efforts and granted them, in the long run,

another political sortie:

> When official power elites are incapable of resolving crises, women
> emerge and replace them, whether they are political parties, in
> situations of repression in which politicians are unable to take action,
> . . . they create alternative forms of organization that are more
> participatory and less hierarchical and can easily be converted into true
> opportunities for countervailing power. (Cañadell 45)

In my view, the initiatives taken by Chilean women during the Allende period

qualify as strategies for "countervailing power." However, the Cañadell study appears

ambivalent when stating that "women's participation increased . . . only from within

the unions and political parties and never with any real awareness of the specific

problems facing women," only to later confirm the existence of a "high level of

consciousness and organization" that emerged as a "clearly antidictatorial and

antipatriarchal stance" (45, 49).[56] I argue that the "high level of consciousness"

presupposed an awareness of some specific problems and this awareness informed the

nature and focus of their response. Discrepancy aside, the study validates that more

women became breadwinners and heads of household, resulting in a "new

interpretation of social realities and an increase in class consciousness that has

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[56] The Cañadell article (1993) notes that "women's groups that have emerged during
the past 15 years in Chile are fundamentally different in that for the first time the
majority of these groups have linked social and political to gender demands" (46).
This reinforces my argument for historical processes that ripened conditions for
Bachelet's gender equity platform to resonate with voters.

fostered greater commitment to and participation in the process of change" (52). Far in advance of the Bachelet election, this "new interpretation of social realities" places Bachelet's status as sole breadwinner and head of household within the range of acceptable models. Chapter three discusses this in greater detail.

In the tenth year of the military regime, protestors took to the streets *en masse* in wave after wave of public rejection of Pinochet's authority. Rebecca Evans marks this as the period when the "government lost its monopoly over the interpretation of key events and symbols" as well as "its cultural hegemony" (6-7). A detailed summary of Chilean protest efforts published in 1985 recognizes "la emergencia de un actor organizado en la escena política social y que logra resultados interesantes: las mujeres" (Maza and Garcés 108). Women perceived the opportunity created by the cleavages and became a major force behind the "no" vote in the 1988 plebiscite. This transpired in spite of Pinochet's efforts to court them by framing the "yes" vote as an endorsement of nationalistic fidelity and conventional morality (Sacouman and Veltmeyer 114; Safa 364). Historian Jadwiga Pieper-Mooney hails this as a major turning point when "women's demands for rights appeared in a new light, connected to the right of equal citizenship under an elected, democratic government" (*Forging* 623). Fisher's summary of the cumulative affects of women's activism in the Southern Cone supports Sewell's theory that clusters of small revisions can enact large-scale social transformation:

> One of the most important achievements of the diverse women's movements has been their contributions towards transforming cultural values that government programmes and legislation alone cannot achieve. The small changes that have taken place in women's everyday lives may be difficult to measure but they clearly have a social influence disproportionate to the numbers of women involved

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. . . They have challenged traditional images of the passive subservient housewife and mother . . . (J. Fisher 211)

Taken as a whole, the electorate's acceptance of Bachelet's non-traditional status can be comprehended as a visible manifestation of manifold hidden histories.

2.4 Historical Residue for a Holistic Interpretation

This chapter is not an exhaustive exposition of all possible associations between historical elements in Chile's sociopolitical legacy and the Bachelet Phenomenon but it does demonstrate how Chile's early support of the intellectual development of females created unique paths for female agency and civic involvement on a long trajectory.[57] My analysis of how past political upheaval opened up spaces of influence where women could operate as effective agents of change explains the proactive nature of Chilean women in politics today. It also furthers the argument for a sociopolitical preconditioning to the possibility of a female head of state. Thus, the present transition period can be interpreted as a "gendered process, in which ideologies of gender and sexuality, cultural structures of family and sex roles, and informal values and expectations all come into play, and are continually contested, reproduced, or rewritten" (Nelson 27). In this environment, Bachelet's presidency becomes the culmination of reconfigurations in response to Chile's need for "a language with which to represent self and community in the radically altered circumstances of postcoup society" (27).

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[57] Klimpel's (1962) extensive lists of Chilean female accomplishments in almost every area of human endeavour testify to the agency of female education in Chile's national development.

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My validation of the agency of historical residue encounters critical

alignments between unintended consequences of the past and current political

configurations. For example, the negative effects of patriarchal authoritarianism

under the regime enabled Bachelet's campaign to reimagine the "fatherland" as a

"motherland" (Kunin 21). The odds against this gendered redefinition of nationalist

identity are great: "Si por regla general, las sociedades responden a pautas

patriarcales, donde el hombre es el protagonista por excelencia, es difícil que pueda

surgir una lideresa carismática, sus posibilidades casi estadísticas son prácticamente

inexistentes" (Marugán and Durá 105). A redefinition of nationalist identity had to

resonate with the population at large, not just with individuals, small interest groups,

or a single gender. Within that collective frame, women in particular "underwent a

series of changes themselves which raised their individual and collective

consciousness" and scripted them as "historical agents who can determine the course

and future of society" (Dandavati, *Women's* 6-7). In Bachelet's own words,

> we have experienced a cultural shift in the last 30 years. Many women
> run social organizations, are union leaders and play important roles in
> their children's schools. The only place where women were still absent
> was at the higher levels of government. My predecessor Ricardo
> Lagos's decision to place women in powerful positions in the Foreign
> Ministry and the Defense Ministry was ground-breaking. (qtd. in
> Bachelet, *Only*)

Former President Ricardo Lagos's support of the political inclusion and advancement

of women perpetuated early efforts by Sarmiento, Bello, Montt, and Amunátegui to

exploit female potential as part of a comprehensive plan for national development.

The legacies of competent Chilean female leaders mentioned earlier in this chapter—

Adela Edwards de Salas, Elena Doll de Díaz, Elena Caffarena and Amanda Labarca—laid the groundwork for subsequent female political engagement.

More recently, feminist efforts to address discrimination in the 1980s and 1990s raised awareness of "la subordinación de las mujeres al dominio patriarcal, desatándose un proceso de búsqueda y cambios en la conciencia colectiva de éstos" (Ciorino 71). By 1991, persistent demands to "superar la desigualdad entre hombres y mujeres" gave birth to SERNAM, an agency created specifically to address concerns of female citizens (71). This represented more than a formalized recognition of women as participants and recipients in a contract between the state and citizens. It transferred issues of private life, such as "planificación familiar, aborto, violencia doméstica," to the public, "ensanchando de este modo el ámbito de la política, llevándola de lo cotidiano y personal e impulsando su transformación" (Carosio 13). As executive director of UN Women between her first and second terms, Bachelet channeled global attention to these same issues that were focal points of her first administration (Moloney; Kennedy).

As discussed earlier, the limitation or incapacitation of normal channels of political processes by the regime spurred the emergence of an underground movement led primarily by women. But the end of the regime in 1990 did not end the momentum for female empowerment. Chilean universities offered twenty-three programs for gender studies in 1991 (Valdés, *De lo social* 79). This is proof of "a growing legitimacy gained by *gender* as a public and academic concept and as the expression of political and cultural openness fostered by the transition to democracy" (Tobar, *Chilean* 268). Against this backdrop, Bachelet's campaign message to women

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was timely: "I'm not neutral . . . As president of the republic, I'm going to fight for women" (qtd. in Ross, *Michelle* 728). Her focus on women's issues and the long trajectory of female advocacy in Chile have bearing on her endorsement by the Chilean populace: "Without the changes in the relationship between gender and politics brought about by women's activism, Bachelet might not have had the cultural resources necessary to craft her version of 'feminine leadership' " (Thomas, *What* 137).

I do not interpret Bachelet's first election as an unequivocal endorsement of female equality by the Chilean electorate. In the wake of Bachelet's first presidency, one commentator stressed, "Although Chileans may think they have come a long way, the truth is that it is a men's country led by a woman. Bachelet's journey is an exception and not a norm" (Bonnet). I would, however, qualify the 2013 election between two female contenders as an indicator of transformation in progress. Furthermore, even in a "men's country led by a woman," there have been side benefits for female leadership. One is female advocacy for the inclusion of capable women in public arenas relevant to their expertise. In 2013, María de los Ángeles Fernández founded "Hay Mujeres" with "hopes to make smart and talented women visible to the public" (Bonnet). The premise for its creation is the "missing link" in organizations, defined as the "absence of women in thought leadership." The website posts qualifications of female professionals for consideration as participants in panels and conferences. It is, in my view, an offshoot of seeds sown by Labarca and cultivated by the Bachelet presidencies.

Intentional or not, Bachelet's campaign platform intersected with historically embedded Chilean values. As stated earlier, Chilean women were recruited to do the work of "apostles" among the less fortunate early in the twentieth century (Yeager, *In the Absence*). During the Allende period and following the coup, women's organizations gathered funds for families of the regime's victims, protested violations of human rights for all Chileans, and attended to daily material needs of struggling citizens. That level of concern continued after the regime collapsed. When improved economic conditions reduced funding for NGOs and similar humanitarian organizations (P. Silva 71), Chilean citizens responded by channeling their empathetic tendencies into volunteerism. By 2010, volunteers made up "47% of total civil society employment, . . . making Chile the country with the highest volunteer participation in Latin America, even outranking developed countries" (Cosgrove 120-21). Bachelet's promises "to reduce inequality, promote social mobility, and improve public services" reflected the very concerns that drive volunteerism (D. Meyer 8).

In her speech "Nuestro sueño es posible," Bachelet informed the public that "la miseria humana y material de muchos chilenos" had gained attention during her campaign tours (Lacoste 94). She called on citizens to participate in its amelioration: "Yo quiero invitar al país, no a un gobierno, no a una coalición, sino al conjunto de la sociedad, a asumir un compromiso, el compromiso de poner fin a a la miseria en Chile" (qtd. in Lacoste 94, 96). In the same speech, she situated that participation within a nationalistic framework: "Las tareas son muchas y necesitamos a todos los que tienen amor por Chile y tengan vocación de servicio público" (qtd. in Lacoste 96). This offered a perfect fit between a collective history of service-oriented efforts

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and the humanitarian *ethos* of Bachelet's political image.[58] Added to the social

resonance of Bachelet's platform was the fact that those concerns fell within the

range of those typically designated as feminine.[59]

The concept of collective trauma as generator of opportunity for

transformation is epitomized by how the regime unknowingly prepared the political

landscape for a Bachelet presidency. Journalist Lidia Baltra Montaner describes

Bachelet's propitiatory function: "La elegimos porque estaríamos pagando con ella

una deuda de todos quienes sufrieron la represión dictatorial, especialmente aquellos

que, paralizados por el miedo o la indiferencia, no hicieron nada por impedirla" (174).

Carlos Peña, rector of the Universidad Diego Portales, incorporates the concept of

ordeal as shared history to explain the "fenómeno Bachelet." His perspective echoes

that of Montaner: "[Bachelet] se halla enlazada como ninguna otra a la historia del

Chile . . . refleja la posibilidad de redención de toda una generación de chilenos que

fueron de izquierda, que vivieron la dictadura a salto de mata y con el alma en un

hilo" ("Michelle Bachelet (perfil)"). It matters not that Bachelet does or does not

personally endorse this symbolic function. The collective imaginary operates

independently of it. What is apparent is that Bachelet recognizes the need to

"reencounter" the past, given that "only cleaned wounds can heal" (Bachelet, *Only*).

During her governance, an independent organization, the National Institute for

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[58] Lacoste defines *ethos* in a sociopolitical sense as "la imagen de sí mismo que se construye el hablante en una situación de comunicación" (82).
[59] Chaney's interviews in Chile in the 1970s, along with more recent literature, flag male issues as those that center on "questions of authority, power, war, arms, monopoly over resources, [and] economic policy;" female issues center on "family, children, and the old, food prices and inflation, peace, moral questions" (*Supermadre* 164).

Human Rights (INDH) was established to bring to justice those who committed crimes against humanity during the regime, to recover the remains of its victims, and to put in place and enforce measures that guarantee the future protection of human rights in Chile (P. Sepúlveda). This intitiative responds to a long history of activism by Chilean women for social justice. Bachelet's call for transparency—"Let's put an end to the silence"—speaks to that exigency.

At the beginning of the previous chapter, I presented several of the motivations commonly stated for the first Bachelet election. Through the historical lens, I identified areas of social transformation that emerged on a long-term schedule. Through the use of data and more recent history—the 2013 election—this chapter argues against an assessment of the election as an electoral fluke, establishing it instead as a deliberate choice to break with the status quo and, in some demographics, perform a symbolic act of atonement. I also discussed how Bachelet's message of hope, communal solidarity, and partnership between the executive and citizenry reenergized the Chilean populace for a time. This also discounts her election as a mere symptom of postdictatorial malaise.

On 11 March 2014, Chile's first female head of congress Isabel Allende placed the presidential sash of authority on Michelle Bachelet, Chile's first female head of state. Allende's father, President Allende, died during the *coup* that installed the regime. Bachelet's father, General Bachelet, died at the hands of the regime. The historical record, the appointments of women to high profile posts, and two Bachelet elections in the space of eight years counter any conclusions that Chilean "women are uninterested in politics, incapable of unified action, politically ineffective, passive

and resigned to accepting the status quo with very little desire to change things"

(Dandavati, *Engendering* 67).[60]

The next chapter forwards to a more recent past with a close examination of

the contradictions presented by the Bachelet backstory. It offers an interpretation that

I believe effectively resolves many of those contradictions.

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[60] Dandavati writes in 2005 that "Much of the politics of the growth of democracy
and the decomposition of authoritarianism will be determined by the future of the
Concertación. This in turn will impact and will be influenced by the women's
movement" (*Engendering* 133). Due to the absence of any reference to Bachelet, I
assume the manuscript preceded the Bachelet election.

CHAPTER 3

THE IMAGINED LANDSCAPE OF FEMALE POLITICAL ASCENDENCY

If a person does not invent herself, she will be invented.

—Maya Angelou

Having laid a foundation for the agency of Chilean and transnational history in the Bachelet elections, I now examine Bachelet's backstory. My intent is to determine to what extent specific facets of the Bachelet biography considered antithetical to Chilean cultural norms are mythologized. This inquiry originates in the first election with its media focus on Bachelet as a woman, an agnostic, a divorceé, a single mother, and a Socialist. Consistent with the conventional Chilean political profile, any one of these factors could have disqualified Bachelet as a candidate; in combination, they not only failed to eliminate her candidacy but also failed to secure her defeat at the polling station. Given these conditions, how is the Bachelet backstory reconciled with the Chilean sociopolitical context? This line of inquiry entails important discussions, seeing that "how institutional change takes place is still poorly understood, and the mechanisms of change are disputed" (Waylen, *Gendering* 25).

The Chilean cultural norm had its defenders. Politician Antonio Garrido pressed the moral aspect, with a verbal warning "a toda la gente cristiana, que cree en Dios que no puede votar por Bachelet, porque Bachelet está al lado del Diablo y no de Dios" ("Alcalde"). Opposing candidate Sebastián Piñera sought to discredit Bachelet by highlighting her lack of "leadership, fortitude, knowledge, and capacity

to organize teams, capacity to captain a boat so that it arrives at a good port"

(Thomas, *Michelle* 74).[61] His self-promotion as the candidate "con más dedos para el

piano" and the labeling of Bachelet as "tuerta" had little effect on the electorate

(Gamboa and Segovia 106).[62] After Piñera distributed car air fresheners in the shape

of a tie to highlight masculine leadership credentials, Bachelet countered in a

campaign speech: "Let us change our mentality; when all is said and done, a woman

President is simply a head of government who doesn't wear a tie" (Thomas, *What*

128, 133).

Carlos Huneeus interprets the electorate's choice to overlook dissonances in

the Bachelet biography as a result of different but contiguous sets of norms:

> She coincides with the spirit of the country at the moment . . . Chileans
> are looking for a new, fresh face . . . Bachelet's personal life has not
> been a problem . . . Chileans can separate the public and private lives
> of politicians, like they do in their own lives. People have their public,
> religious life and then how they actually live. (qtd. in Chang,
> *Candidate*)

For part of the electorate, the discriminatory aspects were mitigated by the appeal of a

different "style of political leadership based on more feminine traits, and

significantly, traits historically associated with women's political participation in

Chile" (Thomas, *Michelle* 64). The appeal of a different style of leadership was

dependent on context and temporality; in Bachelet's words, "the fact of being a

woman became a symbol of the process of cultural change the country was

undergoing" (qtd. in Dixon). Based on a more complete examination of these

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[61] Bachelet served as Minister of Health and Minister of Defense in the Lagos
administration.

[62] "Más dedos para el piano" can mean more qualified or intellectually superior;
"tuerta" references the idea of lacking vision or clarity in the abstract sense.

considerations, I propose that the alleged dissonances do not reflect Chilean reality under current sociopolitical conditions. The validation of this proposal resolves part of the mystique surrounding the Bachelet elections.

3.1 The "Reordered" Established Order

Manfred Steger advises of a global "destabilization of taken-for-granted meanings," where "large chunks of the grand ideologies of modernity . . . have been discarded, absorbed, rearranged, synthesized, and hybridized with new concepts" (*Globalisation* 10-11). This assertion straddles a rift in scholarship about actual transformation in gender and power relationships in Latin America; some maintain that no real change has taken place while others confirm "significant erosion" of the authoritarian, patriarchal model (Edwards; Chant 549). In 2006, *Time* magazine depicted Bachelet as "revolutionizing this traditionally conservative Catholic country," with her government viewed by some as a "menace to traditional values" (Edwards). Bachelet's election is not the first threat to Catholic tradition in Chile. As Marxism gained momentum in the 1930s, Jesuit priest Alberto Hurtado noted the church's diminished role in daily lives:

> Some believe that the faith endures among almost all Chileans. However, the results of surveys and statistics force us to think differently . . . Christian life . . . is weakening, almost to the point of disappearing in some regions . . . 9 percent of women and 3 ½ percent of men go to mass on Sundays, and 14 percent of the faithful follow church instructions. (287)

That diminished role persists at the pragmatic level of current affairs. Drawing from a study done by Pía Rajevic (2000), sociologist Marcelo Mendoza puts forward that Chileans are more liberal, family arrangements are diverse, virginity is short-lived,

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homosexuality is tolerated, birth control is a public health component, almost half of

live births are illegitimate, and that of the 80 percent declared Catholics, few adhere

to its mandates in private life (Mendoza). Cristobal Edwards also references the "80%

of Chileans who call themselves Catholic" but find the church's "discourse is

sometimes at odds with their lifestyles."

Contemporary Chilean society is a study in contrasts. Director of MORI

(Market Opinion Research International) Marta Lagos considers that "people are

more accepting of alternative lifestyles, but most regard their family and traditions as

the most important" (qtd. in Edwards). At the same time, José Brunner's surveys

"show people are shedding their traditional submissive attitude toward authority and

instead adopting a level of mistrust" (Edwards). Sorting through fact and fantasy is a

complex process: "the real source of people's actions is not what they know but how

they perceive the world around them and what conclusions they draw as a result. It is

easy to confuse those conclusions with reality" (Sharpnack 39-40). Schoenmakers

explains the roots of this ambiguity as

> configurations of interest groups and actors who negotiate the right of
> assigning meanings or try to impose on others their definition of the
> surrounding reality. So, culture results from an asymmetrical relation
> of forces between different actors and groups . . . [with] the capacity to
> enclose contradictory meanings. (96)

While the "contradictory meanings" in Bachelet's political ascent provoke

speculation about major ruptures in the political landscape,[63] Peter Siavelis assigns

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[63] Izquierdo and Navia argue that Bachelet's election was guaranteed by the
"predominio histórico" of her party because "la Concertación estaba especialmente
posicionada para obtener una ventaja en la contienda presidencial de 2005, en forma
casi independiente de quién fuera el candidato" (81). I disagree with this in light of

them an apolitical configuration at the personal level. Bachelet is an "everyday

Chilean" whose "novelty rested on a combination of her biography and her gender . . .

perceived by much of the public [to] be more like them and less like the entrenched

political class" (Siavelis, *What* 31).[64] This indicates a public perception that has more

in common with what is considered unorthodox about Bachelet. It contests the

version of Chilean reality propagated by media and literature and reinforces the idea

of an identity gap between the political elite and the electorate.

Current electoral behavior suggests a heterogeneous set of societal norms. As

mentioned, attempts to frame Bachelet as lacking "traditional Chilean values" failed

to detour voters, who overlooked her "transgressions of this patriarchal, authoritarian

order" (Hiner 5). Bachelet made no attempt at concealment: "I unite all of Chile's

deadly sins within me" ("Michelle Bachelet" *DAAD*). The choice of Bachelet as a

leader with moral "baggage" by her own definition challenges opinions of Chileans as

primarily conservative. As late as 2005, analyses affirmed that the election of women

was shaped by "the conservative moral and social climate in Chile since the return of

democracy" (Franceschet, *Women* 105). By 2014, other forces were at work: "In

electing Michelle Bachelet . . . many, and above all younger Chileans, expressed their

wish for a more modern society" ("Michelle Bachelet" *DAAD*). Former student union

president and current member of congress, Giorgio Jackson, speaks on behalf of his

generation:

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evidence presented later in this chapter: the electorate disassociated Bachelet from the
Concertación and supported the candidate, not the party.
[64] Isabel Allende, president of Chile's senate since 2014, attributes Bachelet's initial
popularity to her transparency: "Michelle reflects a long-hidden reality in Chile, not
the fake image of the perfect family or the model politician" (qtd. in Vogler, *Capital*).

> We decided to enter into Congress to stop delegating to others the changes that we want and need. We want to say to people that their lives *can* be changed through politics . . . I see in the candidacy of Nueva Mayoría an opportunity for change (. . .) The option that allows us to open doors and not find ourselves up against a wall is that of Bachelet . . . (qtd. in Constantine)

Taken as a whole, the pursuit of modernity in the form of change has, through the elections of Bachelet, choreographed a departure from the reproduction of traditional prescriptives. Iván Fuentes, representing the fishing industry, confirms that Chile is now a "non-conformist but constructive society, . . . people want to set forth ideas, to be listened to; they don't want policies in which others decide for them" (qtd. in Jarroud). Anthropologist Mauricio Rojas emphasizes the importance of power from below as exerted through organized demands: "The social movement is now totally autonomous from the political structures, and if in-depth changes are not forthcoming, it will continue pressuring for them to happen" (qtd. in Jarroud). The increased mobilization of university students represents "young people who are on the frontline of change," and whose demands pose an emerging dynamic with which Bachelet and her successors must negotiate (Constantine; Jarroud). At the same time, she is favored by circumstances where that dynamic and her own agenda for change converge.

A determination of the extent to which Chileans as a whole are aware of sociopolitical changes taking place and how that awareness influences the vote proves elusive. The absence of a watershed moment made it difficult for Bachelet's opponents in the first election to fully grasp evolving shifts in public opinion. Their strategies to highlight conservatism as the desirable option did not diminish Bachelet's momentum, nor did it harness female electoral power. In fact, Elisabet

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Gerber posits that these strategies achieved the opposite: "Si hubo algún atisbo de utilizar esta situación en contra de la candidata presidencial y remitir a valores vinculados con estructuras familiares tradicionales, esto sirvió en todo caso para *aggiornar* a la sociedad con relación a su propia realidad" (47).[65] In other words, this served as a "wake-up call" to politicians.

Lavín was alerted to the impact of the female vote after losing an election in 2000, when the total female vote exceeded the male vote by half a million (Walter, *Urban* 662). Significantly, the combined male and female vote favored the left. Although sociologist Manuel Garretón disagrees, Lavín's party and "supporters in the media interpreted the first-round results as showing that the country had changed radically: Chile had become 'modern' and its citizens were 'freer' from ideological constraints. No longer would Chileans base their votes on ideological and political visions, or […] personal or collective history; . . ." (80). In the new order of things, the deciding factors would be "specific proposals and personal attributes" of candidates and "promises that the state would provide a solution to all their individual problems" (80, 81). Sociologist Pedro Güell accurately predicted a future Chile as "una democracia expansiva cuyos líderes son cada día más fieles a la cultura de masas" (11). Bachelet, viewed by the collective as one that comprehended its needs, was well positioned to benefit from a sociopolitical climate that demanded real life solutions to everyday problems.[66]

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[65] The intended meaning of *aggiornar (aggiornare* in Italian) appears to be "to bring up to date."

[66] The Bachelet 2005 campaign slogan, "Estoy contigo," transmitted a message of solidarity with the public. As Lavín admitted, "Chile's problems are no longer

Chileans overlooked incongruities between Bachelet's biography and their

professed social expectations and assigned to Bachelet the status of "everyday"

Chilean. That designation required substantial accommodation: the Bachelet

biography is rife with exceptions. Her upbringing by an anthropologist and a military

general was unconventional: "I have a mother who always told me since I was a child

[that] marriage is not the goal of a woman . . . that you can do much more than that, . .

. Even my father, . . . was very progressive too" (qtd. in Tett). A childhood friend

considers Bachelet's university-educated mother—"ninguna de las otras mamás

estaban en eso"—a key to Bachelet's "otra postura frente a la vida" (*Michelle*

Bachelet: La mujer). These vignettes of Bachelet's personal life coincide with

findings that women in high political positions

> had very strong bonds to their fathers [and] tended to come from
> families where much was expected, where opportunities for personal
> development abounded, and where the male figure encouraged or
> pushed the daughter to move beyond role limitations and social
> stereotypes. (Genovese, *Women: What* 337)

Additional studies show that "women who have risen to positions of national

leadership had the benefit of superior educational experiences and grew up in families

that emphasized the importance of education for their daughters" (Jensen 98). General

Bachelet's assignment to the Chilean embassy in Washington D.C. during Bachelet's

early years,[67] Bachelet's study of medicine and military strategy, and her ministerial

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ideological, but practical and concrete. If people wake up at 5 a.m. to get in line for a
hospital appointment, that's not an ideological problem" (qtd.in Elliott).
[67] The timing of the sojourn in Washington D.C. allowed Bachelet to observe
responses to racial segregation and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy
(Worth 55).

appointments all constitute a privileged life.[68] How, then, does Bachelet become the everyday Chilean?

I suggest that a "hidden transcript" of mores allows significant components of Bachelet's biography to resonate with the public. Maricel Sauterel reiterates that Bachelet attained her position without "male sponsorship," as an atheist, a single mother with children by different fathers, and a professional woman, "so it was easy to identify with her" (qtd. in Viñas 46).[69] Those sectors of the population that in one or more ways can identify with the less traditional aspects of Bachelet's backstory include single parents, female heads of household, professional women, those distanced from orthodox religious traditions, and people of less conservative political leanings. In these intersections of lived experience, Bachelet acquires a commonality with the populace:

> I represent this country's capacity to revisit itself. I represent people's resilience and their ability to accept their history from a constructive instead of a negative and aggressive point of view. In my conviction and in my personal history, intolerance, arrogance and condemnation have led us to what had happened. And I won't repeat that. ("Señora")

Bachelet serves a synecdochical function as a single representative of the larger group of discriminated individuals. Her rhetoric of exclusion provides a dual connection: "I am here as a woman, representing the defeat of the exclusion to which we were objected to for so long. Today is the time to include in our development all those citizens that suffer other types of exclusions" (qtd. in Tobar, *Feminist* 37). In

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[68] Bachelet's cousin remarks on the university years: "We were teenagers immersed in the political and social movements that were transforming Chile and the world. The seeds of her ideals were planted in this period" (qtd. in Worth 57).
[69] It can be argued that Lagos provided male sponsorship in the form of mentorship.

1995, gender studies specialist Valenzuela described the circumstances preceding

Bachelet's victory.

> The women's issue in Chile is currently a controversial theme that has displaced the class struggle as the only focus of social conflict. It has also been incorporated into the political agendas of various parties and movements. It is a theme that divides the entire political spectrum—including church and government—and prompts a new system of alliances and tensions among political actors. (182)

The "new system of alliances and tensions" provided interstitial spaces of political

footholds for Bachelet's eventual ascent. According to mayor of Santiago Carolina

Tohá, the 2005 election "erased numerous myths and prejudices about Chileans,

especially among Chilean men," thereby signifying that "voters are tired of old

politics with men at the helm" (Viñas 41). Ricardo Lagos, a political risk-taker,

provided some of those interstitial spaces. His appointment of Bachelet to

"traditionally 'masculine' portfolios, such as defense and foreign affairs" contributed

to the "breakdown of cultural stereotypes about women's leadership capacities"

(Hinojosa and Franceschet 763). In an interview with Radio ONU 19 September

2012, Bachelet confirmed this:

> If I hadn't been Minister of Defense, I can tell you I would have never been president of the republic. You have to have women with the possibility of being in positions where they are seen as people who can make it, who can do it, who are capable. ("Michelle Bachelet" *Interview*)

Male political support is still vital but female support is increasingly important

in Chile. Surveys indicate that Chilean women "claim less interest than men in

politics, yet they consistently demonstrate higher levels of voting than men," and

"female membership exceeds male" in conservative parties (Matear, *Desde* 98). Data

showing that "Chilean women in every social class tend to have higher participation

rates than men at every stage in the electoral process" (Lewis 720) is not a recent

trend. Political Scientist Paul H. Lewis references Federico Gil's comment some

thirty years earlier that "women have come to play an almost decisive role in Chilean

elections" (723).[70] The premium value placed on the female vote will most likely

impact prospects for future female leadership but it does not ensure that women will,

arbitrarily, vote for women.[71] At the same time that the Bachelet elections put to rest

some debates about the possibility of women scaling the higher rungs of political

power, they create new ones. The Bachelet presidencies provide quantifiable

substance for those debates: "when a leader is sharply different in an important and

obvious way from her predecessors, it allows an instructive test of propositions about

the enduring features of a particular political system and about the necessary

conditions for leadership in general" (Genovese, *Women: Does* 3). For those who

aspire to follow Bachelet's lead, there is now a path in view.

3.2 A Chilean Leadership Paradigm for the Twenty-First Century

Bachelet's status as single mother and divorcée excludes her from what

Gwynn Thomas calls the "Patriarchal Leader category" and implies a revision of the

"necessary conditions for leadership" (*Contesting* 249). During the 2005 campaign,

attempts by Piñera and Lavín to woo female voters with Christmas card images of

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[70] Gil, Federico G. *The Political System of Chile*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966.
Print.

[71] This is discussed further in the conclusion.

their families and testimonials by spouses did not persuade the majority.[72]

Historically, Chile is a country where "political actors routinely use the idea of protection and promoting the family as an important strategy to both gain political support, or to attack that of one another," and where "the 'natural' headship of the father within the family can be used to legitimize the political 'fathership' of a political leader" (Thomas, *Ties* 170-71).[73] Chilean politics set the gold standard for what constituted "family" when

> un amplio bloque político cerró sus filas alrededor de una definición de la familia que sólo reconoce como grupo indisolublemente formado por la triada madre-padre-hijo cuyos vínculos—establemente clasificados—no deben sufrir alteraciones ni de forma ni de contenido . . . (Richard 205)

The strategy employed by Piñera and Lavín stemmed from a mindset that sought to "hiperbolizar el discurso de la Familia para fundar nuevos vínculos de estabilidad comunitaria que se encargaran de naturalizar el reencuentro del país consigo mismo" (Richard 200). In post-Pinochet Chile, the "united family" functioned as a "metaphor of the country reintegrating itself" (Hines 62). The conservative sector had no positive metaphor for a single mother, "dado que tras una mujer jefa de hogar se encontraba una 'familia fracasada' " (Godoy 112). Yet, the concept of "family" was available for new interpretations. If, as Richard puts forth, "el ideologema de la Familia debe así reparar el daño político y ético de la muerte cometida en el pasado del régimen militar" (Richard 201), the image of family that Bachelet incarnated as

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[72] Lest the romanticized version of family be construed as a product of predominantly Catholic-*machista* societies, surveys reveal that voters in the United States favor candidates framed as "good family people" with "presentable spouses and one or more children" (Genovese, *Women: Does* 4).
[73] The bachelor status of Jorge Alessandri (president of Chile 1958-1964) raised questions about his ability to "father" the Chilean nation (Thomas, *Contesting* 249).

single mother had to undergo a transformation in the collective. The transformation was accommodated by a setting in which Chileans "imagined one community; they lived in quite another" (Dore, *Holy* 111).

The male-led household, marketed as the norm in Latin America, is contested by current perspectives about actual family structures. Recent scholarship "suggests that plurality in household composition headship was as much a feature of many societies in Latin America prior to the 20th century as it is now" (Chant 546-47). Discounting the role of patriarchy in the region is a controversial proposition, but Bucciferro challenges the conventional understanding of it as "a patriarch who 'takes care' of his woman and his family. Paradoxically, in the Chilean case, it is the woman who bears the responsibility of taking care of the man and the family, even as he is put in a position of power as grand decision-maker" (Bucciferro, *For-get* 67). After research in the 1980s revealed a "high proportion of female-headed households in Latin America," it was documented as "new phenomena," when in reality as many as half of the households in nineteenth-century Latin America may have been headed by women if households not comprised of elites are included (Dore, *Holy*; Hutchison et al. *Honorable* 127).

The absence of men in households is largely attributed to economic conditions that forced men to migrate in search of work, but other sources attest to the "roving spirit" of the male population even into the early decades of the twentieth century: "Chilean men simply did not want to settle down and become consistent providers" (Rosemblatt 161-62). Data from CEPAL indicate that between 1997 and 1999, the percentage of female-led households in 17 countries of Latin America ranged from 19

in Mexico to 36.6 in Nicaragua, with a median of 27.1 (Massolo 4-5). In 1990, Chile and the Dominican Republic scored the highest percentage of female heads of household in Latin America (García and Rojas 276).[74] In 1999, the percentage was 24 (Chant 547).[75]

More recent information affirms "new family structures have emerged in Latin America alongside traditional forms, including childless couples and households with no conjugal nucleus; at the same time, households headed by women also continue to grow in number" (Arriagada 520). Paul Walder, referencing sociologist Anthony Giddens, posits that a female head of household engaged in the labor force "is probably the greatest social transformation of this late phase of modernity, altering not only social and work relations but also the traditional institution of the family." Attempts to define the composition of female-led households by a single demographic are frustrated by the variables. In a 2002 regional study, the most common composition was that of a mother with co-resident children or a mother with children and other relatives; of moderate frequency was the household comprised of a mother and her children co-habiting with other family members, usually parents; of less frequency were households comprised of single women (usually elderly), lesbian partners, women as authority figures over junior males, and grandmothers raising grandchildren (Chant 548). Female heads can be widowed, divorced, single, or separated. Obviously, the specifications for a female-headed household vary widely and are inconsistent across studies.

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[74] Statistics provided by Chant state a lower percentage (547).
[75] Claudia Bucciferro notes that in Chile "paternal abandonment has always been common" (*For-get ix*).

Variables notwithstanding, "one trend which seems to be fairly ubiquitous is a progressive 'feminization' of household headship" (Chant 546-47). This could indicate that what is portrayed as a "rupture" (Dore, *Holy* 101) of the traditional family unit has become normalized in the realistic state of affairs. The deconstruction of the patriarchal model by the feminization of households compromises its power to determine what is preferable, normal, or acceptable. This impacts conservative social norms and increases the possibility of a Bachelet presidency, making the seemingly sudden acceptance by Chilean voters of many things contrary to their alleged values somewhat more explicable. In the opinion of Chilean law professor Lidia Casas Becerra, Chile "is still a very machista country, and it's hard to make that cultural transformation, but Bachelet was a beginning. Chileans are, in fact, much more liberal now than their political elite" (qtd. in Chang, *Latin*). I propose that Bachelet's status as a head of household in Chile does not qualify as aberrant within the framework of current information.

According to research, there is an affirmative value to Bachelet's status as head of household: "the absence of direct spousal control is often observed to have positive outcomes for women's personal autonomy and 'empowerment' in the home" (Chant 557). There is also a link to empowerment in politics. Women activists and women highly placed in governments "most often are either single or separated or, if married, often are childless" (Chaney, *Old* 334). A review of some top contenders bears this out. At the time of their presidencies, Moscoso, Rousseff, Chinchilla, and Bachelet were all divorced, while Perón, Kirchner, and Chamorro were all widowed. Elsa Chaney clarifies that "freedom from family restrictions and absence of a

husband's authority are not . . . sufficient explanations of a feminine political

vocation" but "may well be necessary conditions in the face of the largely unchanging

attitudes on women´s place" (*Old* 334). Although her husband supported her work in

women's movements and national education, Labarca told Chaney that she "did not

feel free to become active in politics until after his death" (Chaney, *Old* 334).

Attitudes have altered somewhat in recent decades, but the absence of male authority

could still serve to diminish the extent to which family obligations and societal

expectations shape a female leader's political performance. Greater personal

autonomy would logically impact the focus of policies and the political agenda in

general.

Bachelet is described by Chilean women as a "woman's woman" (Thomas,

Michelle 75). Whether this epithet originates in her ability to forge her own destiny,

with or without male partnership, or in her unconventional personal choices is

unclear. In either case, I view it as indicative of a transformation in female identity

and, by extension, societal expectations. Chilean journalist Paul Walder offers an

insider's view:

> She symbolizes reason, access to the equality of modernity, a break
> with the baggage of macho tradition. Being separated . . . strengthens
> rather than weaken[s] her, turning her into a new public referent
> through this profound and previously private sort of myth. We could
> say that being separated was until recently a kind of trauma for
> women, a sin that has now been inverted into a natural civil status, if
> not necessarily an icon of feminism . . . (Walder)

As the woman's woman, Bachelet naturalizes the image of single mother and

autonomous woman. Chile appears predisposed to this interpretation, given that the

"culture is to some degree built on the idea of abandonment; an idealized but abstract

and distant image of the father" (Walder). Previously decontested concepts of family
and gender roles appear to have been contested, albeit subconsciously (Steger,
Globalisation 13).[76] Hite explains this process using a framework established by
Jürgen Habermas: "When the identity-securing system (including institutional and
normative structures) between humans and their social structures proves
incompatible, a 'legitimation crisis' occurs, forcing either change or the demand for
change of the social structure" (308-09). It is not difficult to locate Chile's
"legitimation crisis" in the Pinochet period, with its melting down and recasting of
established structures.

The following comment by a Bachelet supporter verifies an altered view of
female lives at the time of the first election:

> I am voting for her because it is historic for the country. She is the fruit
> of the fight and work of the women in Chile. Just five years ago, I
> could not have thought it was possible to have a woman president. It is
> an opening up of possibilities, especially for young girls—now that
> they have in their heads the possibility of being president. (qtd. in
> Thomas, *What* 130-31)

Even though conventional ideals continue to promote marriage, spouse and children
in a nuclear family context, Bachelet, as a visible role model with status, has taken
measures to support alternative family structures by establishing programs to assist
women as single parents or heads of household. In her own words, "I am an ordinary
person . . . I have a different sort of family, but one that is similar to a third of Chilean

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[76] Steger defines the concept of decontestation as ideas that are "held as truth with
such confidence that they no longer appear to be assumptions at all" (*Rise* 5) and
references the claim by Michael Freeden that "[i]deologies also need to decontest the
concepts they use because they are instruments for fashioning collective decisions.
That is their political role" (Freeden 54-55).

families" ("Writing").[77] The accuracy of that claim, with broader application to Latin

America, is backed by CLASCO statistical data from 2012 (Carosio 11). Ironically,

the number of consensual unions in Latin America during the late eighteenth and

early nineteenth centuries reached thirty percent (Cicerchia 120), the exact same

percentage for the twenty-first century.

Some attribute the stigmatization of nontraditional family structures to bias

propagated by Catholic dogma:

> We are still suffering from the narrow limitations of a debate whose
> guidelines continue to be framed by the Catholic doctrine . . .
> discriminatory criteria exclude any family arrangement contrary to the
> traditional model. The view of such families as "incomplete" is only
> one of the pernicious effects of such indoctrination. (Cicerchia 121)

Concurrent with this is the misrepresentation of Chilean society by a vocal, powerful

elite that took for granted that "political and familial discourses about stability,

patriarchy, and nation-building were intertwined" (Dore, *One Step* 108) The social

exposé *El libro abierto del amor y el sexo en Chile* (Rajevic) verifies Cicerchia and

Dore's observations: "la actitud abierta en la vida privada no correspondía a los

deseos de las élites del país. Por ello la vida privada real de los chilenos no estaba

representada ni en leyes ni en el discurso público ni en los mass media" (qtd. in

Mendoza).

The described gap between the established order and its relevance to the lives

citizens actually lead is again demonstrated by the illegitimate status of Bachelet's

youngest child. Records indicate that "during the early twentieth century well over

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[77] A decision on 28 January 2015 in "socially conservative Chile" to grant civil union
status to gay and unmarried heterosexual couples endorses Bachelet's statement in
that it "recognizes the different types of families" in Chilean society ("Chile:
Lawmakers").

one-third (in Santiago, more than half) of all Chilean children were born on the wrong side of the blanket" (Collier and Sater 171). Becerra describes acts of overt discrimination, where illegitimate "children were refused entrance to certain schools and their birth certificates were stamped with the word illegitimate" throughout the twentieth century (qtd. in Howard). Legislation (passed in 1999) now requires fathers to acknowledge illegitimate children, with the result that "more than a million Chileans have applied for new birth certificates which make no mention of the circumstances of their birth" (Howard). Sponsor of the paternity law Marie Antonietta Saa confirms the desire to harmonize policy and praxis: "I think our laws will eventually reflect the way we live today" (qtd. in Howard).[78]

An additional exception to the traditional set of requisites for Chilean leadership is Bachelet's identity as a modern woman with progressive ideas about gender equality. From the era of Sarmiento to the present, the quest for modernization forms an axis where social and political agenda intersect and where traditional roles are syncretized with progressive ones. The result is that investigators traverse a perplexing reef of contradictions to arrive at a concise description of contemporary Chilean female identity. In interviews with women between the ages of twenty and fifty, grouped within the Allende, Pinochet, and Concertación government periods, "all the women interviewed considered motherhood and home life as integral parts of

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[78] Chilean lawyer and politician Elena Caffarena used similar rhetoric in 1943 in reference to the legalization of divorce: "for laws to be effective, we need to adapt them to the customs and needs of the times. The fact that the courts have had to accept arrangements that they know are fictional and artificial, such as the practice of nullifying marriages, tells us that divorce is considered to be a social fact and that we need a law to deal with it" (Hutchison et al., *Emancipation* 319). Divorce was legalized in Chile in 2004.

womanhood" (Mora 49). When groups were segregated by social class and age,

middle- and upper-middle-class women, along with women ages twenty to twenty-

eight strongly supported the concept of "modern womanhood" as the ideal (Mora 46,

48). That ideal accommodates motherhood in or outside of a marital relationship and

in combination with employment that provides economic independence (57-59).

Surveys that show working class women largely favor a more traditional role may

reflect to a lesser degree a sociocultural norm and to a greater degree the desire of

respondents to reconcile their economic marginality (51-53, 59).[79] Motives aside, the

rallying cry of the Concertación to promote "modernización,"—defined by

participation in a global market and the transformation of Chile into "un país

moderno" (Godoy Ramos 113)—implies increasing receptivity to the concept of

modern womanhood as opposed to the more traditional model.

Perceptions also play an important role at the greater collective level: nations

that "fram[e] women's political empowerment in terms of modernity" are ranked

among those viewed as progressive and in sync with the times (Towns; Paxton et al.

901).[80] The conceptual coupling of modernity and women's empowerment is not a

recent development nor is it restricted to Latin American cultures and developing

nations. Data from developed nations in the late twentieth century tied "political

ambition" to the "notion of modernity" as characteristic of "women who have been at

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[79] Another factor is the "imposition problem," where the phrasing of survey questions
can bias responses.

[80] The Paxton study adds, "states that pass quotas and elect higher numbers of women
are characterized as modern, whereas states relying on traditional electoral practices
are stigmatized as backward" (Paxton et al. 901). Gender quotas, parity in cabinet
appointments, and a reform of the electoral system are all numbered among
Bachelet's achievements.

the leading edge of contemporary changes in gender role understandings" (Costantini

757). In many respects, contemporary interpretations of womanhood correspond to

the participation of women in the labor force, in that economic independence can

foster independence of thought and action. The numbers are convincingly large

enough to effect radical change. Female employment statistics published by the

United Nations (2009) show a rise from 32 to 53 percent in Latin America and the

Caribbean between 1990 and 2008, with an estimated total of over 100 million

women actively employed in that region ("Working").

In the first half of the twentieth century, "political organization also gave

women prestige and legitimacy within their communities and a sense of

empowerment that tempered their support for male supremacy" (Rosemblatt 74-75).[81]

Male supremacy had already suffered a blow when levels of domestic tension created

by the political tremors of the Allende period caused husbands and wives to separate

(Aviel 170). Under Pinochet, the growing resemblance of authoritarian rule at the

national level to that at the domestic provided additional justification for acts of

female resistance (Kirkwood, *Ser*; Matear, *Gender*; Vargas). Economic policies that

placed over one third of the population below the poverty line and obligated large

numbers of women to assume the role of breadwinner converted resistance into self-

actualization (Klubock 497; Chuchryk).[82] The resulting "market-based society . . .

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[81] While the emphasis is on working-class women, Rosemblatt also documents that "middle-class women marshaled professional and political resources to assure that men acted honorably" and that these actions, seen as an alliance, no doubt abetted the contestation of "male dominance" (268).

[82] The official percentage provided by UN ECLAC (2009) for the year 1990 was 38 percent (Clark 59). In 1970, just prior to the Allende and Pinochet governments, the percentage was 17.

impacted contemporary constructions of femininity," with increasing value given to the qualities of "self-development, autonomy, and individualism" as portrayed by the "modern woman" (Mora 48). I consider this evolution of female identity to be the sociopolitical Trojan horse of the twenty-first century as scholars in feminist studies have long argued that "liberal political thinkers and politicians disenfranchised women by encoding as masculine the qualities thought to be essential to the exercise of citizenship: rationality, autonomy, and individuality" (Rosemblatt 11). On a long-term schedule, women effectively coopted these masculine leadership qualities.

It is evident that the regime's campaign to confine women to subordinate roles within a patriarchal template and to control the scope and nature of their behavior by scripting them as "the moral reserve that would rebuild a great Chile" (Mora 47) was ineffectual. Women were already predisposed to take action on their own behalf. The course taken is described in the following assessment:

> During the military period, women began to view themselves as equal partners in the political process with the right to occupy and define for themselves what constitutes political space. By empowering themselves as individuals, they challenged the state's right to define their political identities. (Chuchryk 94)

Marjorie Agosín asserts that this period shaped "an alternative form of political power" for women (19). A comment by one *arpillerista* in 1977 reveals the extent to which the regime was aware of the negative repercussions of their subjugation of women: "women have changed so much that the military themselves made the comment that the biggest mistake they made was in leaving the family members of

the disappeared alive" (qtd. in Agosín 19).[83] The role of militant motherhood paved

the way for a more assertive female leadership model. In a culture where women are

generally socialized to support the established system, the resulting activism of

women can be understood initially as a matter of survival on the individual level that

later evolved into a *cause célébre* at the collective. More important, the concerns of

the private, domestic sphere that required women to engage in public, political

processes to ameliorate them strengthened the logic for solidarity. I believe that these

processes then provided an effective apprenticeship for how to navigate the labyrinth

of female citizenship and its relationship to power leading into the twenty-first

century.

The following excerpt from interviews with Chilean women demonstrates that

the domestic and maternal are seldom distanced from notions of female political

leadership in Chile: "If a woman of capacity is capable of governing her home, she is

capable of doing the same in the nation" (qtd. in Chaney, *Supermadre* 102).[84] No

imagination is required to conclude that "home" is synonymous with "maternal."

Analysts acknowledge the benefit of maternal qualities for Bachelet's first election:

> It would appear that the Chilean people were looking for a maternal
> figure with the hope that she could help heal the wounds left by the
> abusive dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. It is clear that Bachelet
> campaigned and was received by a majority of the Chilean people as a

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[83] The *arpilleristas* used scraps of fabric to appliqué scenes (*arpilleras*) of repression
and brutality that served as exposés of the regime's violations of human rights. They
were often hidden until sold abroad, clandestinely (Agosín).
[84] The political potential of the concept of motherhood is context-sensitive. "While
feminist scholars in the United States and Europe might frown on the repeated
utilization of the discourse of motherhood, no matter how combative or
revolutionized, it is undeniable that it has been an incredibly effective political
stimulant in Latin America especially for working-class women" (Chassen-López
188).

feminine maternal leader who was closer to the people than a male
leader and whose ability to restore the health of the country depended
upon her feminine attributes. (Haddad and Schweinle 104-05)

Although Bachelet did not propagandize her maternal image vocally, her campaign

manager Ricardo Solari promoted it as an effective difference marker through

photographic media: "Because of *machista* campaign attacks, we wanted to show that

her gender would enable her to do things differently" (qtd. in Steinberg).

The concepts of "feminine" and "maternal" persist in the collective imaginary

but the elections of Bachelet call for a new representation of them in their political

application. The term *supermadre* assigned by Chaney to women that execute

leadership as an extension of the maternal role has, in my opinion, been hybridized

and rescripted as the *supra-madre* in the twenty-first century.[85] I base this difference

on the idea that the "supermadre paradigm extends traditional sex roles into the

political sphere and reinforces patriarchy" (Chassen-López 188). The *supra-madre*

retains the maternal element at a symbolic level but cedes space to multiple facets of

self-actualization that allow for the development and implementation of qualities

beyond the stereotypical representation of female leadership as primarily maternal. A

female leader may be defined but not confined by her identity as mother, whether she

has borne children or not; she can act within a maternal construct or apart from it, as

mandated by the exigencies of the moment. The maternal role is neither the whole of

her being nor the center from which all other intents and meanings emanate. In this

sense, the *supra-madre* does not reinforce patriarchy, but instead capitalizes on the

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[85] This does not exclude an application to other female heads of state.

positive qualities of gender difference, some of them masculine by orthodox

categorizations, that the imaginary extends to the female gender.

Literature published twenty years ago credited the "No" vote on the 1988

plebiscite with giving women the necessary awareness of and confidence in female

power to sway political interests (M. Valenzuela).[86] This event was an important

milestone for those no longer content to "continue performing secondary tasks at the

margins of power" and "opened the possibility of entering the public arena;"

nonetheless, the same literature held that "women's roles in society were not

redefined. Instead, their traditional domestic roles were extended into the public

realm, as mothers in the human rights organizations and as housewives in the popular

economic organizations" (177, 179).

If roles were not altered by the events under discussion, at least the transition

into political space served as an important staging event for a subsequent

reformulation. I base this conclusion on the logic that if conditions for female

empowerment had remained static, the probability of four women elected as heads of

state in the region within a five-year period would be minimal or nonexistent. Even

though Bachelet herself downplayed her maternal status, Pieper-Mooney maintains

that she has "reconfigured the meanings of motherhood and given it multiple

dimensions that reach far beyond traditional essentialized characterizations of the

mother as morally superior, domestic, and dependent on men" (*Politics* 200). The

Bachelet biography demonstrates that none of the aforesaid characterizations—moral

[86] Power notes that conservative women who "had defined themselves as apolitical
for the past fourteen years began, in 1987, to re-create their identities: they became
the public-spirited citizens and political actors that the struggle to win the plebiscite
demanded" (*Defending* 322).

superiority, domesticity, and dependence on a male figure—have circumscribed her personal choices, making it all the more imperative to formulate a new interpretation of maternal imagery representative of the present sociocultural reality. My concept of the *supra-madre* accommodates this.

By extension, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's sociopolitical interpretation adds another dimension to the new maternal configuration. She is "consistently presented as the caring, compassionate mother, which feminizes her scientist-laden image but not at a sacrifice of her attributes of competence, rationality, and seriousness. The press increasingly portrays her in the roles of hostess and mother" (Steckenrider 245). Two obvious discrepancies emerge. She is known as "das Merkel" for her detached, unemotional, unfeminine demeanor; she is also childless (245). Logically, the image of "metaphysical mother of Germany subtly implies she has more in common with most Germans" than literal parenthood (245). The symbolic function of Merkel's fictitious maternal status does not endorse patriarchy. Furthermore, I believe the dichotomy posed by her personality traits and public perception is explained by her adaptation of masculine and feminine leadership styles to fluid circumstances. A similar case is presented for Bachelet in chapter three.

The *supra-madre* as a fully invested citizen reconciles contradictions between modern and traditional perceptions of the role of women in leadership—similar to the case of Merkel—and offers greater relevance to a generation of voters that came of age after the dictatorship. As a reiteration of Nelly Richard's assessment, Pieper-Mooney traces the Chilean roots of a "political configuration" of the traditional maternal role to intolerable conditions imposed by the regime (*Feminist* 9). The first

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Bachelet election was fortuitously positioned to receive the end result: "Many

Chilean sociologists have suggested that Chile was ready for a motherly leader—or

were in fact seeking one as a form of reassurance" (Ross, *Michelle* 725). Chilean

Public Affairs specialist Pedro Figueroa reinforces this suggestion: "When a country

is developing quickly, or modernizing, those changes generate a feeling of insecurity

or up rootedness. That's when the type of emotional, maternal leadership a woman

can offer becomes subconsciously attractive" (qtd. in Ross, *Michelle* 725). Far from a

configuration that reinforces patriarchy, this imagery provides a psychological

compensation for male abandonment, allowing for a substitution of the patriarchal

paradigm with the feminine maternal constant. In this way, Chile's robust history of

militant motherhood sponsors the conferrence of that symbol to Bachelet. Her roles as

mediator and protector were established earlier in ministerial roles: "In respect of

political achievements, the most important thing for me is to have contributed to the

consolidation of the first process of reunion between the Armed Forces and society in

Chile's modern history" (qtd. in Dixon).

As Minister of Defense, Bachelet's decision to board a tank and ride through

the flooded zones of Santiago not only gave her celebrity status as "champion of the

common good" (Kornblut 240), but also interfaced masculine qualities of authority

and control with feminine qualities of care and compassion. Chilean author Isabel

Allende shares a description of this event sent from Santiago by her mother: "The

greatest thing is that the minister of defense, Michelle Bachelet, called out the army to

come to the aid of those affected, and is touring in an armored car, with the

commander in chief by her side, helping in every way possible, night and day" (*Mi*

país 86). There is power to be gained by "extraordinary situations which suddenly expose the cultural foundations of power constellations. Cultural aspects, which under normal circumstances, remain hidden" (Schoenmakers 3). It is thus credible that the "extraordinary situation" recounted by Allende afforded Bachelet substantial political currency, when combined with the claim that "in times of crisis, mothers have even greater moral authority" (Kornblut 197).

Even in the aftermath of Bachelet's record-breaking exit poll rating of 84 percent in 2010, some Chileans continued to "question the validity of women's engagement in the public realm, and Bachelet's election did not change this" (Bucciferro, *Chilean* 27). Bachelet's second election indicates that Chileans are divided on this point. One view from the outside sees contemporary Chile as a "puzzling combination of economic modernization and social conservativism" (Htun, *Sex* 3). A view from the inside expands on the topic:

> Although it is conservative discourse which ideologically confers a certain degree of "unity" on the Chilean population, it is clear that it is losing ground in the national psyche because of the process of modernisation in the country . . . conservative norms which do not really represent our culture are prevalent . . . Our society lacks new collective, symbolic reference points which give sense to people's actions. (Palacios and Martínez 31)

I consider that much of what is framed as "novel," "nonconformist," or "unorthodox" in Bachelet's backstory constitutes one of the "new collective, symbolic reference points." In the following section, I explore the relationship Chileans currently profess with conservatism, taking into account Bachelet's status as a self-proclaimed Socialist.

3.3 Politics as Usual: A Decline or Demise?

From its beginnings, Chile has held the reputation among its neighbors as the most conservative Latin American society. Even so, there is an ambiguous nature to its conservatism, as author Isabel Allende explains: "In customs we are conservatives and traditionalists; we prefer the known evil to good yet to be learned, but in everything else we are always on the lookout for something new" (*Mi país* 95). What Allende describes in principle is central to a comprehension of the Bachelet election. Just as some surveys continue to conclude that Chilean women are "conservative in nature," others conclude that

> the increased number of women in the labour market, the drop in the marriage rate, the increase in annulments, the high incidence of abortion, the number of unmarried couples living together, . . . would all seem to indicate that Chilean society is more "liberal" than some would like it to appear. (Palacios and Martínez 1-2)

As data reveal, "research conducted in the early 1990s into women's political allegiances and voting behavior indicates that 47.5 percent of women ideologically identify themselves with the center and 22.8 percent with the right; only 17.3 percent identified themselves with the left" (Matear, *Desde* 97; Aviel). A combination of the first two percentages positions over 70 percent of female voters in a conservative political camp. A decade later, that percentage shows a complete reversal. In 2002, a poll conducted in Chile by Centro de Estudios Públicos "concluded that 77 percent of the population is either liberal or mostly liberal" (Franceschet and Thomas 181).[87] What accounts for an exact reversal over a period of ten years? Had the percentage

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[87] This figure repeated itself in the 2013 election when the combined vote for Bachelet and her opponent Matthei, both females, totaled a little over 70 percent (Bucciferro, *Michelle* 231).

identified with leftist politics in the early 1990s remained constant, Bachelet could not have garnered the necessary majority from her party alone to win two separate elections. In South America, female candidates are typically more conservative than male candidates (Murray, *Introduction* 9), which adds to the complexity of deciphering the 2005 election that saw the main opposition to Bachelet, a Socialist, represented by two conservative male candidates.

Negative framings of the left experienced a surge in the early twentieth century, when conservatives in Chile associated the left with a general breakdown of the established order: "Socialists were commonly seen as degenerates who believed in free love" (Rosemblatt 204-05). Those concerns continued to be exploited by political leaders who "claimed that disorganized, improper family life and uncontained sexuality . . . undermined national vigor and relegated the nation to a second-class status" (12). After seventeen years of right-wing policies under the regime, the electorate sought an annulment: "the reality of representative liberal democracy in Latin America is that the political parties do not represent the diverse interests of the electorate but serve the interests of the political and economic élites" (Matear, *Desde* 98). It follows that the public transcript, provided and reinforced by the elite, overshadowed profound changes as it ceased to represent the majority. A demonstration of this was captured on film by photographer Spencer Tunick in June 2002. More than 3,000 Chileans posed nude *en masse* in front of the Fine Arts Museum in Santiago, provoking commentary by talk show hosts and reporters of a "rebellion against the social conservatism not only of the dictatorship but also of the civilian governments that had succeeded it" (Hutchison et al. 271).

It is arguable that Bachelet's elections are symptomatic of an ideological

metamorphosis in process in Chile, but classifying it proves difficult. One

interpretation rejects it as "ideological liberalism," preferring a reading of it as

"ideological conservatism which has been 'fractured' by the experience of modernity

and the need to adapt to it" (Palacios and Martínez 30). The following conversation

just prior to the 2005 election illustrates the philosophical accommodations already

underway:

> As José Joaquín Brunner categorically stated in a debate with Tomás
> Moulian, "Can I argue that socialism is dead and still feel myself a
> Leftist? Can I believe that the political discrimination between right
> and left has lost sense, but still use it? Can I declare myself liberal and
> progressive at the same time, without renouncing my own past? (. . .)
> At a first glance it can sound contradictory, but to all these questions I
> answer "Yes". How is this possible? The reason is that we live in a
> period in which the political language, the vocabulary and the
> grammar have rapidly changed, giving birth to new large zones of
> which still no maps have been drawn." (qtd. in P. Silva 74)[88]

In the uncharted territory of transition to democracy, the process of building

on the "irreversible gains" of female achievements during the Allende and Pinochet

periods involves "articulating tactics and strategies that will make the inclusion of

women's demands acceptable to every political and social sector" (Cañadell 58-60).

Bachelet's platform worked along these lines by combining appeals for gender equity

and bipartisanship under a single rationale. Her speech "Nuestro sueño es posible"

called for a unified Chile: "Tiene mucho más valor lo que podemos lograr juntos que

la defensa de lo que puede separarnos" (qtd. in Lacoste, 97).[89] The softening of hard

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[88] Excerpt from J. J. Brunner and T. Moulian. *Brunner vs Moulian: izquierda y
capitalismo en 14 rounds.* Santiago: Editorial El Mostrador, 2002.
[89] The speech was delivered on 2 December 2004 before her win in the runoff vote in
January.

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lines that favor polarization was key to capturing the majority. For an electorate averse to ideological extremes, this kind of message was a potentially more decisive factor than the negative value assigned to Bachelet's religious leanings or marital status. Herein lies another logic for the election of the dark horse.[90]

Current indications are that conservatism is in decline in Chile. In 2003, Franceschet wrote that "many observers predict that the next government in Chile will be composed of the two main rightist parties," and warned that the stalwart women's organization SERNAM ran the risk of debilitating compromise under the next government (Franceschet, *State* 36). Neither prediction materialized.[91] Bachelet won two elections from the center-left. In January 2014, a unanimous vote of congress accorded SERNAM institutional status as the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality. A full appreciation of this development requires a review of recent history. Only seventeen years earlier, Matear wrote that SERNAM's "lack of institutional muscle resulted in limited success" since many of its proposals "challenged the patriarchal structures of the Chilean state, society and judicial system" (*Desde* 93). Much of its female leadership had close ties to the ruling party, a situation that created "self-censored internal debate on issues affecting women" and, at times, guaranteed female compliance with the status quo through silence (94). In the twenty-first century, the political bulwarks defended by the elite appear to have

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[90] Academician Alberto Fujimori was labeled a dark horse when, within a few weeks of election day, he rose in polls quickly without a background in politics or strong party affiliations to become president of Peru (Robinson); Bachelet's situation is similar.

[91] A merger of the center and left led to the formation of the Concertación, the party associated with Bachelet's first term; it was later reformulated as Nueva Mayoría (2013), Bachelet's current party affiliation.

been compromised. This is nowhere more evident than when gender equity achieved

priority status in the first election: "Nadie, hasta el momento, no sólo en Chile sino a

nivel mundial, había tematizado el género de esta forma ni había sacado la cara por

las mujeres de manera tan evidente . . . el liderazgo de Michelle Bachelet puede ser

catalogado de transformacional" (Ramil, *Es el género*).[92]

Bachelet's focus on gender equity was a central feature of her UN Women

global initiative for the empowerment of women.[93] In the Chilean context, she

considers SERNAM its appropriate vehicle of promotion:

> Creo que es un motivo de enorme alegría para las mujeres de Chile,
> pero también, para la convivencia entre chilenos y chilenas, . . . Chile
> hoy día da un paso decisivo en el proceso que hace de la igualdad entre
> hombres y mujeres un objetivo de Estado y le da fuerza institucional.
> (Gobierno)[94]

This event is noteworthy, taking into account that on the "verge of the new

millennium Chile became the only nation in the world to prohibit the use of the word

'gender' in Parliament" (Pieper-Mooney, *Politics* 196). Richard explains that the

> palabra "género" fue básicamente condenada por su falta de ortodoxia
> en material de definiciones tanto lexicales como sexuales; por abrir
> demasiados márgenes de imprecisión —en el borde de las categorías
> repertoriadas—que amenazan con desregular el centro de autoridad de
> una Verdad única (prefijada). (208)

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[92] I include the list of women's demands from La Agenda de Género: "mismo trabajo, mismo trato; castigo a la violencia contra las mujeres; más protección y mejor calidad de vida para las jefas de hogar y sus familias; salas cuna para mujeres con trabajo: hijas e hijos bien cuidados; derecho a una pensión digna; mayor igualdad en el matrimonio; mayor participación" (Ramil, *Es el género*).

[93] Bachelet was executive director of UN Women from 2010 to 2013.

[94] Three of the six "demands" published by the Concertación de Mujeres in 1988 are foci of the Bachelet administration: "allocation of 30% of decision-making positions to women;" "creation of Nation Women's Office with ministerial rank;" "ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" (Chuchryk 86).

The conservatism defended by two major institutions, the Church and the

government, was challenged by a third: "mientras la Iglesia y el Senado

condenaban—a escala del país—la legitimidad conceptual de la palabra 'género', se

inauguraba el Programa 'Género y Cultura' en la universidad de Chile como un

programa que pelea por la legitimación universitaria de los saberes nacidos del

feminismo" (209). In Chile, this represents a sharp detour from conservative

pathways.

This detour not only emboldened an alternative response to political

manipulation but also confronted some inviolate bastions of the Catholic Church. In a

controversial move in January 2015, Bachelet introduced a bill to decriminalize

abortions under specific circumstances, removing the penalty of up to 5 years

imprisonment. The ongoing contraception debate received increased attention after

Bachelet approved the distribution of the emergency contraceptive pill to women 14

years and older in 2006, only to have the courts overthrow it in 2008. Responses to

this are significant. One, the Catholic Church named the Bachelet administration a

"totalitarian regime" (Kumar). Two, the Catholic Church was the target of reprisal:

> Hundreds of Chileans are planning to renounce their membership in
> the Roman Catholic Church on April 29 . . . Over 10,000 people also
> marched in evening demonstrations to protest the court's decision
> Tuesday. Mujeres Públicas, or Public Women, a women's rights group
> in Santiago, has used e-mail to organize the "massive apostasy," that
> is, an active rejection of the Catholic faith . . . Women from each of
> Chile's 15 regions have committed to the abandonment of their faith.
> (Malinowski)

This does not signal a mass defection to atheism: "for many Chilean women

professing belief in God is not synonymous with following the dictates of the

Catholic Church on social issues" (Power, *Gender*).[95] It does signal a social

transformation in progress. The collective decision of women in 2008 to unshackle

personal choices from the dictates of the Catholic Church stands in sharp contrast to

their status in 1970:

> Though relatively emancipated socially compared to women in most
> other countries of Latin America, Chilean women are, nevertheless,
> still sheltered and subordinate to men, and far more under the
> influence of traditional customs and the moral and political views of
> the Catholic Church. (Zeitlin and Petras 23)

 In the present setting, this describes a shrinking portion of the female population that

voiced their demand for "a female President *without* a feminist agenda" (Bucciferro,

Michelle 221), ergo, a controversial stance on reproduction. Additional scholarship

argues that the conservative right and the Catholic Church have, in recent decades,

lost ground as the "extremely hard-line position on moral and social issues . . .

appears to be at odds with societal attitudes" (Franceschet, *Women* 105).

This is particularly evident in the policy on birth control. Women now link

large families to limitations on economic improvement and personal advancement. In

the absence of adequate information and easy access to birth control devices, Chilean

women have utilized rudimentary methods, resorting to "going to the butcher"

(abortion) as a last resort (Rosemblatt 213). The ideology of the left avoided the

stigmatization of such decisions, judging that "women's control over their fertility,

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[95] This raises questions about correlations between the pursuit of modernity and a
declining adherence to Catholic dogmas related to gender roles: "For many women
the gendered expectations they receive, and frequently internalize, conflict with the
drive to modernity that dominates the national discourse and shapes public values and
goals. These expectations also clash with many women's quotidian reality and
desires" (Power, *Gender*).

like male abstinence from alcohol, was validated as the assertion of personal will"

(213). After these decisions acquired a political nature, the Church and government

joined forces to exercise control over them. Consequently, a growing trend towards

progressive views may favor candidates with a more liberal agenda. As Chilean

sociologist Eugenio Tironi infers, "What conservative society would dare elect as

president a woman, a leftist, a victim of human rights violations, and an annulled

mother?" (qtd. in Edwards).

Chilean journalist Monica Silva credits Bachelet's ability to overcome

obstacles presented by dominant religious postures and conservative female sectors to

the notion that women are more firmly anchored to the realities of human experience:

"women have common sense, they know the real problems of a person, she

[Bachelet] knows the problems . . . the political men, they know the problems of the

world as they present them, not the world as it is" (qtd. in Thomas, *What* 132). The

Bachelet campaigns were able to effectively exploit this aspect.

The first Bachelet administration took its cues from the electorate and pursued

a path that would cultivate a synergistic relationship with an engaged citizenry. For

some, her first election was a move on the part of the electorate to replace a top-

down, aloof leadership model with one that promised closer proximity to the practical

side of Chilean lives. This is considered exceptional in the Chilean context: "fue la

ciudadanía y no la clase política quien la investió candidata y luego Presidenta, algo

extraño en el politizado voto chileno" (Mendoza). It was a short-lived experiment.

After Bachelet exited with an unprecedented high approval rating, her successor was

unable to replicate that level of rapport with the populace. A 2014 report on Chilean

economic and political conditions confirms the social unease that shadowed Piñera's

administration:

> According to many analysts, Chileans have resorted to street protests
> as a result of their dissatisfaction with the country's political class,
> which they view as unresponsive to citizen demands and unwilling to
> address the country's high level of inequality. This is somewhat
> counterintuitive since Chile's democracy is more consolidated and
> inclusive than ever before . . . (P. Meyer 5)

As evidence of Chile's stability and progress, the same report listed the process of fair

elections, the recognition and protection of human rights, essential adjustments to the

constitution, and the reduction of poverty (P. Meyer). In 2014, much of the discontent

stemmed from the expectations of the post-Pinochet generation—one that is more

vocal and aggressive in their demands—and from an electoral system that curbs the

direct influence of the electorate (P. Meyer).[96] In May 2015, the second Bachelet

government achieved the long desired reform of the electoral system and continues to

pursue additional reforms that address the concerns of that generation.

3.4 Chilean Politics: A New Script with a New Cast?

A distancing from and, at times, rejection of the political elite is tied to what

Hite (1996) describes as the "Chilean political class's virtual obsession . . . with

'modernizing' the country" (319). In the transition from dictatorship to democracy,

the path to modernization is obfuscated by a diverse ideological spectrum. In this

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[96] Reuters describes it as "a byzantine electoral system introduced by dictator Augusto
Pinochet before he departed from power that has effectively excluded parties that do
not belong to one of two leading coalitions and prevented either coalition from
winning a significant majority in Congress" (Jara and O'Brien).

section, I implement Hite's study of political identity among postdictatorial politicians of the left to make application to where Bachelet is positioned on that spectrum. Hite's conceptualization of four "patterns of political behavior and distinct value hierarchies" (313) sheds light on both the Concertación's response to the Bachelet candidacy and on the identity that Bachelet projects.

Those who identify themselves as "party loyalists" value "hierarchy" and envision themselves as "keepers of the flame, . . . inseparable from their representation of past traditions and symbols;" their rhetoric is "nostalgic," with a degree of distrust in the "new politics of consensus" (313). They defend and preserve a strong tie to the past and a centralized locus of command and control (313-15), two features incompatible with the egalitarian goals pursued by more progressive actors. Bachelet, "una desconocida" and a woman, has little in common with this group and, like many Chileans, has strong reasons for not fixing her gaze on the past. The sector desirous of putting the past behind, politically and psychologically, is on the increase. An aversion to "consensus" creates an additional barrier; Bachelet is known for her practice of it. While consensus conveys positive qualities in the context of equity, it generates some negative connotations for Bachelet among critics and supporters alike. Chapter three revisits this topic.

The "personal loyalists" derive identity from allegiance to a particular leader, a case in point being the staunch supporters of Allende and Pinochet (Hite 315). The general disenchantment with political parties currently afflicting the Chilean electorate is unfavorable to the blind affiliations that incline towards idealized images of leaders. In contrast, Bachelet's autonomous identity represented the necessary

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"fresh eyes to see behaviors that are problematic" (Helgesen 371-72). This complements a description of new styles of political leadership in Latin America as those "a cierta distancia […] de los partidos políticos tradicionales, apostando a construir un vínculo directo con la ciudadanía y sus intereses" (Díaz-Tendero 32; Tobar, *Feminist*). Where the old order is viewed with increasing skepticism (Tobar, *Seizing* 514), Bachelet stands to gain substantial credibility to the extent that she can distance herself from it. Tobar confirms that "the anti-establishment climate provided added support for a woman candidate, and it helped Bachelet's campaign in particular" (*Feminist* 35).

Two points of interest emerge here. First, I suggest that the climate here described as antagonistic to conventional politics was, by association, also antagonistic to a *machista* cultural construct. If so, the *machista* element ascribed to Chilean society was less of a barrier to the first Bachelet election than depicted. This diminishes the contradiction posed by her gender. Second, some commentary indicates an altered alignment in the pathway to power: "while connection to a powerful man has traditionally been a route into power for women, the reverse now appears to be the case" (Murray, *Conclusion* 237). If this is the case, female candidates have less to gain *as* personal loyalists or *from* personal loyalists since they are often viewed as minor actors in the inner circles of political mechanisms and because they are relatively recent arrivals to high positions in government. It will take time for female newcomers to build a base of longstanding loyalties.

The "thinkers" emphasize "ideas over what might be seen as the good of the political party or their own self-interest" (Hite 317).[97] This approach appeals to the new way of doing politics as it curtails the preponderance of party agendas and the pursuit of political office for personal power. Bachelet affirms she did not enter politics out of personal ambition: "Yo no fui criada para el poder ni nunca hice nada para obtenerlo . . . la política entró en mi vida destrozando lo que más amaba" (qtd. in Ortiz de Zárate). Thinkers are largely motivated by humanitarian ideals: "human rights, questions of social justice, and dignity . . . recognising the diversity of our global civilisation" (317-18). Bachelet placed these ideals at the center of her reforms. Her recognition and support of diversity, her pursuit of social justice, and her focus on the protection of human rights also correspond to the more specialized category of thinker-exiles. This group displays an ability to tolerate and accommodate diverse political postures as a result of the struggle to maintain and promote their own cause in foreign contexts (316-17). Journalist Jonathan Franklin writes that as exiles in East Germany, "Bachelet and her mother organized protests against the military junta that drew media attention and put pressure on the regime" (Worth 70).[98] Bachelet has pursued reforms with a similar degree of purpose and boldness while, at the same time, making some necessary adaptations to ever-evolving circumstances.

The "political entrepreneur" places the focus on "pragmatism, consensus and coalition-building, stability and gradualism," while remaining "responsive to changing political winds" (Hite 318). This type avoids strict definition by a single

[97] Self-interest cannot be completely ruled out as a determinant of political behavior. A current consumer-citizen approach to politics demands that government provide solutions to problems and material benefits at the personal level (P. Silva 72-74).
[98] Franklin's article appeared in the November 2005 issue of *Women's eNews*.

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ideology. These characteristics surface in discourse by Bachelet and about Bachelet. Identified as a Socialist, she heads a government defined as center-left, but that position has been criticized for its failure to perform according to expectations. Victor Toro, founder of the MIR movement under Allende and an exile of the regime, spoke of Chilean political identity in a 2013 interview: "We are clear that the Concertación is not part of the Left . . . It is pure capitalism. Therefore, they are neither Left nor progressive . . . the New Majority is a superficial media movement, from the same old political class that is so discredited " (qtd. in P. Sepúlveda). Disenchantment with political parties is not unique to Latin America. A study done in 2000 found "massive declines in party membership have been registered in most Trilateral countries over the last 25 years," with the result that "more citizens are now maintaining their independence from political parties and the institutions of representative democracy that they represent" (Pharr et al. 16).[99]

The present political scene, in combination with Bachelet's new style of leadership, lends another level of comprehension to her elections. In an interesting development, the electorate itself ideologically separated Bachelet both from the traditional political profile represented by other candidates and from her own party, the Concertación. Historian Patricio Silva explains this dynamic: "Today, the personal attributes of the candidates involved are decisive . . . the current electorate gives its personal adhesion to a single candidate and not necessarily to the political forces which are officially behind his or her campaign" (73). Public perception held

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[99] The same study states, "by the mid-1990s, barely a tenth of the American public had a great deal of confidence in the people running the executive branch or Congress" (Pharr et al.17). This is significant in a country with the longest continual history as a democratic institution.

that "leaders of the Concertación had grown arrogant and disconnected . . . [and] were generally out-of-touch with the grass-roots activists that had supported them in the transition, as well as with concerns of everyday Chileans" (Thomas, *What* 120). Paradoxically, the electorate not only chose the Concertación candidate; it identified her as an "everyday" Chilean. This required a correct assessment of citizen concerns and a different approach to governance from the candidate. In Bachelet's words, the approach is one that "understands what it is like to be 'in the skin' of those you serve" (Clift). The Internet was particularly instrumental in establishing that empathetic connection.[100] Based on a 2003 survey, Chile ranks highest among Latin American nations for Internet use (Boas 2). In the 2004 campaign, both Piñera and Bachelet utilized blogs and Lavín established an online volunteer network. Political scientist Taylor Boas endorses their effectiveness:

> The greatest unique opportunity that the Internet provides to candidates in Chile is probably the potential for interactive communication with supporters and stimulating a sense of community among them, particularly in an era in which parties no longer play an important role in performing these functions. (22)

One year into her second term, Bachelet expressed awareness of the general malaise affecting the governed and their disenchantment with political parties in particular: "In Chile, as in many parts of the world, politics has lost so much legitimacy. And part of it is because they feel that we make promises that we don't fulfill" (*Chile's Women*). The psychological value of her first term set a new standard: "Now, those who criticized her supposed sentimentalism are taking classes in

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[100] Lavín's essay *Chile: A Quiet Revolution* (1988) noted that "Chile has experienced profound changes, transformations that are modifying the way in which new generations of Chileans live, think, study, work, and rest;" he credits this in part to global access of information (Lavín and Tironi 498-99).

emotional intelligence, while Chile's politicians must all pass the 'Bachelet test' (that

is, having 'heart' and being close to the people)" (Chavarría). Tactics from the

opposition to frame Bachelet as too sentimental and emotional to be tough, objective,

and authoritarian floundered. Contextualization played a major part: "campaigns

focused on the issue of change where the public wants to get rid of corruption by

throwing the 'old guard' out and bringing in 'clean hands'. . . may serve to benefit

women candidates" (Norris *xvi*). Elizabeth Janeway's insight reflects the situation in

present day Chile:

> What we want from the powerful is not just morality . . . but sensitivity
> to the operations of the political process, which includes an awareness
> of our presence and of our demands . . . [and] of increasing misfit
> between their theoretical paradigms of governance and changing
> contemporary reality. (265)

Bachelet's rhetoric of "consensus" and "inclusiveness," in combination with

the push towards gender equity at all levels of government and society, demonstrate

at the very least an awareness of a new mantra for leadership in the twenty-first

century. Before the second election, Bachelet voiced the realization that

> [Chile] cambió y se va a hacer más difícil de gobernar . . . Si no somos
> capaces de hacer los cambios y la gente empieza a tomarse las calles
> no va a ser responsabilidad de una presidenta, sino de un sistema
> político incapaz de responder a los desafíos de Chile. ("Bachelet:
> Chile")

Seven months into her second term, Bachelet remarked again on changes in the

Chilean electorate: "Chile has changed. The people have become more mature and

they are more conscious of their rights. They want to participate and have a say about

things . . . " (Bachelet, *Chilean*). The ramifications of the upsurge in citizen

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involvement have provoked one opinion that "whoever rules Chile has to be acrobatic" (Jocelyn-Holt 584).

Bachelet's discourse dovetails with a study that describes effective leaders as those who "inspire change . . . not through daring acts of courage, but through their ability to keep going, to tough it out, and to rise above their own frustration, humiliation, and anger to act on behalf of their larger ideals" (Meyerson 170). As a survivor of the regime, Bachelet represents resilience.[101] Her appeal for a united Chile, enlightened instead of disabled by the past, projects a vision of sociopolitical modernity. Her medical training informs this vision: "I went to the Ministry of Defense, I knew that I could do much more than protect all the citizens from the outside, I had in my hands the possibility of collaborating to heal the most profound wound that divided my country" (qtd. in Franceschet and Thomas 189). In the wake of that division, new actors with a new script are required. Chilean sociologist Manuel Garretón foresaw this as he wrote, "the *fin de siècle* coincides with the exhaustion of a sociopolitical model . . . Profound reforms are needed to transform this regime into a true political democracy . . ." (84).

By all definitions, Chile is not the *locus amoenus* for the election of a female head of state. As a context for Bachelet's elections, it more closely resembles a *locus certaminis*. Commentary offered by media, nationals, and foreigners shortly before her first election "auguraban una derrota, señalando que el país no estaba preparado

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[101] Similar to Bachelet, the assassination of Violeta Chamorro's husband by Somoza's government crafted her political image as a "symbol of the sacrifices that had been made in Nicaragua's bloody political history" and as "a matriarch who held together a divided family […] that symbolized the divided country" (Saint-Germain 124).

para ser gobernado por una mujer" (Valdés, *El Chile* 248). One study on women and

the forces that favor or inhibit their political integration demonstrates that

> conservative religious ideologies promote a less public role for women
> . . . countries with dominant conservative religious ideologies can be
> expected to resist the message of equality from agents of world society
> and to demonstrate lower levels of female political participation . . . a
> country with a history of colonialism may exhibit slower incorporation
> of women into the political realm than countries never colonized
> (Paxton et al. 904).

Chile meets all of these prohibitive criteria, yet their suppositions are not validated by

reality. Findings in 2002 revealed that Latin Americans are favorable to the idea of

women in power: 57 percent believed that women in politics improve the

government; more than 90 percent affirmed they would vote for a woman for

president; 69 percent were confident that a woman would be elected to the presidency

within twenty years; 65 percent were receptive to quota laws; 66 percent evaluated

women as more trustworthy than men; 85 percent "agreed that women are good

decision-makers;" and 57 percent prioritized women's rights as an important piece of

a candidate's political platform (Htun, *Mujeres*).

The Htun study concludes that as attitudes about women in power and politics

change, they pose less of a hurdle for women aspiring to public office than factors

such as funding and political party affiliations. An insistence that things have not

changed can be attributed to the notion of a prevailing system without actual

reproduction of that system in praxis: "Because of fixed dispositions, an individual

can remain closed off to the evolution of a context, to the modification of its objective

rules, of its function, and therefore of his or her own position within that context"

(Hilgers 734). The Abarca and Majluf study confirms that even as women assume

nontraditional roles, traditional expectations persist (57, 76-78). These come in the form of Mathieu Hilgers's "fixed dispositions" and appear as contradictions to actual change. Nonetheless, "old and new family models coexist," due to increasing numbers of women in typically masculine professions (Abarca and Majluf 56, 58). It would appear that in Chile expectations are in flux.

Several milestones representative of change can be attributed to the Bachelet biography: Minister of Health; first female in all of the Americas, the United States and Canada to serve as Minister of Defense; first female head of state in Chile (2006-2010); formation of the first cabinet in Latin America to achieve gender parity; first executive director of UN Women; and the election to a second presidential term (2014).[102] A statement from 1995 that in Chile "the traditional view of women in politics is that they have no interest in competing with men" (M. Valenzuela 183) emphasizes the extent of change in only two decades. Milestones erected by Bachelet indicate that the new way of doing politics has gained traction but it does not advance unchallenged:

> Es evidente que algo cambió de modo dramático en el balance de poder simbólico entre las mujeres y los hombres en el país. La subversión del orden de las cosas al tener una mujer, una figura femenina maternal, en el lugar del falo organizador de las relaciones sociales, síntesis del poder social, ha tenido consecuencias significativas en distintos ámbitos. Desde la llegada de Michelle Bachelet al gobierno se inició una sucesión de escaramuzas, pequeñas acciones tácticas y estrategias del poder masculino en su lucha por recuperar el sitial perdido y por garantizar que "nunca más" una mujer se atreva a disputar aquel sitio que consideran de su propiedad y privilegio, como parte del orden "natural". (Valdés, *El Chile* 267-68)

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[102] Additional milestones in the form of landmark reforms are discussed in chapter five.

The attempts referred to by Valdés failed and the "natural" order of male preeminence was not completely restored. The 2013 run-off vote between two female candidates added credibility to Bachelet's projection of things to come: "que una mujer sea presidenta no debe ser visto como una rareza, sino como un augurio" (Ortiz de Zárate). Chilean historian Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt agrees:

> Chile is an unstable society undergoing rapid change . . . [that] resists any clear-cut definitions. This situation is not unlike what happened, back in the 1970s, when it turned out that we were not the Latin American exception that confirmed the rule, nor as institutionally bound as everyone wanted to think. If so, in the near future, Chile will be a far more surprising place than anyone in or out of power . . . might be guessing at this present time. (584)

The contradictions surrounding the Bachelet elections cannot be dismissed as indicators of transformation but I suggest that the focus is misdirected. The alleged anomaly does not reside so much in the contradictory elements of Bachelet's biography as it does in the contradictory elements of the collective identity. The following details support this suggestion:

> she represented many constituencies . . . To working women she was a survivor, . . . men admired her approach to life; . . . Surveys of the armed forces showed that a plurality considered her the best minister of defense in decades . . . for men, she represented courage . . . middle- and even upper-middle-class women could identify with her upbringing, her education, and her resilience. For young adults born after the coup . . . she was a symbol of what it was possible to achieve in Chile . . . They saw in her a person who could really give them the resources and the opportunity to be a part of the sociopolitical scene. First and foremost, Bachelet was perceived as a symbol of political, economic, and social change. (Fernández and Vera 13)

Upon close examination, cleavages between the Bachelet biography and Chilean social expectations recede considerably. What can be said is that the unfolding of female leadership in Chilean politics provides a suitable laboratory for ongoing

studies of the unpredictable in social transformation and gender politics. In this

chapter, I have presented evidence for a level of social transformation in Chile that

renders the contradictions presented in the first part of the chapter less enigmatic. In

the next chapter, I develop the idea that although deeply ingrained attitudes about

criteria for executive positions did not obstruct the election of Bachelet, they have

challenged her progress postelection.

CHAPTER 4

TRAVERSING THE LABYRINTH OF FEMALE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The exercise of power is determined by thousands of interactions between the world of the powerful and that of the powerless, all the more so because these worlds are never divided by a sharp line: everyone has a small part of himself in both.

—Vaclav Havel

The intent of this chapter is twofold. One seeks a cogent construction of the relationship between gender, political leadership, and empowerment as manifested in the elections and presidencies of Michelle Bachelet. Another examines current changes in Chilean expectations of leadership and how those assist or hinder the political progress of Bachelet. In chapter three, I began a discussion of changes in the electorate, a development verified by Bachelet herself. In this chapter, I pursue this development through the polarized views about women in executive office and the gap between what the Chilean public articulated prior to the first Bachelet election and what they actually enacted when votes were cast.

4.1 What Chileans Said and What Chileans Did

Interviews conducted by Elsa Chaney in 1979 indicated that only 13 percent of female interviewees in Peru and Chile held the opinion that qualified women were apt candidates for any and all governmental posts (Chaney, *Supermadre* 141). The dissenting majority voiced reasons such as, "Some posts simply are against the nature of women," "It would be too much against our traditions," "I don't think women

would be appropriate for posts like the presidency, ministers of defense, foreign

relations, …These are posts for men. A woman in such a place would be really

strange, completely outside our experience" (142).[103] A year earlier, a survey

conducted among young Chilean men disclosed similar opinions about women and

positions of power:

> "Es menos que el hombre" (clase inferior); "No puede ser
> independiente como el hombre" (clase inferior); "No las encuentro
> ejecutivas" (clase inferior); "Con sus condiciones psíquicas, la mujer
> no está capacitada" (clase inferior); "El carácter del hombre es más
> compatible con un cargo directivo" (clase media superior) . . . (Gissi
> 567)

In the midst of the 2005 presidential campaign twenty six years later, Chilean men

held that Bachelet "no tenía carácter ni liderazgo …y que los partidos no la dejarían

gobernar;" Chilean middle-class women objected on the grounds that "sería como

votar por ellas mismas;" working class women insisted that "las mujeres no sabían

gobernar;" feminists criticized Bachelet's refusal to overtly declare herself a feminist

(Valdés, *El Chile* 257). Among professionals, "feminist academics" noted her

reticence "to play the gender card" (Ross, *Bachelet*).

On 11 December 2005, a gap occurred between what Chileans said and what

Chileans did. Bachelet acknowledged its significance: "muchas veces se dijo 'la gente

en Chile no vota por las mujeres, las mujeres no votan por las mujeres.' Y la verdad

es que yo tuve una muy alta votación en mujeres y también buena en hombres"

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[103] Both developing and developed nations show acute similarities in attitudes.
Political consultant Chris Esposito states the reasons women give for not voting for
women in the United States: "politics is a man's world . . . a woman running for
office is too ambitious . . . women candidates [are] trying to become like men . . .
women campaigning full-time [are] being irresponsible at home, related to marriage
or children or both" (qtd. in Kornblut 160-61).

(Bachelet, *Democracia* 18).[104] In the final analysis, the female vote was a key factor

in securing the election for Bachelet (Mengo 202), with a large percentage from the

working class (Franceschet and Thomas). This places them within the larger group of

working-class women that denied the ability of women to govern just prior to the

election (Valdés, *El Chile* 257). Chilean anthropologist Sonia Montecino Aguirre

interprets Bachelet's first election as "una nueva tensión al sistema de estatus y una

ruptura con muchos de sus códigos," in that Bachelet served as a "signo condensador

(universal) de los múltiples cambios que se fueron gestando en la historia femenina

chilena desde la década de los 60" (*Género* 153). Reactions to the first Bachelet

inauguration covered a broad spectrum. On inauguration day, thousands of women

donned replicas of the presidential sash as a message of solidarity. Mid-way through

the first term, other citizens still refused to validate the altered political landscape:

> Los analistas criollos siguen pensando que la masculinización de la
> autoridad, por siglos considerada la única versión del liderazgo
> político, es el estilo que necesitan los pueblos . . . el ex Presidente
> Ricardo Lagos fue el último estadista, aunque también fue tildado de
> autoritario, mientras que Bachelet no ha pasado de ser, para ellos, la
> primera mujer Presidenta. (Burotto and Torres)[105]

The repudiation of the Bachelet presidency is better understood in the context

of a presidency ranked as one of the most powerful in the region, along with the

prevailing belief by some that governance is best executed by a "mano dura" (López-

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[104] Detailed interviews with Chilean women in municipal leadership challenge as
"myth" the idea that women do not vote for women, stating the 56 percent that voted
in favor of the female gender in 2004. They also demonstrate an increase in the male
vote for female candidates in election cycles between 1992 and 2004 (Franceschet
and Thomas 86). I discuss the female vote in further detail in chapter four and the
conclusion.

[105] In the 2005 campaign, media initially used "president**A**" to refer to Bachelet's
candidacy, but in the runoff against Piñera the term was changed to "president**E**"
(Vera 128).

Hermida, *La imagen* 12; Jalalzai, *Shattered* 458).[106] In response to the right-wing

opponent's promotion of that concept, Bachelet reframed it as the "mano justa e

inteligente" (López-Hermida, *La imagen* 12).[107] This deliberate revision of a long-

standing metaphor for political leadership fits both the changing criteria of

sociopolitical expectations and the objectives of citizens to position Chile among

progressive nations. Chilean journalist Paul Walder explains that Bachelet

"symbolizes reason, access to the equality of modernity, a break with the baggage of

macho tradition," thereby tapping into the "aspirations of a large part of Chilean

society for change and modernity."

Rubén Dittus credits a "nuevo imaginario político" as one emerging from "un

nuevo electorado nómade, fluctuante, que adhiere a candidaturas y opiniones opuestas

tras breves períodos de tiempo. Se trata de un electorado volátil que no vota por

cuestiones valóricas sino según la coyuntura personal más inmediata" (35). Dittus,

referencing Denise Jodelet, describes social representation as a product "de

construcción y de reconstrucción" in response to the exigencies of the "contexto

social inmediato" (Dittus 37). The social imaginary at work in the social context of

the 2005 election converted Bachelet into the "icono" of "nuevo liderazgo femenino"

(39). This permitted a new interpretation of the Bachelet "deficiencies," wherein

Bachelet emerged as a symbol of "buena feminidad nacional . . . Se trata de una

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[106] Research by Alan Angell goes beyond a regional comparison to classify the Chilean presidency as "one of the most powerful presidencies in the world" (283).
[107] Lavín extended this metaphor to the management of crime, focusing on the punitive aspect; Bachelet focused on prevention and rehabilitation (López-Hermida, *La imagen* 12).

heroína que sufrió como el pueblo y que superó desgracia, que venció los obstáculos, que se redimió y perdonó el pasado" (Vera 122).

I suggest that socialization defined as the manner in which "circumstances have shaped the roles" people perform and how people, in turn, "have shaped [them]selves to fit the roles" is one possible source of the female opposition prior to Bachelet's first presidency (Janeway 151). Elizabeth Janeway reinforces that possibility with the proposal that a "woman who accepts the idea that her sex is inept . . . at using power will disapprove of attempts by other women to do so" (151).[108] The "idea" is based on what is "projected at them to perceive" (Bloom 22). More specifically, it is conceivable that older generations of female Chileans have transferred the regime's indoctrination, consciously or subconsciously, to the current political environment. What was "projected at them to perceive" was that political involvement was "unfeminine" unless sanctioned by the regime for its own purposes (Safa 360). The residual effects linger. A 2009 comparative analysis of the Bachelet and Kirchner presidencies describes a perception of female political involvement as " 'cosa sucia' y por lo tanto como un lugar no propicio para una mujer que cuide su 'imagen' o reputación" (Mengo 200). In a context where the reproduction of traditional roles may be valued as an agent to maintain sociocultural equilibrium (Wolf 204), opposition to a female head of state could function as a guarantor of stability.

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[108] Bloom's definition of socialization as the "whole process by which an individual, . . . is led to develop actual behavior which is confined within a more narrow range— the range of what is customary and acceptable for him according to the standards of his group" reinforces my suggestion (Bloom 15).

On the other hand, the dissonance between discourse and action on the part of both genders at the polling station or, following Wolf's argument, the choice to jeopardize equilibrium is not resolved by the previous discussion.[109] When that dissonance is juxtaposed with Durkheim's definition of the "collective conscience" as prescribed by "the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average citizens of the same society" (Bloom 14), it is then necessary to reach beyond an overarching definition of collective conscience to explain the somewhat rapid shift in shared sentiment at the communal level. As a case in point, Juan Velasco's assertion of a deliberate effort by Chilean women to "enmujerar" the government and "matriar" the country stands in direct opposition to statements by Chilean women about female political power in the initial section of this chapter (2).

4.2 Internal Acculturation and Accommodation

Even as the concept of politics as masculine space continues to inform interpretations of the dynamics of women's engagement in politics and access to power, recent literature discourages an unqualified application of it. The conventional public-private dichotomy that assigns the political, public domain to men while relegating women to domestic, private space functions more at an ideological level "rather than as an accurate reflection of women's and men's lived experiences" (Thomas, *What* 115; Montesinos, *Masculinidades* 64). The framing of how things "should be" distorts perceptions and frustrates an accurate reflection of lived reality. Cultures with long histories of a sex-demarcation of communal norms, where "strong

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[109] Bloom notes the absence of a "psychological theory which precisely explains how to argue coherently from the individual to aggregate group or mass behavior" (22).

currents of patriarchalism and the 'machismo' complex reside may often display an

exaggerated devaluation of women's worth and identify women's domain of

competency as highly circumscribed" (Welch 62). Taken at face value, these

exaggerations lead to the conclusion that public space wields power and private does

not, as evident in comments from both genders in the first part of this chapter. It is an

interpretation that begs a different understanding of power:

> women's management of the domestic sphere confers certain
> prerogatives that are complements of those granted to males in the
> public sphere . . . [where] lack of formal power . . . does not
> necessarily imply utter powerlessness nor lack of worth . . . women's
> influence and power may be indirect or informal but nonetheless,
> strong. (62)

Related to the exercise of "indirect or informal" power by women is the

agency of "internal acculturation" (Wolf 85). Eric Wolf defines it as "processes of

accommodation between different sociocultural segments within the same society that

involve the establishment of new culturally patterned relationships" (85). It proposes

that "cultural change within a society causes the emergence of wholly new

sociocultural segments that must establish relations with one another and with the

groups that provided the matrix from which they sprang" (85). According to Wolf, all

modern nations experience this process to a greater or lesser extent (85) and I find

Chile is no exception. Those relationships establish to whom power is ceded and to

what degree, how it is acquired and maintained, and how it is exercised. Clearly,

given the odds against a Bachelet presidency, accommodations were required as those

relationships formed. Rather than conclude that a rapid and major social change took

place in the final weeks before citizens went to the polling stations, I reiterate the

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argument for elements that gestated in the sociocultural substrate over time, resulting in delayed visible manifestations.

Martin Whyte's (1978) evaluation of resources essential for female political empowerment finds female social solidarity at the collective level to be the most significant (Welch 72).[110] Of additional importance is a "sense of shared existential realities" (72). Bachelet entered the ring without the "personal factors and situational contexts" that normally allow female candidates to override gender-related disadvantages but a dissatisfaction with the political elite in combination with prior gains by women's movements ultimately provided the necessary advantage (Thomas and Adams 107, 125).[111] Bachelet's persistent focus on issues of importance to women eventually garnered female support. Additional accommodation followed a more indirect route: "[Bachelet's] performance could be measured in various ways, but only one way matters to the onlooker in modern politics: public opinion as shaped by the media" (Walder). Further discussion of public opinion follows.

The circumstances of the enigma are well documented. In 2005, the Chilean media favored Bachelet, with "nine out of ten stories" declaring her as the "likely winner of the election" (Valenzuela and Correa 23). This auspicious framing became

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[110] Whyte's research (1978) examined nine variables among preindustrial societies in all major geographic world regions: domestic authority of women, collaboration of both genders in daily activity, female power in kinship networks, female control of property, the value assigned to female labor, female social solidarity, control of female sexuality, gynophobia, and the intrinsic value assigned to female lives. Michael Welch acknowledges that industrialized societies were not included in the Whyte study but asserts that the data are still "adequate for testing hypotheses about women's exclusion from political leadership roles" across cultures (64).
[111] The authors define "personal factors" as connections to politically powerful males; "contextual factors" are sociocultural attitudes concerning women's engagement in politics. The authors consider Chile to be a "hostile" environment in the latter sense.

duplicitous when the media portrayed her "charisma and honesty" in a positive light, yet framed her competency in "an overwhelmingly negative manner" (24). By contrast, much positive commentary about competency was afforded the two primary male candidates, Piñera and Lavín (24).[112] Not all predictions concurred with the media's projections. Lavín was promoted as "the clearest representative of the new way of doing politics in Chile" and the one with the "best chances to become in 2006 the next President of the country" by academician Patricio Silva (P. Silva 73). The actual outcome bears two initial interpretations. Either Bachelet's charisma and honesty held more value for the collective than her competency, or the collective was more convinced than the media of her competency. But there is a third possibility relevant to the male population. Gendered discourse analyses conducted by Linda Carli and Alice Eagly reveal that speech characterizing a female speaker as competent has more effect on female listeners; speech that conveys less competence exerts greater influence over male audiences, eliciting a more positive rating for the speaker (131). In keeping with these findings, the framing of Bachelet as lacking competence could have tempered the perceived threat to male preeminence and inadvertently courted the male vote.

Several appointments of women to high profile posts confirm female competence in the Chilean political domain. In 1952, Adriana Olguín Baltra became the first woman to serve as Minister of Justice in Chile and in Latin America. Soledad Alvear became Chile's first female Foreign Minister in 2000. Carolina Tohá, Chile's

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[112] Female journalists were more likely to reference Bachelet's gender (one out of four) than their male counterparts (one out of ten). The authors suggest that coverage by male journalists leaned towards neutrality while coverage by female journalists focused on the novelty of a female candidate (Valenzuela and Correa 20, 25).

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first female Minister Secretary General of Government in 2009, was also the first

woman to serve as president of the Party for Democracy in 2012 and is the first

female mayor of Santiago. Also in 2012, Barbara Figueroa became the first female

leader of a multi-union in Chile and in Latin America. In 2014, Isabel Allende

became Chile's first female head of congress. If argued that these appointments do

not represent altered attitudes of the collective about women in political leadership,

they nonetheless impact them. Predictions by one Chilean anthropologist propose that

the changing image of executive leadership will accomplish a change in perspective:

"Si la figura del 'ejecutivo' —ese hombre con terno y maletín—fue una que permeó

el modelo masculino de los 80, el de la 'ejecutiva' . . . predominará en los 90 y en el

2000 como alegoría de los espacios de poder alcanzados" (Montecino, *Género* 152).

Even so, shifts in opinion about female ability to execute power in masculine

domains do not fully account for Bachelet's rise. In televised discourse, Bachelet

couched the theme of gender in the language of inclusion versus exclusion, pointing

out that women are often eliminated in hiring processes due to the occupational

liability of pregnancy and that, as a female head of household and homeowner, she

lived in much closer proximity to the challenges (or biases) incurred by that reality

(López-Hermida, *La imagen* 12, 14). This may indicate that not only female

leadership defined by a position of power, but also womanhood as it relates to the

maternal and competency, is gaining status as it enjoys increased publicity. A

discourse analysis study conducted by Paulina Salinas Meruane (2005-2006) among

Chilean males, ages 19 to 63, unveils their awareness of feminine power within the

family unit and their estimation of feminine qualities as essential to the well being of

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society (556). Walder reflected a similar acknowledgement prior to Bachelet's first term: "What woman didn't identify with her as she seduced the army without contrivances? If she could do it, why couldn't other working women control their labor relations, or at least their own husbands? And if she could tame the army, why couldn't she tame the political class and run the country from La Moneda?"

Historian Manuel Gárate affirms the gain for Bachelet when gender equity and female access to positions of power became important issues during the 2005 campaign period, seriously depleting Lavín's efforts to frame his candidacy as "change" (10).[113] More than the issue of gender equity, Gárate sees Bachelet's success as a political "desconocida" in the conservative Chilean context heavily dependent on Bachelet's backstory:

> Bachelet representaba la llegada de una figura no tradicional al poder, . . . su mensaje se afirmaba en el papel de la mujer en política y su calidad de jefa del estamento militar, profesional independiente, médico y víctima de las violaciones a los derechos humanos. En definitiva, su biografía tuvo mucho más peso que su trayectoria política; y eso ahora aparecía como algo importante a nivel ciudadano. (11)

Though touted as an "unknown" in the presidential race, Bachelet was not without a political legacy prior to her presidency. During the campaign period, she exploited the experience acquired in high profile posts under Lagos and addressed the skepticism regarding her capabilities: [114]

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[113] In 2005, two females, Soledad Alvear and Michelle Bachelet, campaigned for the presidency. In 2013, the runoff vote was between two females, Evelyn Matthei and Michelle Bachelet. These were unprecedented situations in Chilean politics.
[114] When Bachelet was criticized for being "overweight in the physical sense and lightweight in the political, her mother's retort was: 'Have they ever looked at her CV!'" (Dixon).

I won all the prizes and awards at my school. No one ever questioned my competence as a child. As a doctor, I led a group of interns, and we were very successful. No one ever asked, "Is she competent because she's a woman?" ("Berkeley Welcomes Bachelet")

But this is not entirely true. Two years into her first term, her feminine leadership model "was prone to constant criticism," with a major Chilean newspaper circulating "constant references about her being a weak, non-aggressive leader" (Cantrell and Bachmann 439). The following anecdote demonstrates the extent to which gender perception impacts assessments of competence. When Bachelet's mentor Ricardo Lagos appointed women to two traditionally masculine portfolios, Defense and Foreign Affairs, it was considered an act of "audacia;" when Bachelet practiced gender parity in her first cabinet, it was considered "un 'gustito' personal" and an act that would hinder the selection of the most capable candidates (Ramil, *Es el género*).

After a major restructuring of her cabinet in May 2015, the national and international press faulted Bachelet and her cabinet for incompetence and questioned the viability of her presidency.[115] Ostensibly, the restructuring was an attempt to accelerate and improve governmental response to the demands of citizens.[116] However, the negative assessments underscore the complexity of promoting a more "receptiva y participativa" feminine leadership model as one that is better suited to the "needs and ideals" of democratic societies (Morales and Cuadrado 36). A study conducted in Spain using created profiles of male and female leaders serves as

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[115] Two examples are: "Can Michelle Bachelet Save Her Presidency?" (2015) and "Chile News: President Michelle Bachelet Will Not Resign, Says Corruption Scandals Will Bring Change" (Ontiveros).
[116] In a similar vein, UK Prime Minister Theresa May justified a June 2017 cabinet reshuffle with the need for "government that's going to be governing for everyone" and "a cabinet that will get on with the job of government" ("Cabinet"). This followed a change in the ruling party and rumors of her political demise.

illustration. Leaders of both genders with stereotypically feminine leadership styles received "significantly better evaluations" in measurements of competence, effectiveness, and desirable leadership characteristics, regardless of the gender of the leader or the evaluator (Cuadrado et al. 62). It can be established that to some extent, leadership expectations are in transition, but widespread opinions of feminine leadership styles as superior have yet to become the rule. In the twenty-first century, "women who are considered 'feminine' will be judged incompetent while women who are competent will be judged as unfeminine" and, at times, penalized for it (Jalalzai, *Women* 63-64).

I propose that the endorsement of female competence expressed by the Lagos appointments of women to top ministerial posts cultivated some receptivity to, if not normalization of, women in powerful positions.[117] Four decades earlier, Chaney described a far different situation:

> There is some evidence that men bestow the custody of moral values as a "consolation prize" for exclusion from other activities more highly valued in a society . . . Many [women] find themselves marginated to old line ministries and agencies far removed from power, social innovation, and change . . . few women of the left attain front rank in government or party hierarchies. (*Supermadre* 339)

In contrast, Bachelet was assigned to ministries close to the centers of "power, social innovation, and change" as Chile transitioned from dictatorship to democracy and, as a Socialist, she hailed from the left. The Lagos appointments, seen as an "elite cue," could well have influenced the male vote for Bachelet, given the theory that "male

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[117] Lagos appointed more women to upper echelon posts during his term (2000-2004) than had been appointed in the previous 40 years; some relate this to the call for gender equity at both the party and societal levels (Izquierdo and Navia 82). That "call" preceded the Bachelet elections.

attitudes about the suitability of female leaders are more prone to fluctuation based on pro- or anti-egalitarian cues from elites . . . " (Morgan and Buice 646).[118] The appointments may have been more instrumental in placing Bachelet in La Moneda than the inclusion of Bachelet on the national ballot, according to a finding that "appointing female ministers shapes the national (male) psyche more than nominating and electing female legislators" (656).

At the same time, not all Chileans were equally persuaded. In 2005, Bachelet spoke of her critics: "Hay quienes creen que soy sonrisa y tonta" (Politzer 83). That statement is substantiated by media attempts to discount her political gravitas by casting her as an affectionate "ama de casa" ("Michelle Bachelet (perfil)"),[119] a "marketing product," and a "populist media star with a hidden agenda up her sleeve" ("Señora Presidenta"). The criticisms were anticipated:

> every time any of us starts something new we have to confront prejudices. We have to confront resistance to change . . . if I could be successful at this, I would be opening doors and windows for so many women—and men, because they would free themselves of prejudice. ("Berkeley")

Ironically, men thanked her for opening the doors of possibility to their daughters. Taken as a whole, conflictive attitudes about Bachelet imply a plasticity in the collective imaginary.

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[118] The simultaneous candidacies of Alvear and Bachelet placed Lagos in a difficult position. A televised interview in which he favored Bachelet created tension with Alvear and cast Lagos in the paternalistic role of having to choose between two daughters (Vera 19).
[119] A similar situation occurred when Josefa Errázuriz ran in a mayoral race in 2012; incumbent Labbé "caused an outcry when he appealed to voters to choose between an experienced politician and a 'housewife' " (Paranagua). The housewife won.

Patricia Politzer's unofficial biography of Bachelet, published after the first

Bachelet term, offers that "el discurso político y racional ya no da cuenta de la

complejidad y diversidad de la sociedad chilena, deja fuera muchas facetas de lo que

somos y de lo que deseamos" (Politzer 73). A development related to Politzer's

comment is worthy of mention. One method used for revealing the "facetas" of the

Chilean sociopolitical psyche—the opinion survey—has of late become a powerful

determinant in political outcomes.

> El rol que juegan las encuestas de opinión como mecanismo para la
> selección y proclamación de abanderados y candidatos presidenciales
> es algo indefinitivamente inédito, contribuyendo a dotar de un nuevo
> esquema el proceso de formación del liderazgo político presidencial.
> (Dockendorff 177)

That role in the first Bachelet election is verified by Gwynn Thomas: "The

importance of opinion polls in propelling Michelle Bachelet's candidacy was the

consistent answer I was given when conducting interviews in Chile between

December 2005 and January of 2006" (*What* 121).

Based on Andrés Dockendorff's evaluation of the agency of opinion polls and

its technological permeation of society, I consider current changes to the

sociopolitical context irreversible. To the extent that this materializes, a degradation

of long-term, entrenched political mechanisms will be the likely outcome. To what

extent it will favor or disfavor female political advancement is yet to be determined.

What can be determined is a gradual dismantling of some political mechanisms, not

only in Chile but globally. At the threshold of the new millennium, political scientists

confirmed a "long-term decline of trust in institutions, not just governments" and

observed that "the declining respect for authority is part of modern and postmodern

values as people switch from survival to quality-of-life values" (Nye et al. 13). That observation holds especially true for Chileans in the transition period, with a culture that is divided generationally between those that experienced the dictatorship and those that did not, between those that focus on "survival" and those that focus on "quality of life." The subsequent shift in values has created a new kind of citizenry.

4.3 The Female "Face" of Political Empowerment

Since transition to democracy, experts note a "growing disaffiliation" with all things formalistically political: "current Chilean society has radically broken with old political practices" that once "represented one of the most remarkable features of the Chilean political system" (P. Silva 65, 66; Tironi and Agüero). Candidates in 2009 and 2013 that attempted to wield an advantage through party loyalties ignored the implications of an important trend: between 1990 and 2007, the segment of Chilean voters with no party affiliation grew from 20 percent to over 50 percent (Dockendorff 167). Bachelet arrived at La Moneda sufficiently backed not by the political elite but by a long history of women's direct action and a general public mandate for an alternative form of relationship between state and citizen. This mandate, described as "un triunfo de la opinión pública sobre lo que quieren las clases dirigentes," coerced the political elite to endorse Bachelet, "apoyándola a regañadientes" (Dockendorff 175). Teresa Carballal's historical point of view sees this process as another unintended consequence of the dictatorship:

> The new female heads of state of this last decade . . . were politicized during the brutal military regimes. They played a very big role in resistance movements, sometimes fighting alongside men and proving

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themselves capable as organizers, militants and leaders . . . That formative period was characterized by a rejection of traditional forms of leadership and a more inclusive form of politics that didn't focus on gender or class as a condition to hold an important political role. (qtd. in Kubi)

Chilean electoral behavior in recent elections poses a reconfiguration of the status quo. Changes eroding the established order in the late 1990s, such as an "increasing depoliticisation of the population," a "rising *malestar con la política*," the "transformation of Chileans into citizens-consumers," and additional "factors related to modern society," predisposed the electorate to consider optional strategies to obtain results (P. Silva 73). Just prior to the first Bachelet election, Silva observed that "Chilean political culture has experienced some important mutations . . . the current political map has become more complex" (74).

To facilitate the navigation of that map, Paloma Román Marugán and Jaime Ferri Durá integrate Joseph Nye's concept of "hard," "soft," and "smart" power into their discussion of female political leadership. "Soft" power is identified with "habilidad comunicativa, carisma, inteligencia emotiva, persuasión, capacidad de visión;" "hard" power is defined as "habilidad organizativa, y habilidad política, entendida como la capacidad de acumular capital político para negociar continuamente," with "smart" power a combination of both (Marugán and Durá 96). The point made is that a multifaceted concept of power has replaced the dichotomous model of power*ful*/power*less*. Whereas women tend to excel in the exercise of soft power, it is nevertheless power. Nye promotes the adoption of soft power as more compatible with a globalized context where political coalitions form at both national and transnational levels (2004). In the twenty-first century, it may prove to be the

preferred model: "Today, with the information revolution and democratization demanding more participatory and integrative leadership, the 'female' style is becoming a path to more effective leadership for women and men alike" (Nye, *Soft Power, Hard* 2).

The quality of charisma, discussed at length by Nye as a form of soft power, surfaces repeatedly in commentary about Bachelet's appeal. Soft power is not inferior to or less effectual than hard power.[120] Nye credits Osama Bin Laden with the effective use of soft power. Bachelet's usual style falls more within the range of soft power but the dismissal and reselection of an entire cabinet demonstrates an ability to exercise hard power. Interestingly, whereas charisma is often related to rhetorical prowess, extensive interviews conducted in 2014 reveal that Chileans did not find Bachelet's speeches and debates particularly inspiring (Jalazai, *Women* 85).

Despite discussions surrounding positive shifts in gender perception and leadership, much literature insists that the public "tends to associate the stereotypical male personality traits as those more compatible with executive office, such as assertiveness, ambition, vision, decisiveness, rationality, and strength" (Steckenrider 249; Kornblut 21-22). As established, a growing discourse on contemporary styles of leadership now enforces the value of feminine qualities for male leaders (Colvin; Murray, *Introduction*). The situation is more restrictive for women. A comparison of

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[120] Tobar comments that Piñera's attempts at soft power were unsuccessful, that he lacked "emotional intelligence" and appeared "so detached from everyday people as opposed to her [Bachelet]" (qtd. in Jalalzai, *Women* 85). According to political scientist María Ángeles, Piñera was eager for Bachelet to relocate to New York during his presidency because he was "living in her shadow" (qtd. in Jalalzai, *Women* 85).

literature in the twenty-first century with a study conducted in the 1990s reveals

conditions that have undergone very little change:

> women candidates have to present themselves as both "male" and "female" to satisfy voters' expectations . . . they are welcomed into the political fray, as long as they bring with them their traditional skills, capabilities, and vestiges of their roles as mother and spouses. At the same time they have to demonstrate their power, toughness, and capacity to win, traits assumed by most voters to be inherent in most male candidates. (Alexander and Andersen 530, 542)

This capricious proposition known as the "double bind" has led one author to

question if "the ability of women to learn how to act and think like men" will assure

they are "accepted as if they *were* men?" (Janeway 236).[121] That kind of social

contract appears postponed for a future date when men have more experience with

female figures positioned in non-stereotypical dominant roles (Genovese, *Margaret*

Thatcher).[122] Some see that future date as imminent. The CEO of Ketchum, an

organization dedicated to leadership studies, states that a global survey (2014)

> clearly shows that to inspire trust, leaders of both genders need to avoid a "macho," command-and-control approach to leadership communication, which tends to be one-way, domineering and even arrogant. Instead, we are seeing the birth of a new model of leadership communication based on transparency, collaboration, genuine dialogue, clear values and the alignment of words and deeds, a model being followed far more consistently by female leaders. This research finally puts to rest the flawed assumption that women need to act like old school male leaders to make their mark. ("Global Leadership")[123]

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[121] Kathleen Jamieson offers an in-depth study of this concept in her work *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership* (1995).

[122] A study in 2003 revealed that women occupy 3 percent of the executive positions in corporate Chile. The authors propose that this is partly due to "self-imposed limitations" incurred by personal choice as opposed to those imposed by external obstacles (Abarca & Majluf 72-73).

[123] Developments in the British political landscape serve as a case in point. June 2017 witnessed an ironic bow to Bachelet's much-criticized model of consensus, when Defense Secretary Michael Fallon stated that May's leadership style "had to start being more consensual" and form a "more collective government" (Merrick).

In the world of politics, this becomes a pivotal condition as women at the

highest rungs of power are still more the exception than the rule and, as some analysts

confirm, are more often evaluated based on a stereotypical image of power than on

actual aptitude (D'Adamo et al. 92-93). Even attempts by women in power to appoint

other women have proven problematic. Bachelet's goal to practice gender parity in

her appointments has had consequences. Both of her terms have been characterized

by "constant ministerial turnover," driven by the need to replace "appointees [that]

lacked experience and political connections" (Siavelis and Galván 257). The

appointing of women to ministerial positions is a double-edged sword: until their

numbers grow, it is difficult to find women with the necessary background and

networks. At the same time, until they are appointed, it is difficult for them to gain

relevant experience and form networks. After achieving admittance, additional

challenges await them. In comparison to male counterparts, female cabinet members

in the first Bachelet administration saw their performance scrutinized more severely

and their errors frequently highlighted by media (Huneeus 77). In May 2015,

Bachelet's rhetoric of parity lost substantial value. After replacing eighteen members

and reassigning four, the reconstituted cabinet was 70 percent male ("Chilean

President").

Bachelet assumed the additional risk of appearing unqualified with a

leadership style that embraced female qualities: "I took a gamble to exercise

leadership without losing my feminine nature" ("Bachelet: Democracy"). The risk is

Speculation about the durability of May's governance, called a "dictatorial regime"
by one source, has elicited the title "dead woman walking" for May (Merrick).

not overstated. Cross-cultural surveys conducted on women and leadership establish that women who adopt a primarily masculine style "have difficulty enlisting respect, support, and cooperation from coworkers" and "are rated lower as leaders," even though they "are more likely to emerge as leaders than those with feminine styles" (Kellerman and Rhode 7). A manly stance may favor the attainment of positions, yet elicit negative feedback on the performance of them. Bachelet defends her leadership style in opposition to those "who want to stick with the status quo . . . I took up my government posts while maintaining my female characteristics, and in the beginning some people didn't understand that it was a different kind of leadership" ("Bachelet: Democracy"). Suzanne Brogger advises that "If a woman can only succeed by emulating men, I think it is a great loss and not a success. The aim is not only for a woman to succeed, but to keep her womanhood and let her womanhood influence society" (qtd. in "How Women"). Attempts by female leaders to achieve "mimicry, not usurpation" (Janeway 238) by adopting male leadership models forfeit whatever advantage differences in gender may offer. It can also validate the very thing it seeks to repudiate with a message "that masculine character traits are those most needed for executive office, thus reinforcing the linkages among men, masculinity, and the presidency" (Franceschet and Thomas 190).

Women in positions of power are confronted with two equally difficult choices. A push for equality where standards are calibrated by a predominantly patriarchal social structure "might inevitably result in requiring everyone to assimilate to the dominant gender norm of masculinity" (Squires). On the other hand, an emphasis on gender difference may reinforce existing inequities by highlighting

comparisons (Squires). In spite of the debates among experts, gendered associations of power persist among the collective as a lose-lose proposition. This is substantiated by Michael Genovese's remarks on Margaret Thatcher's practice of "political cross-dressing" that earned her the labels of "honorary man" and "gender bender " (*Margaret Thatcher* 299-300). When Bachelet refused to make those concessions, she was criticized for not practicing "un 'comando' tradicional, . . . [y] por no hacer discursos en el tono tradicional y hablar con una racionalidad distinta" (Baltra 182).

Despite its critics, some sectors of the media approve Bachelet's leadership model. Paula Escobar Chavarría, editor of *El Mercurio*, recognizes Bachelet as "our anti-Thatcher, not adopting all the male-dominated codes of power but transforming them" (qtd. in Bennhold). This reinforces the contemporary leadership model "menos vertical y mucho más horizontal; se busca más un coordinador que un director dando órdenes. Se precisa más una persona comunicativa, participativa e integradora, que un jefe con bastón y silbato que ahora resulta menos eficaz" (Marugán and Durá 96). Bachelet's decision to assume her executive position "sin perder para nada su feminidad" has also been approved by sectors of the electorate: "En Chile la percibimos como la típica madre: sencilla, cariñosa, fuerte, incansable, compasiva" (Allende, *Mujeres* 28).

In yet another contradiction surrounding the Bachelet elections, Tobar authenticates Allende's description: "the most traditional constructions of gender in Chilean political culture (and not the most egalitarian or modernizing ones) helped to cement popular support for the Socialist candidate" (Tobar, *Seizing* 514). Clearly, there are both traditional and progressive processes at work in Chilean social

phenomena. Marta Lagos touches on this point: "[Bachelet] "no tenía un 'bench mark.' El promedio de la mujer chilena es baja y gorda . . . Entonces el famoso 'gordi' pasa a ser un símbolo de lo concreto, de lo real, de lo auténtico" (qtd. in Gerber 47).[124] In sum, Bachelet has encountered both fortune and misfortune while navigating uncharted territory.

The designation of "typical mother" proves interesting for Bachelet, who intentionally avoided promotion of that metaphor in televised messages when both male opponents, Piñera and Lavín, heavily exploited their image as fathers (López-Hermida, *La imagen*). An analysis of media coverage during the 2005 campaign found that whereas Piñera played to the traditional "rol de padre" in televised appearances, Bachelet downplayed the role of mother and "optó por mantener lo más al margen posible su condición de separada y el hecho de tener tres hijos de dos matrimonios, algo inédito en un candidato a la Presidencia de Chile" (14).[125] As previously discussed, Bachelet did exploit her womanhood (12). The unforeseen outcome saw her range of appeal increase as she established rapport with marginalized citizens. Evidence exists that, consciously or subconsciously, feminine qualities nurture a political advantage "when the salient issues and traits of the campaign complement a woman's stereotypical strengths" (Kahn 2). I add that in the new way of doing politics, it may not be strengths alone that define a candidate's suitability. The public formed a connection not only with Bachelet's strengths but

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[124] The level of familiarity evoked by the Bachelet persona does not supersede protocol. A reference made by Finance Minister Nicolás Eyzaguirre to Bachelet as "mi gordi" required a public apology (Gerber 48).

[125] Research shows that compared to female candidates, male candidates "reap an even greater benefit from emphasizing their family roles" and more often "feature family in their ads and campaign websites" (Deason et al. 141).

also with her "weaknesses" (as defined by traditional Chilean mores), and assigned to her the required combination of qualities to represent their humanity. Dittus expands on this:

> No se vota por la persona, sino por el imaginario que el candidato representa . . . es el ciudadano común el que termina por crear al candidato . . . la formación de opinión pública no es fruto de la interacción de individuos aislados que intervienen en igual medida en el proceso, sino que refleja la composición y organización funcional de la sociedad. (43, 46)

Fortuitously, in 2005, the salient issues of economics[126] and governance fell well within the habitat of concerns of a feminine nature: education reform, reduction of inequality, reduction of poverty, support for at-risk family units, and the elimination of corruption (Bonilla and Silva 14). This directed the focus of campaign platforms for candidates of both genders. One body of research that logged specific time limits given to topics in televised discourse during the first and second rounds revealed that in the first round, Piñera took the lead in "asuntos típicamente femeninos" and even increased the time allotted to those in the second round. Bachelet did the same, but with respect to "los temas masculinos" in what was viewed for both candidates as "una estrategia electoral evidente" (López-Hermida, *La imagen* 3-14). This strategy is justified by findings that "men may have more flexibility to choose whether and when to emphasize feminine issues, whereas women need to stress masculine issues consistently in order to convince the audience of their competence" (Deason et al. 141).

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[126] Economics is usually categorized as a masculine issue. In this case, Bachelet was able to coopt it as a feminine concern by promoting the funding of opportunities for self-development and the betterment of families.

Lavín, a candidate for the Right promoted as the probable winner, took the "marketing" approach "to connect with the real Chile, a consumer society in which the citizenry has become accustomed to look at the politician's message as being a product" (P. Silva 74). Silva assessed that "while some politicians from the Left and the Concertación criticize this new type of society and are attempting to change it, in recent years Lavín has been working to represent it" (74).[127] In the same article, the author flags unfulfilled expectations of "a more participatory process of democratic reconstruction" as the cause of "deep disillusion" on the part of the Left (70). My conclusion is that Bachelet was able to channel a masculine agenda through a feminized discourse of participation and consensus, thus presenting the best of both worlds. Her message was not formulated as a product packaged and marketed for consumer appeal but, rather, as an invitation to enter into a social contract. Sociologist Manuel Garretón credits her with "la capacidad de leer de manera muy correcta lo que estaba sucediendo en la sociedad chilena" (Reyes).[128] That ability, also called intuition, should not be undervalued. The role of "las circunstancias de cada momento electoral" can so favor or disfavor a candidate of either gender that it determines an electoral outcome (López-Hermida, *La imagen* 7).

Contradictions regarding the imagery of power are not confined to Chile. Chancellor Merkel, portrayed as a tough-minded executive and named the most powerful woman in the world by *Forbes,*[129] is known to Germans as *Mutti*—

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[127] Within the discourse of political consumerism, Lavín employed the term "*cosismo*," defined as "the politics of giving away stuff (*cosas*)" (Luna 160).
[128] Nye calls this ability "contextual intelligence" and assigns it a high value in governance (*Leadership*).
[129] See Huggler.

mummy.[130] The press ascribed similar epithets—"mamá Michelle" and "mamá buena

onda"—to Bachelet (López-Hermida, *La triangulación*). On the street, she is simply

"Michelle" (Jiménez). At the same time that this can convey "familiarity and

warmth," it can also project a lack of "authority and gravitas" (Murray, *Introduction*

13). Names assigned by the collective may be indicators of an emotional

identification of citizens with leaders. However, it is a leader's physical appearance

that most impacts perceptions about capability. Regardless of criticism that this

applies disproportionately to the female gender (Murray), sociologists flag it as "an

important indicator of organizational role taking," assuring that an actor "will perform

according to expectations" (Meyerson 44). Moreover, it is tied to the larger issues of

social and organizational identification as a statement that said actor "is associated

with the values or characteristics of an organization" and as a symbol "to

communicate to others who they are and what role they are playing" (Rafaeli et al.

27).

In 2006, a British newspaper dubbed the most powerful female in the world—

Angela Merkel—a "dumpy hausfrau" for her outdated hairstyle and shapeless suits

(Powell). When she attended the opera in an elegant gown with plunging neckline,

the media focus was "Merkel's Weapons of Mass Distraction" (Foreman). For some,

her eventual fashion upgrade was linked to her performance potential as head of state:

"to the extent that she was seen as becoming more western, she was perceived as

becoming *more* competent . . . feminization overlapped directly with

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[130] The dilemma that "women with families are assumed to be burdened by them,
while women without families are treated with suspicion for failing to conform to
societal expectations" proved problematic for political contenders Peruvian Lourdes
Flores (childless) and Nicaraguan Miriam Argüello (unmarried) (Murray 14).

professionalization" (Wiliarty 146).[131] Another evaluation saw her minimal

concessions to fashion as a "strategy to communicate to the German electorate that

her time and head space is entirely dedicated to them" (Foreman). The conundrum

that women face in positions of leadership is where (in which contexts), and how (by

what method) to challenge gendered expectations, and where and how to meet them.

Kim Fridkin Kahn warns that if women

> act in unstereotypical ways, voters tend to punish them, . . . It is this
> balancing act that women have to do—to eliminate people's worries
> about your not being a strong leader, but not so much that they think
> you're not being a woman. (qtd. in Kornblut 34)

Commentary by Guillermo Recio Guajardo offers a similar conclusion about the

problem of overcompensation: "el juego de la política tiende a castigar la relación

género y poder de manera enérgica, pues considera que las mujeres dentro de la

política se comportan de manera más masculina que los hombres" (127).

In the world of stereotypes, Bachelet's physical appearance gives no

indication of a liberal, progressive mindset. Her wardrobe is matronly, her makeup

minimal, her jewelry often the *de rigueur* strand of pearls, and her coiffure, casual. In

a published personal interview with Bachelet about her work with UN Women, one

female journalist used the first several lines to critique Bachelet's "shocking pink

jacket . . . not a particularly elegant garment" of "cheap" fabric and "unfashionable"

design (Tett). Descriptions of Bachelet run the gamut of "frumpy," "scruffy" and "La

Gordi(s)" to "more like a schoolmarm than a revolutionary" and "una gorda

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[131] British Prime Minister Theresa May received criticism for her trendy boots,
leopard print shoes, sleeveless sheath, and short skirts (Kelsey). Her fashion choices,
viewed as a strategy to "mark her territory" as a "confident and confrontational"
actor, resulted in the creation of #viewsnotshoes to "challenge media to highlight
female politician's policies rather than clothing" (Cuffe).

simpática" (Jiménez). In response, she describes a cultural bias that views portly Chilean politicians as "hombres, de un cierto peso, pero eso era sinónimo de poderoso. En cambio, una mujer es una gorda" (qtd. in Carlin). At the same time, Lagos clarifies that Chileans are not known for gala affairs where socialites display designer wardrobes to draw attention to the body: "es una sociedad en donde la mujer no es protagonista de su cuerpo, ni en política, ni por dinero, ni por liderazgo" (qtd. in Gerber 47-48). As a female university student indicates, this enhances the public perception of Bachelet for some sectors: "She represents to us professional success. And she is just a regular woman, not skinny and glamorous like the television presenters" (Jiménez).

Both Merkel and Bachelet have resolved the image conundrum to a degree. Germans claim that "Merkel has a character that suggests she's one of us" (Packer). This echoes the female sentiment that Bachelet is a "woman's woman," but Bachelet has also received endorsement from the male contingency. Her message, "Yo tengo un arma mucho más poderosa que las pistolas o los cuchillos de los delincuentes: no les tengo miedo" (López-Hermida, *La imagen* 12) displayed a bold approach to crime, a typically masculine portfolio. In Chile, it is a matter of one who does or does not "da el ancho,"[132] a linguistically charged phrase that measures the ability to perform in leadership (Navia, *Da el ancho*). During Bachelet's first term, her opponents used the negative form "no da el ancho" freely in public discourse to highlight her lack of competence; members of her own party, the Concertación, expressed it in private (Franceschet and Thomas 87; Gerber 43).

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[132] This phrase means having or not having what it takes to accomplish something.

Ironically, the feminine qualities of "courtesy, idealism, and softer ways" valued by the ancient Greeks (Durant 51) are currently promoted as desirable for leadership in the twenty-first century:

> We live in such interconnected environments that to be effective, a leader today must seek out information from a wide array of people, especially those who don't share his or her biases …Women leaders …seem perfectly tailored for this "new style" described as "consensual, relational, web-based, caring, inclusive, open, transparent" in contrast to the old style characterized as "aggressive, assertive, autocratic, muscular, closed. (Coughlin et al. *xx-xxi*)

After maternal skills were devalued for centuries in business and political sectors, an extensive study on women and leadership now reports positive recognition of "the nurturing skills associated with motherhood" (Eagly and Carli 39). Lengthy comparisons of traits categorized by gender lead some experts to conclude that "men and women differ little in the traits and abilities that are most relevant to leadership" (43). Leadership styles diverge significantly on a single trait: the concept of power. Generally, men pursue it to enhance their personal careers and to facilitate an agendum; women pursue it to enact change on behalf of the collective (Eagly and Carli). The Abarca and Majluf study (2003) confirms this focus: "women see the strengths in their leadership style more associated with a people orientation" (74). Bachelet reaffirmed this in an interview: "en general las mujeres se relacionan con el poder más desde la óptica del servicio a los demás . . . No quiero caricaturizar . . . parece ser que en el caso del hombre se ofrece una suerte de atracción fatal más potente por el poder" (qtd. in Carlin).

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As Chaney's (1973) study establishes, female leadership in Latin America happens "under conditions of change that undermine tradition" (Paxton and Hughes 170). A global evaluation of female leaders finds that their

> most powerful and most attractive symbolism appears to be change . . .
> When a woman is visibly chosen to become president, prime minister,
> or CEO when no other woman has ever held such an office and when
> few people thought that she would be selected, other major
> organizational and societal changes become believably possible.
> (Adler 187-88)

Great risk accompanies the potential to effect change. Tangent to discussions of breaching the "glass ceiling" and negotiating the "labyrinth" to arrive at positions of female executive power is the "glass cliff," defined as precarious positions of power in problematic contexts (Ryan and Haslam, *The Glass Cliff: Evidence*). In these positions, the personality and capability of the individual, not the "situational and contextual variables," are held largely accountable for outcomes (87). Just before Bachelet's second election, one academician offered that much of the business sector favored Bachelet as the candidate that could "contener el vértigo de las demandas ciudadanas [y] desactivar una bomba de tiempo" characterized by "una tension social inmanejable" (Velasco, *Los Chiles*). Based on the nature and proportions of the challenges, her second term can aptly be described as a "glass cliff." Undoubtedly, the political capability of women as a category may be judged by the performance of a single member of that category but this is not a gender-exclusive situation. The same can occur when a political party, political ideology, race, social class, or theology is judged by the performance of a single representative in a position of visibility and power. I do not dismiss the negatives associated with the "glass cliff" but I suggest that they are somewhat mitigated by Nye's claim that "transactional

leadership styles are more frequent and effective in stable and predictable

environments and an inspirational or soft power style is more likely in periods of

rapid and discontinuous change" (*Soft Power, Hard* 9).[133]

Multiple studies show that "once women become candidates for elective

office . . . they are as electable as men" (Costantini 748). As female candidates,

gender can work in favor if the desire for change on the part of voters promotes a

"break from the past" (Murray 14). Prior to Bachelet's first election, the Concertación

party lost leverage due to corruption scandals and failures to address the concerns of

the electorate. Bachelet's unorthodox backstory and her gender gave her the sufficient

distance needed: "If a candidate is seen as different despite belonging to a

government coalition, he or she can raise hopes of achieving reforms in areas that

have so far resisted solution, bringing a breath of fresh air and change to fight

corruption" (Bonilla and Silva 14). One political consultant, Ann Lewis, adds another

dimension: "Women are still considered outsiders. Because they had to struggle to get

where they are, voters think: 'women candidates are more likely to know what my

life is like and less likely to forget about me' " (qtd. in Jamieson 116). This kind of

candidate appeals to female voters with "more to gain by changes . . . than by

clinging to the status quo" (Nash and Safa 10).

Undoubtedly, marketing Bachelet as a symbol of change harnessed "popular

acclaim" (Bonilla and Silva 19, 21). The corporate world employs a similar strategy

when companies experience a downturn; the appointment of a female executive can

"signal to the shareholder that radical change is on the way" and sustain confidence in

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[133] Transactional leadership styles are associated with hard power (Nye, *Soft Power, Hard*).

the organization (Ryan and Haslam, *The Glass Cliff: Evidence* 87). A 2007 study by the same authors indicates that a female leader is only viewed as "significantly more suitable than the equally qualified male candidate" when organizational performance is in decline (*The Glass Cliff: Exploring* 554).[134] Executive positions acquired under these circumstances are seen as "poisoned chalices" when female leaders cannot reverse the downward momentum and assume the blame in the role of scapegoat (559). On the other hand, they can be "golden opportunities" that utilize feminine qualities considered to be most beneficial in times of crises: "being intuitive, creative, or understanding" (559; Ryan et al. 62). Jalalzai supports the concept that "women are often charged with providing unity in unstable contexts which benefits select ones in their pursuit of power" (Jalalzai, *A Woman* 196).[135] This idea is pursued further in chapter five.

Bachelet acknowledged that "lo que se está produciendo en Chile es un cambio cultural que no se va a ver ahora, se va a ver a largo plazo" (Bachelet, *Democracia* 152). This does not negate that visible change has already occurred; logically, the sum of its effects play out on a long-term schedule. In the present century, there are signs that a major shift in leadership style is under way, one that finds a compatible fit between feminine qualities of leadership and a globalized context: "command-and-control leadership has given way to a new approach, often

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[134] Politician John Bailey stated: "The only time to run a woman is when things look so bad that your only chance is to do something dramatic" (qtd. in Kirkpatrick 461).
[135] Recent commentary following Theresa May's appointment as Prime Minister of the UK reiterates this concept: "She had been installed amid the most turbulent period in British politics anyone could remember and without time for much preparation. The country needed reassurance. May said she would heal the nation's divisions and build bridges to help the least privileged" (Helm).

called an influence model of leadership . . . The new leader persuades, empowers, collaborates, and partners" (Gergen xix).

A 2008 Pew Research study shows that women do have what it takes to lead effectively. Of the eight leadership traits polled—honesty, intelligence, hard work, ambition, compassionate, outgoing, creative, decisiveness—women rated as high or higher than men in seven of the categories; the single lower rating for women was decisiveness ("Paradox"). In the same study, women received high marks in the areas of "standing up for one's principles in the face of political pressure, able to work out compromises, keeping government honest, and representing the interests of 'people like you' " ("Paradox"). Another poll conducted in Chile in November 2005 rated Bachelet's strongest qualities as "honesty (40%), concern for the real problems of the country (41%), and common sentiment (41%)," with lower ratings for the ability to make "difficult decisions (36%) and firmness in confronting pressures (35%)" (Franceschet and Thomas 186). These specific evaluations of Bachelet are consistent with the general results of related polls.

A comparative study of leadership practices conducted among MBA students in Chile and the United States in 2007 established that Chileans place a high premium on "collectivism" as opposed to "individualism," practice "a high power distance," and rank high for "uncertainty avoidance" (Arias-Bolzmann et al. 6). These categories that correspond to indices assigned to cultural values by Geert Hofstede (2016) offer insight into how Bachelet's leadership resonates with Chileans. Collectivism interfaces easily with qualities assigned to female styles of leadership and with Bachelet's common sentiment rating. High power distance more closely

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aligns with a masculine authoritarian approach and may explain concerns about Bachelet's ability to make hard decisions and stand ground in the face of opposition (Arias-Bolzmann et al. 6). Power distance is gauged by "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, *Hofstede Centre*). Chile's relatively high ranking is based on "hierarchical social structures and rather rigid social classes," with the perception that top positions are occupied by people with superior qualifications (*Hofstede Centre*). According to Hofstede (*10 minutes*), in societies with high power distance, subordinates expect to be told what to do by those with the authority and expertise to give directives. In light of this, Bachelet's preferred method of gathering input on which to build consensus runs contrary to established expectations ingrained in the social structure and is interpreted as weakness, not "progressive leadership" (Balch). Bachelet's response to the criticism contextualized it as gender bias, an arguable assessment when taking into account that social expectations both form and are formed by gendered attitudes:

> If a man takes (sic) a decision, he's a man of character and he made a decision. And if he doesn't make a decision, he's a wise man . . . If a woman doesn't make it, she's unable to make a decision. She's not wise. And if she takes (sic) a decision, somebody convinced her to take (sic) the decision. (qtd. in Freeland)

Alongside literature linking contemporary leadership models to feminine qualities, there is scholarship that takes a dim view of the "great women theory of leadership," or the stereotyping of feminine traits as more effective in the current century (Pittinsky et al.). The main objection is that it constructs a "precarious pedestal" of "exaggerated or overemphasized" positive differences in gendered

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leadership styles that can "subtly mark women for exclusion" by a "devaluation of their performance, denying of credit to them for their successes, and penalization for their proven competence" (Heilman 661). This observation implies that even in a temporal context with supposedly favorable conditions for the empowerment of women, those favorable conditions can also function as impediments.

The value placed on uncertainty avoidance complements Bachelet's concern for the real problems of citizens. During her campaign, Bachelet traveled the country on a "listening tour" to speak with Chileans "from all walks of life" about "their concerns and learn about what issues they considered most pressing" (Franceschet and Thomas 185). Chileans in particular require assurance that government will take measures to protect their rights and ensure a stable future. Undoubtedly, the residual effects of a totalitarian regime have some bearing on the fact that on a scale of 1-100, Chile rated 86 in the category of uncertainty avoidance. An application of Hofstede's criteria to that rating indicates Chileans have a "strong need for rules and elaborate legal systems in order to structure life" (Hofstede, *10 Minutes*). But there is a puzzling side to this. The surprising revelation centers on responses to the concept of "challenging the process" (Arias-Bolzman et al.). Given that Chileans scored higher in this category than their counterparts in the United States, I question the actual extent of uncertainty avoidance among Chileans as well as the characterization of Chilean society as antithetical to "direct, confrontational, and extroverted" (Arias-Bolzmann et al. 7). The high rating in the area of challenging the process provides some origin for Bachelet's reforms, as she both challenges the process and responds to challenges as a protagonist in the process. It also correlates to the latest upsurge in

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social mobilization among the younger generation as a strategy to shape governmental agenda.

Without question, honesty is the principle distinguishing quality assigned by the public to women in leadership (Chaney, *Supermadre* 101; Kornblut 133; Salinas). Lists of social expectations for candidates do not routinely include it for men. In fact, it can be an impediment for men that pursue power (Magstadt 399). It is also a sensitive area in contemporary Chilean politics. Considering that corruption has characterized the political scene in Latin America from its colonization forward, reports by Transparency International (2015) that "corruption levels in Chile are among the lowest in South America" ("Controversy") hold great value for Chileans.[136]

In the first staff meeting of her second term, Bachelet established integrity as "the main issue" and "was clear when asking that ministers be attentive to detect and face any situation which could affect their management," stating, "these kinds of situations were a high cost for previous Concertacion's governments" (Arellano). No one foresaw how personal that issue would become for Bachelet. In 2015, media responded quickly with accusations of influence trafficking and corruption allegations after the discovery of a lucrative real estate deal brokered by Bachelet's son and wife two years earlier on the day after Bachelet's second election ("Controversy"). According to Navia, it is more a problem of inequality than illegality: "The way in which her daughter-in-law's company got the credit is all about unequal access. So

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[136] In 2016, Chile ranked 24 out of 176 countries; lower numbers indicate lower levels of corruption (Transparency International).

what Bachelet says is opposite to what her family does" ("Controversy"). Bachelet, who has not been implicated, voluntarily testified in the hearing; her daughter-in-law, Natalia Compagnon, has been charged with financial fraud and is restricted from leaving the country (Jara and Esposito; Bonnefoy, *Daughter-in-law*). Given that a main feature of Bachelet's rhetoric centers on the problem of social inequality, this breach of trust with the populace has had significant consequences. Rumors about a possible resignation accompanied an immediate and severe decline in approval ratings, which have remained low despite several political victories in the way of landmark reforms (Franklin, *Chilean*).

Bachelet spoke of the liabilities of her gender in her first term: "Al comienzo hubo mucha crítica, prejuicio, machismo, subestimación …Pero yo creo que es la experiencia de todas las mujeres del mundo que trabajan, . . . Tienen que trabajar el triple y ser triplemente buenas para que las reconozcan" (Carlin). Nonetheless, political scandal is not gender-specific. Journalist Nick Miroff summarizes the current context (2016) in which the governments of Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil, Guatemala, and Mexico are held accountable: "In countries where democratic institutions have grown stronger, a more independent judiciary and the political activism of an Internet-powered citizenry are challenging the old way of doing business by graft." The ongoing argument that women in executive positions are held to a higher standard than their male counterparts (Murray; Abarca and Majluf 72, 77) may lose strength under the emergent conditions named by Miroff: many current demands for transparency and justice center on male politicians.

Any discussion of the empowerment of women in Latin America includes the cultural construct of *machismo*. While some speak of its eminent demise in the twenty-first century, others contend that it survives with a contemporized identity:

> el histórico machismo se ha camuflado y hoy se basa más en el control y en la coerción psicológica que en la discriminación o en las restricciones físicas. Es el dominio que se ejerce en la clandestinidad, el denominado neomachismo. (Salinas 554)

The new term, *neomachismo*, implies the "existencia de profundas transformaciones que conjugan aspectos tradicionales con otros más modernizadores [y que] permite visualizar la ambigüedad y sincretismo presentes en el proceso modernizador que experimenta la sociedad chilena" (557). According to Salinas (2007), it requires men to perform an uneasy balancing act of negotiating power arrangements between genders without preexisting reference points for models. Here the complex becomes more complex. Just as there is "no single feminine identity, it makes sense to assume that there is similarly no single masculine identity but rather many" (Squires 74). It is expedient to note that where comparisons are made between men and women in matters of unequal access to power and the attainment of it, comparisons made between men also reveal inequalities.

Machismo's counterpart, *marianismo,* has also undergone transformations. Traditionally, it socializes women to be "yielding, self-sacrificing, and docile" (Warkentin and Daly 151). These qualities are not typically associated with political power, which leads to the conclusion that where women attain it, they "have to 'transgress' ideas of acceptable behavior" (Thomas and Adams 116). Jaquette argues that "the conservative female stereotype is countered by a long tradition of radical

political activity," naming examples of female initiative in the form of working class

uprisings, miner's strikes, and guerrilla warfare (*Female* 229). In contrast to an

assertiveness at the sociopolitical level is a self-inflicted diffidence at the personal.

Santander bank manager María Mercet posits that women fail to develop their careers

in the corporate world due to a glass ceiling of their own making: women fear the loss

of male support if their success "masculinize[s]" them (Balch). Susan Franceschet

questions the extent to which Chilean women can fault *machista* culture for their

limited access to positions of power (*El triunfo* 19). This is somewhat reinforced by

data from a Latinobarómetro survey (2004): "las actitudes de los chilenos hacia las

mujeres son mucho más modernas que las de la mayoría de los latinoamericanos, con

excepción de los mexicanos, argentinos y uruguayos" (Franceschet, *El triunfo* 19).

The same survey, conducted four months before Bachelet's first election, revealed

that only 26 percent of the Chilean populace agreed that men were better political

leaders than women (19). In order to lend comprehension to that statistic, an

expanded interpretation of *marianismo* is needed, one that recognizes that

"marianismo not only is a constraint, but also is an empowering factor in women's

efforts to effect constructive political change" (Warkentin and Daly 150). Where,

then, is power for women found within the cultural construct of *marianismo*? Vera's

response to this is rooted in Montecino's work (2007):

> el carácter sincrético e híbrido del estereotipo marianista mestizo
> vuelve coherente la mezlca identitaria "Bachelet" como iconografía
> exitosa . . . la madre sola y abandonada que se sacrifica y cría a sus
> "huachos", blanqueando de alguna manera la vergüenza del origen,
> haciendo prueba de coraje, fuerza y resistencia y deviniendo por ese
> gesto, madre todopoderosa. (Vera 121-22)

The image assigned to Bachelet of all-powerful mother is conferred on her by the imaginary but, at the same time, subject to revision as her presidency unfolds.

Roles are changing but how women arrive at and articulate those roles shows uneven progress. One author views this as a process of "language" learning:

> We very much need a culture and a behavioral language that will let us speak easily, accurately, and understandably in public as well as in private. Until we have such an instrument, it will be hard to make our thoughts clear without having intentions and meanings confused and garbled by traditional symbology. (Janeway 302)

A successful delivery of the message requires women to breach chasms not typically encountered by male counterparts since the sociocultural attire of politics has been tailored by the masculine gender for the masculine gender. Even though research and polls confirm that leadership qualities abound in female aspirants, getting selected or elected for leadership positions still poses a major hurdle. While there are many similarities among the conditions that favor female and male leadership, one thing governs all aspects: there is still a distance ahead for women to achieve parity with male counterparts. One study on female political leadership explains why this circumstance will persist until sufficient numbers of women achieve parity in political representation:

> cuando son pocas [mujeres], se tiende a verlas como "mujeres" y les cuesta mucho que se reconozcan sus derechos y la valía de sus políticas. Y si tienen éxito, se ironiza con que parecen hombres. Si no tienen éxito, se achaca a que son mujeres y se las neutraliza políticamente . . . se enfrentan a muchos más problemas de imagen que los candidatos hombres, ya que aparecen como políticamente inexpertas, carentes de conocimiento, débiles de carácter y faltas de autonomía. (Marugán and Durá 88)

This situation repeats itself in the corporate world. A survey in 2003 revealed that women are "underrepresented in higher executive positions" in Chile, "are required to show a [more] superior performance than men to be recognized as successful," and "have to prove their abilities constantly" (Abarca and Majluf 72, 77). This study also underscored that "in Chile men assert more emphatically the traditional role of women . . . Chilean men consider that the self-development of women is derived mainly from the family" (76). Interestingly, only three years later, literature confirmed that "Latin American families have undergone major changes, . . . Patriarchal authority is being called into question, and highly incipient democratic models of family reconstruction are emerging" (Arriagada 532). Extensive interviews conducted in Chile in 2007 do not fully support Arriagada's assessment. Interviewees stated that "discrimination and machismo both on the job and in the culture in general" were the major obstacles yet to overcome (Clark 101). Analyses in 2010 maintained that "sexism is very strong in Chile" (Franceschet and Thomas 189). What possibly reconciles the disparity is, according to Clark, an interpretation of gender inequality that derives its tone from social status, but even then women with higher social status expressed some of the same frustrations as those from the lower rungs.

Arriagada argues that while "cultural concepts and images regarding male power continue to prevail in a social domain, . . . certain dimensions of modernity have been emerging, such as redefined conjugal roles in which the principle of equality is gradually gaining acceptance" and where "globalized images of different family types have fueled a move towards individual rights and autonomy" (531;

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Montesinos, *Masculinidades*). With a clearer picture of the repositioning of gender in social interaction, it is easier to understand how the position of father/patriarch of a nuclear family has fallen victim to "a drop in the number of marriages, an increase in marriage annulments, and a rising number of children born out of wedlock," with paternity undetermined (Olavarría 335). Acceptance of the new order comes at a price as the following comment by an interviewee reveals:

> I don't have a problem with powerful women . . . The problem is that if women get too much power, men will have too little. Then there's no place left for a man to be a man . . . I'm afraid if it's not a man's world, I'll be playing the previous role women had, a diminished role. I don't want to be in a diminished role. (Stanny)

Scholarship indicates a masculine identity crisis in process in Latin America concurrent with an emerging, more assertive female identity (Chant). One study on the impact of modernization on Chilean families and gender relationships flags it as "afectando la vigencia del modelo tradicional de masculinidad y favoreciendo la construcción de nuevos modelos de masculinidad y, por consiguiente, profundizando el proceso de cambio del modelo tradicional de feminidad" (Gutiérrez and Osorio 128). Luis Bonino Méndez disagrees with the generalization of an identity crisis experienced by a majority of men, preferring to downgrade it to an issue of anxiety: "que actualmente hay una gran crisis, pero de legitimación del modelo social de masculinidad tradicional …lo que genera no es una crisis pero sí inquietud y desconcierto a muchos varones" (8). The same author pinpoints the hub of this anxiety as an embedded view of women based on an arbitrary dichotomy:

> los varones tienden a sentir que con ellas hay sólo dos lugares: dominante o subordinado . . . aceptar a las mujeres como iguales no es tarea fácil . . . Cambiar es transformar dentro de sí y en lo social, los mitos masculinos patriarcales que actúan como poderosas resistencias

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al cambio e incorporar nuevos ideales …es el único modo de innovar y no quedar atrapado entre el mortífero inmovilismo, la nostalgia del machismo perdido o el victimismo del varón domado. (18)

How men and women will formulate an altered social order that reflects transformed roles in private and public is yet undetermined. Again, a full awareness of its progress may be delayed, where the "values of modernity are generating profound changes in behavior . . . not necessarily consciously perceived by men in their own lives or by other members of their nuclear families" (Olavarría 334). Women are no longer mere auxiliary sources of support; in many cases they are now the primary support and this reconfigures power networks for households and governments alike. There are both positive and negative implications. Even in situations where men retain higher earning power, "perceptions that they are losing ground as primary breadwinners seem to be the central issue in an increasingly widely noted 'crisis of masculinity' in the region" (Chant 553).[137] Sociologist Rafael Montesinos emphasizes the extent of these alterations in familial and social dynamics:

> El hombre ya no sólo tiene que vivir el conflicto de competir de tú a tú con mujeres que poseen las mismas o mayores habilidades para ocupar mejores puestos en las organizaciones, sino que ahora tiene que depender de mujeres que en muchas ocasiones ejercen poder dentro de los espacios laborales. (*La difícil* 16)

In the political sphere, ministers and parliaments now answer to female executives in several countries but it is still too recent a history to qualify these circumstances as a state of normalization.

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[137] Region here refers to Latin America.

Lest the consruct of *machismo* be nailed exclusively to the doorposts of Latin

American households, it is important to include that men in other societies, developed

nations not excluded, share similar attitudes regarding the qualities typically

associated with women. For example, emotions viewed as stereotypically feminine

are perceived as weaknesses, some occupations are viewed as less manly, and

transparency and intimacy in certain contexts are considered inappropriate for men as

"gender roles clearly intertwine with questions of proper status behavior" (Janeway

270). This apprehension is articulated in a discussion of bottom-up power structures:

"A great deal of overt machismo derives from the expectation that granting women

equality will reduce men . . . to the same status as women, and that means opening

them to the treatment women should expect" (12). Female Chilean interviewees

confirm these masculine concerns:

> If a woman on the job gives a man an order, he won't do it, and she
> has to complain to the boss and then gets no respect for doing that . . .
> Women's work isn't valued for the simple fact that they are women . .
> . Women are very undervalued in Chilean society . . . Men do not want
> women to be superior to them nor earn a better salary. They won't
> stand for it, won't tolerate it. (Clark 103-04).

Personal testimonies like these complicate attempts to frame the case in more positive

terms regarding social transformation. One participant, a political science major and

community organizer, confirmed that women have gained power, politically, but this

has not improved deficits in terms of their equality and rights (110). Why not?

An analysis of attitudes about female political leadership in Latin America

and the Caribbean explores a hypothesis "that men will react negatively to women's

empowerment" based on the status discontent theory (Morgan and Buice). The

hypothesis is supported by findings that as men lose status, either from the loss of

competitive positions offered to women or when placed in positions subordinate to women, the initial reaction is to restore the "more traditional gender norms" by removing "support for gender equality" (646). The United Nations report (PNUD 2004) on Chile confirmed that "los hombres resienten el acceso de las mujeres al poder pero no logran elaborar un discurso propio sobre su situación" (Salinas and Arancibia 70). The Salinas and Arancibia study (2005-2006) found that Bachelet's first presidency was interpreted by some Chilean men as "una perdida importante para los hombres" (556).[138] The overall result is that the advancement of women in professional and political positions does not necessarily "resocialize people to be more accepting of women in politics" (Morgan and Buice 652). In fact, it can strengthen opposition. Taking all factors into account, I support the conclusion that "the difference that gender difference makes depends on context. Putting women in positions of power is not the same as empowering women" (Kellerman and Rhode 19-20). Neither do elections of females to posts of significant political power reorient societal attitudes engendered by *machismo*.

Navigating the labyrinth of political power is no straightforward process for either gender but it presents unique considerations for women. One theory proposes that in times of stability, "strengthening citizen trust in government may undermine opportunities for women and traditionally marginalized groups whose public support and opportunities to reach power are enhanced when voters are frustrated with the current state" (Morgan and Buice 660). Putting this theory to the test in a near future is unlikely, based on current levels of disquiet in Chile and lingering discontent with

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[138] The Salinas study was conducted in a northern region of Chile and cannot be taken to represent all demographics.

previous administrations. In retrospect, Bachelet's articulation of the political environment appears prophetic: "What was for many years accepted as the normal way of doing politics or business has been criticized by the public as an abuse of privilege for too long now . . . It is time for honesty and action; otherwise, the country will not put its trust in us again" ("President"). This message came one month before media coverage of the Caval scandal. Additional corruption scandals have implicated members of her previous cabinet. She is now engaged in the arduous process of rebuilding citizen trust. Gender is a pivotal factor.

Leslie Schwindt-Bayer finds a strong correlation between female presence in governmental bodies and citizen trust. Among Latin Americans, trust in the legislature declines under a female head of state; under Bachelet's governance, Chileans exhibited "lower levels of trust in their congress" than in countries with male heads of state (180). Significantly, Chile has a consistently low percentage of women in legislature (Htun and Piscopo 6). Chileans "are less trusting of government than are citizens in countries without a female president" and the inclusion of more women in the president's cabinet in Latin American countries adversely affects the overall trust level (Schwindt-Bayer 180). Thus, Bachelet's appointment of several women to her first cabinet may not have actually yielded the desired effect of increased public confidence in her overall ability to govern. On the other hand, the Schwindt-Bayer study confirmed that a combination of factors—"the use of more proportional electoral rules, the presence of women, and the passage of women-friendly policies"—can elicit a positive response on the part of both male and female citizens as it conveys a sense of equality and inclusion (183). This is of particular

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importance for the Bachelet administration with its focus on equity, the reform of the electoral system, and the implementation of policies that favor the advancement of women.

Specific criticisms of Bachelet's presidency frustrate a deciphering of the logic that led to the 2013 reelection. In a negative vein, Clark's (2013) interviewees expressed disappointment in Bachelet's failure to guard the interests of the poor, faulted her lack of assertiveness, criticized her method of consensus-building instead of arbitrary decision-making, and doubted her autonomy to govern apart from external influences. In a positive vein, interviewees expressed admiration for Bachelet as a person, as an individualist, as a survivor, as someone worthy of trust, as a force for challenging gender inequality and roles, as a model of female self-esteem and empowerment, and as a trailblazer for future female attainment in professional spheres (Clark). An article about the origins and effects of stereotypical gender traits with respect to leadership presents the ongoing challenge:

> [Feminists] disagree as to whether women should get ahead in politics by demonstrating traditional masculine virtues of toughness, aggression, competitiveness, and the willingness to use force when necessary, or whether they should move the very agenda of politics away from male preoccupations with hierarchy and domination. (Fukuyama)

Labarca took the latter approach; Bachelet has adopted it to a degree but there are signs of an emerging integration of "traditional masculine virtues." Bachelet's call for the resignation of her entire cabinet in May 2015 stunned a Chilean public already conditioned to her more consensual, conciliatory approach to internal conflict. Some cabinet members were re-assigned while others were eliminated, resulting in the severing of long-term personal loyalties. Public reaction ranged from approval of

Bachelet's boldness to affect needed change to the claim that it was additional proof of Bachelet's incompetency. It is evident that the political identity of Chile continues to evolve, requiring Bachelet to conduct her second term in a context of diminishing tolerance on the part of citizens. Their demands may determine how she negotiates the changing context in relationship to her leadership style. In a commentary on governmental responsiveness to the expectations of citizens, former Socialist senator Carlos Ominami predicted that "if there is no change, that could lead to greater instability. There will be more frustration, more social discontent, and the people will take to the streets to protest. Chile has stopped being a boring country" (qtd. in Mander).

Chapter four examines Bachelet's management of the change enacted by the electorate and the change that she herself has initiated. It includes the following considerations: Does her management reflect a new way of doing politics? If so, how? Has her management proven effective in accomplishing her agenda? What effect, if any, will her performance exert on future female executives?

CHAPTER 5

A FEMALE POLITICAL PERFORMANCE IN *TIERRA DE HOMBRES*[139]

A woman in power is unusual; only when it is seen as unremarkable that a woman
hold power will we be able to judge women's performance in office adequately.

—Michael Genovese

5.1 Political Performance: Regional and Global Reviews

In the current setting, commentary about female management of executive

power is largely unfavorable. Its claims of incompetence appear to be confirmed by

plummeting approval ratings for women in the highest rungs of political power. At 9

percent, Chinchilla of Costa Rica garnered the lowest rating of any president in the

Americas before her term ended in 2014 (Woodbury). Rousseff of Brazil faired worse

at 7.7 percent in July 2015 (Mark).[140] Kirchner of Argentina registered below 30

percent prior to her final exit from politics (Goodman). The winter of Chile's

discontent found Bachelet at 24 percent in February 2016 ("Chile's Bachelet"). In

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[139] I use the term "*tierra de hombres*" both to denote a predominantly patriarchal
social structure and in the sense that Patricia Politzer employs it to denote politics as a
conceptually masculine space.

[140] On 12 May 2016, Rousseff was removed from office with 180 days to present an
appeal for reinstatement (Darlington et al.). Party leader Humberto Costa alludes to
the "*tierra de hombres*" concept in his response to her removal: "This is all the more
difficult because she is a woman in a man's world . . . I have no doubt that her being a
woman makes this worse. Brazilian political culture is very patriarchal and
disrespectful towards women. This manifests itself more intensely with a female
president" (qtd. in Watts, *Warrior*).

isolation, these figures could signal an indictment of Madame Presidents except that several male counterparts in the region share a similar fate. During the same time period, Humala of Peru stood at 17 percent, Maduro of Venezuela at 22, Santos of Colombia at 29, and Nieto of Mexico at 35. In Chile, Piñera exited at 26 percent in 2014 (Molina).[141]

Endemic dissatisfaction with leadership is restricted to neither a single gender nor a single region. Current polls evaluate it as under-performing on a global scale. In 2014, one survey encompassing the broad range of leadership in "business, government, community service, trade/labor unions and the not-for-profit sector" found that a mere "22 percent of those surveyed believe leaders are demonstrating effective leadership . . . with just 13 percent scoring leaders strongly on accountability when things go wrong" ("Global Leadership").[142] When the same survey isolated political leadership, 70 percent stated that leaders had "fallen short of expectations," a mere 9 percent credited them with taking "appropriate responsibility," and participants predicted future declines in ratings ("Global Leadership").[143] The ratio of male to female leaders assigns to the latter a reduced representation in this grouping, but when asked which gender should "navigate us through the challenges of the next five years," men received a 54 percent confidence vote while women received 46 ("Global Leadership"). The narrow gap between the two would indicate an emerging receptivity to women in leadership across cultures.

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[141] Criticism of Piñera's administration as "inexperienced and ineffectual" (Waylen 203) mirrors criticism directed at Bachelet's first administration.
[142] This study involved 6,509 participants in 13 countries on 5 continents.
[143] Participants in Spain registered as the most disillusioned with leadership; those in China, India, and Singapore demonstrated the highest degrees of confidence in leadership ("Global Leadership").

5.2 Political Performance: The Twenty-First Century "Woman Problem"

Political scientists Marugán and Durá (2013) theorize that females in powerful political positions are, first and foremost, seen as women, with their contributions judged in light of their gender and their successes gauged by the standard measuring device of the male politician (88). This state of affairs, largely comprehended as negative, was given a positive interpretation by Bachelet mid-way through her first term:

> I never thought of myself as a possible president of the republic . . . But I think people wanted not only to have a wonderful possibility and economy but also to have . . . a country who is . . . human, who is more social-protected . . . So I think in some ways they saw me first as a woman. (Bachelet, *Interview*)

When pressed to explain the breach between Chile's long-standing reputation as conservative and traditional and the election of a female head of state as an "amazingly progressive" act, Bachelet offered two rationales. First, there is a "difference between what people really does [sic] and what people says [sic]" and, second, that "the world has changed. And maybe you have the same objectives, the same goals but you have to change the strategies, or the instruments, how you grow into those goals" (*Interview*). On the Bachelet schedule for growing into "those goals" is the increase of women in political positions. If accomplished, it could serve as a catalyst for an altered norm with the potential to diminish gender stereotypes, but the variables make this only one of several possible outcomes. There is no reliable way to predict with consistency how the public *en masse* will evaluate women in high positions of public office until more women are invested with that kind of power. Neither is it possible to predict how women will wield their power as Barbar Stiegler

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and Elisabet Gerber affirm: "no se puede esperar ni empírica ni teóricamente que una mujer en el poder se comporte de otra manera que un hombre en razón de su sexo" (13).

While larger numbers may ratify statistical studies, they are not essential to effect change. Analyses of how women in political positions influence policy changes that impact women reveal the absence of "a linear relationship between numbers and outcomes;" one or a few effective "critical actors" are sufficient "to bring about women-friendly policy change" (Childs and Krook 126-27).[144] This would indicate that greater numbers of women in positions of influence do not automatically guarantee that policy makers will favor issues of concern to women, nor that they will operate outside of "patriarchal norms" (Sapiro 712). In fact, data confirm that women in legislature tend to favor party interests over the specific interests of women, with the caveat that social mobilization can exert the necessary pressure to override the constraints of party interests (Franceschet, *Continuity* 85).

The key factor is not the number of women with political power but who they are, how effective their network is, and the extent to which they can and will enact an agenda. Of additional consideration is that leadership, regardless of a "new way of doing politics" or the gender of the agent, is subject to and shaped by preexisting conditions. The power of antecedents in sociopolitical processes was articulated in the mid-nineteenth century by Karl Marx: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but

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[144] Marcela Ríos of the Santiago-based United Nations Development Program affirms that female presidents have made "a difference in terms of policy issues . . . Women did bring issues to table, especially issues traditionally seen as female" (qtd. in Bodzin).

under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past" (9). In keeping with the concept of historical residue presented in the first chapter, this holds true for Chile in the aftermath of a 17-year dictatorship and orchestrates the kinds of deep transformations that Bachelet envisions.

Another factor that operates independently of numbers corresponds to the current "debilitation of political parties as organizations" generated by the "alejamiento, desconfianza y desafección frente a la política en general" (Costantini 764; Tironi and Agüero 164; Díaz-Tendero).[145] This situation is not altogether negative. In Bachelet's case, the label "crisis" assigned to it by both media and literature strategically places Bachelet within those "conditions [that] can liberate a gifted leader from the accumulated constraints of vested interest groups and bureaucratic inertia" (Nye, *Tansformational* 121). An excerpt from Bachelet's discourse delivered to the Council of the Americas (2009) demonstrates how this functions. The assertion, "We cannot continue doing things the way we used to do them prior to the crisis . . . business as usual is not enough anymore" (Bachelet, *Dinner*), effectively employs the aperture created by economic and political crises to prioritize an urgent need and justify a change of direction. In this way, Bachelet could gain the necessary leverage to disengage from prior "constraints" and prioritize policies and procedures that fit her agenda.

Evidence of a strengthening of Bachelet's power amidst the weakening power of party interests was illustrated by the "tough choice" (her own words) to save revenues from copper during a peak time instead of channeling it into social

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[145] The PNUD study (2004) found that 38 percent of Chileans "siente rabia frente al poder y lo percibe como una fuente de abuso" (Díaz-Tendero 36).

programs: "many . . . thought it was a very bad decision because, of course, we were more popular if we used all that money in the contingency" (*Dinner*).[146] When the economic crisis occurred, the available surplus greatly diminished the negative impact on Chile in comparison with neighbors in the region. Then, in Bachelet's words, "everybody understood that it was a wise decision" (*Dinner*). A global investing specialist considered Bachelet "completely justified" in her remark to then Prime Minister Gordon Brown that if Great Britain had implemented "responsible budget policies" similar to Chile's, it "would have more room for fiscal stimulus" in the midst of the global recession (Hutchinson). In that economics is considered a masculine portfolio with high competence values assigned to it, this outcome was of benefit to perceptions of Bachelet's competency.

Here, the observation that in the second term her "strength is quantified by her ability to broker politics on her own without the help of other officials from the New Majority conglomerate of parties" (Montes, *Una Nueva*) dovetails with Nye's proposed windows of opportunity created by unique circumstances. Bachelet's disposition to adopt unpopular stances may correspond to a lack of party support from the onset. It did not escape attention that in Bachelet's first public appearance as a candidate for the 2013 election, the "leaders of the centre-left coalition, whose reputations have taken a beating, not only did not accompany her physically . . . but were not even mentioned in her speech" (Jarroud). It could also be a strategy to create

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[146] Chaney (1979) comments on this situation as particularly hazardous to female politicians who "often are not equipped to appreciate the priorities governments must set to effect structural change . . . Governments of developing nations often are forced to placate their diverse clienteles by diverting disproportionate amounts of money to short-range, non-reproductive projects that are attractive because of their immediate payoff in votes and political support . . . " (*Supermadre* 145).

autonomy based on the theory that "to appear or behave like an outsider may be an asset for a political leader because it helps in reframing the leadership role differently" (Campus 47). In the second term, her tendency to work more closely with select advisors and less with the cabinet as a whole appears to comprise part of the formula for crafting a different leadership style (Jalalzai, *Women* 140).

To the extent that the weakening of parties continues, more women may find increased access to positions of power by paths that circumvent party interests. The evolution of Bachelet's candidacy as the people's choice in Chile serves as a progenitor. She was "not the early favourite" of her own Socialist party, "did not even belong to the Socialist Party elite," and was, as mentioned, "an 'outsider' to the *Concertación* elites" (Navia, *Top-Down* 317). Nonetheless, her case should still be viewed as exceptional. Other assessments describe a disadvantageous situation for women due to the regional tendency of parties to operate along the lines of gender bias:

> se convierte en una carrera de obstáculos al tener que asumir y socializarse en unos modelos muy masculinizados que predominan en todos los partidos políticos. Se da, por tanto, todo un conjunto de prácticas y maniobras que dan como resultado que las mujeres sean desestimadas por los sistemas de cooptación . . . una especie de barrera invisible, y en muchos casos infranqueable . . . (Seisdedos and Gascón 153)

Despite her popularity at the grassroots level, Bachelet received no immunity from the "maniobras" in question. Marta Lagos described it as:

> strong bullying . . . she was being signaled as being inexperienced, doing silly things, doing things incorrect, not knowing what to do. There was . . . envy and resentment from the part of the males which was the majority of people in the heads of the political parties. (qtd. in Jalalzai, *Women* 72)

In the preelection period, the party eventually acknowledged Bachelet's candidacy and included her in the group of "official" Concertación candidates on campaign posters distributed in 2004 (Gamboa and Segovia 99). Postelection, her administration was subjected to "sabotage by the elites of existing political parties" (Navia, *Top-Down* 326). On the eve of the second election, Arturo Fontaine, Chilean novelist and academician, wrote that Bachelet's "biggest problem will be high and divergent expectations," followed by the challenge of a "coalition [that] is deeply divided over education, tax policy and constitutional reform."[147] The Unión Democrática Independiente (UDI) party of the Alianza right-wing coalition initiated a campaign with the slogan "Telling the Truth" to denigrate Bachelet's projected tax reform. As a fear-mongering strategy, UDI informed Chileans that the proposed reform would penalize individual citizens with higher tax rates while companies would enjoy lower ones (Benedikter et al. 8-9). The opposite was true (9). Bachelet prevailed, as verified by the passage of major reforms, each one requiring substantial support from diverse sectors. Research suggests that when women's issues are brought frequently and forcefully to the legislative table, support from men in leadership can be attained (Childs and Krook 132).[148] Though the processes are arduous, the persistence of one or a few women in leadership can build the consortium needed to effect change.

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[147] High expectations are stated as the prime factor responsible for the surge in Chilean demonstrations since 2006 (Camila Jara 43).

[148] The same authors also recognize the possibility of increased resistance on the part of men.

5.3 Political Performance: Reforms, Advances, and Setbacks

As the first female president in a country with one of the lowest percentages

of female congressional representation in the region (Schwindt-Bayer 4), the

achievement of several major objectives by the mid-way point of her second term

implies that Bachelet has garnered sufficient support from the male sector.[149] Of

particular benefit to women are free childcare for working mothers, pensions for

housewives, alimony for divorced women, ministerial status for the women's agency

SERNAM, and, in 2015, the adoption of gender quotas.[150] As of 2017, neither gender

will by law represent more than 60 percent of the pool of candidates in electoral

cycles (González). The state will also reward parties that elect females for

congressional seats by channeling funds to programs that encourage female political

involvement and to reimburse female candidates for certain expenses incurred in

electoral processes (Schwindt-Bayer 11).

Prior to the adoption of gender quotas, interviews among Chilean women in

municipal leadership yielded two reasons for the opinion that gender quotas would

place more women on the ballot: they superseded party mechanisms favoring male

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[149] Chile's IDH (Índice de Desarrollo Humano) was the highest in the region in 2013 but the IDG (Índice de Desigualdad de Género) registered a gap of 26 points (Seisdedos and Gascón 156). The authors note that human development factors—the state of the economy, poverty levels, and educational achievements—may indicate the degree of democracy exercised in a country, but these do not necessarily transfer to advances in gender equality as an integral part of the ideology of democracy.
[150] Gender quotas have received mixed reviews. One perspective sees gender quotas as "degrading for women" since success is not gained "through their own merits, but through a law which insinuates that they need intervention of the state to achieve their goals" (Dubove). Moreover, they can "stigmatize female representatives as less qualified than their male counterparts" (Kellerman and Rhode 32-33). Anthropologist Marta Lamas confirms this: "cuando se sabe que existe un programa de cuotas de género, los hombres piensan que las mujeres contratadas tienen menos cualidades que ellos" (qtd. in Guajardo 140).

candidates and they provided much needed funding (Carrera and Ulloa 83). However, gender quotas cannot achieve their full potential in isolation of other factors. Guajardo's opinion that "las cuotas de género resultan incongruentes si no son acompañadas de otros elementos socio-históricos que permitan enriquecer los niveles de participación" (141) lends support to the role of historical residue as laid out in chapter one. In Chile, the trajectory leading to the adoption of gender quotas is a lengthy one. In the current setting, Bachelet's promotion of gender equity in representation reflects a heightened awareness of it not only in Chile but also in the region. Bolivian President Evo Morales began his second term in 2010 with a cabinet equally comprised of male and female members (Viñas 43). Following Brazilian President Rousseff's removal from office in May 2016, the new "all-male, all-white cabinet has been heavily criticized as unrepresentative of the country" (Watts, *Brazil*).

Additional milestones can be credited to the Bachelet administration. On 13 January 2016, Bachelet announced that education reform would enable 165,000 students to attend university free of charge (Maniebo).[151] This reform has broad-spectrum repercussions. Chile's educational system is "the world's most privatized and most expensive system in terms of per-capita income, and thus one of the country's biggest cash cows for the richest parts of the population;" logically, many Chileans regard it as the "country's main driver of inequality" (Benedikter et al. 4-5). Divesting major beneficiaries of the system's financial potential was not accomplished without opposition and it continues to generate robust debates.

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[151] Julia Glum puts this number at 200,000.

Two months later, on 17 March 2016, an abortion law was approved by the

Congress and passed to the Senate for a final determination ("El congreso").[152] On 25

January 2017, the Chilean senate voted to advance the abortion bill.[153] What remains

is a discussion of the details for final approval. With the highest rate of abortion in

Latin America ("Chile Has"), Chile has revisited this reform numerous times over the

past 15 years. Bachelet did not introduce abortion reform during her first term,

choosing instead to promote preventive measures in the form of emergency

contraception only to have it later revoked by the Constitutional Court. Its revocation

led to an unforeseen use of technology to "undermine patriarchal dominance" as

women accessed internet information on how to "fabricate" an effective

pharmaceutical substitute (Bucciferro, *Chilean* 28). As executive director of UN

Women, Bachelet was criticized for the exclusion of legalized abortion in the

document "Progress of the World's Women" Strategic Plan in 2011 (Hellerstein).

Five years later, Bachelet's promotion of abortion reform led political Scientist

Merike Blofield to conclude that "Bachelet must perceive that she has enough social

support" to successfully pass the new law (qtd. in Hellerstein). Its second phase of

approval signifies that she procured support not only from the Chilean public but also

from the masculine sector of decision-makers for a "woman's issue," and this against

the interests of the Catholic Church and influential conservative political forces. This

was another improbable milestone, given that in the first term she "was restricted both

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[152] Abortions permitted by this law are restricted to cases of unviable fetus, risk to the mother's life, and rape ("El congreso").

[153] This is groundbreaking in light of information from the late 1970s when the topic was treated as taboo: "where women public officials could do a great deal (and perhaps are the only ones who could), the problem goes unrecognized, or at least unnamed among this set of leaders" (Chaney, *Supermadre* 147).

by an overall conservative Chilean political system, as well as strong religious voices within her own coalition" (Bisgaier and Wasson).

A passage of the abortion law by the senate will raise questions about why now and not before, to what extent the conservative nature of the political system has changed since 2010, and whether the political power of the Catholic Church is in decline.[154] It will also cast doubt on a claim that the candidacies of Bachelet and Matthei "reflect their personal circumstances and hard work rather than a dramatic shift in cultural perceptions of women's roles in the political sphere" (Bisgaier and Wasson). Predictions by Franceschet in 2010 bear rehearsing:

> changes to Chile's binomial electoral system, especially changes that would improve women's access to electoral politics, are *unlikely* to occur as long as the parties benefit from the status quo. Achieving a gender quota law is *even less likely*, . . . on the issues of abortion and gender quotas, legislative change is *unlikely* [emphasis mine]. (*Continuity* 175)

In the second term, the unlikely has become likely, provoking further investigations of underlying reasons. I propose that Bachelet's first term did alter gender perceptions about women in power or, at the least, prepared the ground for further cultivation. In the absence of a shift in perceptions, Bachelet's agenda would be in gridlock instead of moving forward at an unprecedented pace and with several desired outcomes. She has in essence gone where no man, literally or figuratively, has gone before.

But perhaps the most improbable feat occurred on 14 January 2015 when the Chilean Congress replaced the binomial electoral system with proportional

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[154] In 2015, Catholic leaders used newspaper inserts to advise the electorate of the "moral prohibition to vote in favor of a candidate who has supported the abortion project" (qtd. in Franklin, *Can Chile's*). This provoked a "furious response" on the part of some politicans, who saw this as a violation of boundaries between Church and State (Franklin, *Can Chile's*).

representation. A year earlier on 10 January 2014, Peter Meyer's report to the United

States congress stated the odds against this event:

> While many analysts think Bachelet should be able to push through her education initiative, constitutional reform is likely to be more difficult. Changes to the electoral system require three-fifths majorities in both houses, and other constitutional reforms require the support of two-thirds of the members of the Chilean Congress. (8-9)

A similar degree of improbability expressed by Chilean academicians Eugenio Tironi

and Felipe Agüero some fifteen years earlier highlights this achievement:

> Si bien hay intenciones de reformar la ley electoral en el seno de la Concertación y en las fuerzas mariginalizadas por éste, es difícil disponer de las mayorías requeridas en el parlamento, y no se visualiza tampoco la voluntad de hacer de éste un tema central de la agenda legislativa en el futuro próximo. (163)

Of additional import is that neither the educational nor constitutional reforms

emerged as "pet projects" of parties; they directly correlated to the concerns of the

electorate. This would meet the criteria defined by Díaz-Tendero as "un liderazgo

eficiente" on the part of Bachelet:

> es aquel que logra traducir sus componentes de empatía social en dinámicas institucionales . . . posee un componente de correcta lectura de las dinámicas que caracterizan un momento determinado del desarrollo de una sociedad, lo cual le permite recoger sus principales demandas. (34)

Beyond a message of credibility—that those who govern assume

accountability for promises made—is another of symbolic importance to many

Chileans: the dismantling of the last institutional vestiges of the regime. Bachelet's

agency in this process began as Minister of Defense with her intent to restore trust

between the military and the citizenry and to bring to justice those responsible for

crimes against humanity.[155] The effort continues by replacing old structures and

models with new ones as Chilean democracy is still a work in progress. Marta Lagos

describes the vindicating quality of Bachelet's reforms within this context:

> retoma los orígenes de la lucha contra la dictadura hablando de la descriminación, de la desigualdad, agotando dos temas centrales que eran el binominalismo y el sistema de pensiones, que son los enclaves más duros de herencia de la dictadura. (qtd. in Gerber 22)

A clear trajectory for this was established when Bachelet prefaced her second term

with discussion about needed reform to the Pinochet era document:

> They didn't believe in democracy so they built a system that meant even if people voted for change, it was hard to alter policy. We need a constitution born in democracy. The one we have now is illegitimate . . . Chile has looked at itself, has looked at its path, its recent history, its wounds, its feats, its unfinished business and this Chile has decided it is the time to start deep transformations. (qtd. in Collyns and Watts)[156]

The phrase "looked at itself" gains significance when paired with the observation that

Chile

> presents a collective psychology that transcends traditional patterns and reflects upon itself more than usual . . . Chile today is a nation in the midst of one of those rare historical moments where many, maybe all, crucial parameters defining a modern nation are changing *at the same time* . . . " (Benedikter and Siepmann 190).

The cooptation of the term "transformations" fits squarely within Maza's description

of the metamorphosis needed to offer Chilean citizens twenty-first century political

relevance:

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[155] In 2014, the officers that tortured Bachelet's father were prosecuted, and sentenced.
[156] The constitution generates ongoing debate: "no hay real consenso sobre su legitimidad de origen, su contenido ni sobre si representa o no la voluntad del pueblo chileno. Se trata del único caso en el mundo de una Constitución adoptada bajo una dictadura militar que sigue vigente en un régimen democrático" (Garretón and Garretón 118).

The relevant political forces have not yet proposed a comprehensive alternative to alter this dominant model [top-down], and the various experiences with local participation do not have the potential to influence and modify these big parameters of post-dictatorial Chilean politics. Bachelet's style of "being close to the people" has to be translated to "new forms of action" . . . As long as political participation is not viewed as a tool for *significant transformations* [emphasis mine], it will lose its meaning and validity. (270)

While many Chileans of the Pinochet era recognize the deficiencies of the old system, their reticence to enact radical change creates a generational rift. The post-dictatorial generation does not share the previous generation's apprehension that sociopolitical upheaval could resurrect a dictatorship (Pousadela 695). In fact, a view of government as "heir of the dictatorship" (695) by students involved in the 2011-2012 demonstrations in no way diminished the boldness with which they demanded reforms and continue to exert their powers of persuasion on Bachelet's governance.[157]

During the first term, Bachelet expressed awareness of what transformation could entail: "había tremendas expectativas con mi elección, que a mí me preocupaban, porque uno sabe que a veces las expectativas no tienen que ver con la realidad de lo que uno pueda hacer en un gobierno de cuatro años" (Bachelet, *Dinner)*. The unprecedented move on 7 May 2015 demonstrated the extent of her resolve to meet those expectations. Her admission, "I made major mistakes. I did not have the strength to criticize what I should have criticized," confirms a self-portrayal voiced as, "I would like Chileans to remember me as a transparent woman, who always said what she thought and did what she said" (qtd. in Dorat). Political scientist

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[157] During Bachelet's state-of-the-nation address on 21 May 2016, student protests became violent, resulting in one death, and the burning of several businesses and a municipal office ("Violent"); this was followed on 27 May 2016 by more student protests that resulted in the use of tear gas and the arrest of 117 participants (Glum).

Mauricio Morales clarifies that the reformulated cabinet "is not a cosmetic change . . . this changes the road map . . . It's a blow to the chin to the more recalcitrant left, the radical reformers who wanted to change everything" (qtd. in Abramovich). For Bachelet, practicing transparency involved the calculated risk of alienating some ideologically sympathetic actors while forming alliances with unlikely partners.[158]

If the broad scale reformulation of a Bachelet cabinet was unprecedented in 2015, the reshuffling of a cabinet was not. In the latter case, it was an initiative seemingly driven by the need to reestablish public confidence. Scarcely four months into her first term, Bachelet responded to massive student protests with a reorganized cabinet. This was significant on more than one level. Behind the new cabinet faces was the relinquishment of her much-publicized platform for gender parity as well as her push for "*gobierno ciudadano.*" What followed was a noticeable departure from the government model so heavily promoted during the campaign and early days of administration as "the administration began to rely more and more on traditional party operators who were not interested in the inclusionary approach" (Weeks and Borzutzky 109). An additional response to the *vox populi* in 2006—the replacement of the Minister of Interior—yielded a temporary increase in approval ratings of over 50 percent (Navia, *Top-Down* 332).

The year 2007 saw the installation of some of the Concertación's old guard. These seasoned actors were eliminated from the early pool of possibilities when Bachelet's vision of change involved a bottom-up approach to governance, with

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[158] As voters leaned away from the Concertación in 2005 under the binomial system that favored the right, Bachelet's dream list of reforms was compromised to the extent that she "had to satisfy the right in order to pass legislation" (Weeks and Borzutzky 109).

gender parity a priority; their inclusion signaled that Bachelet was compelled to adjust

the agenda in order to move it forward (329, 334-35).[159] Those cabinet appointments

provided the necessary collaboration to promulgate reforms and confirmed that

Bachelet could not operate completely outside of established political networks. She

would have to navigate *la tierra de hombres* using some of the routes established by

male predecessors.

5.4 Political Performance: Personas and Leadership Styles

The *vox populi* gave Bachelet a mandate but it did not bestow sufficient

leverage to carry it out unilaterally. At the same time, Susan Franceschet notes that

Bachelet's second term has seen less opposition to her leadership style and that the

"key difference between 2006 and 2014 is the balance of power between the president

and the parties . . . the parties have grown weaker and this has the effect of

strengthening Bachelet's position" (*Disrupting* 87). That weakness could widen the

aperture for appointments of the kind made previously by Bachelet. Marcela Ríos

describes them as "women that are probably third, fourth, or fifth level militants or

professionals [with] quite long experiences with the state, . . . but not related to the

elites or to the party leaders" (qtd. in Jalalzai, *Women* 132). This will, however, have

to play out against the backdrop of a much-reduced focus on gender parity in the

second term. Jalazai attributes that reduction to a greater degree of party influence

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[159] The first cabinet in 2006 included only two members with past experience as ministers; many were college-educated experts in business and other specialties, earning them the title of "global citizens" ("Chile Headed"). While this represented a new approach with fresh faces, those faces were "untested" politicians led by a president equally unschooled in the functioning of political mechanisms ("Chile Headed").

than portrayed, the need for appointees to hold superior qualifications, and the more urgent status of other reforms (137-41).

Experience gained from the management of several crises as Chile's first female head of state and, on a global scale, the international exposure as executive director of UN Women could also have bearing on the noticeable shift in approach in the second term. Both of these positions were spearheading efforts that required Bachelet to traverse new terrain. The commentary on a bolder, more confident Bachelet attributes this to a combination of Bachelet's maturation as a leader and "an evolution of Chilean society" disposed to "more radical change" (87). Near the end of Bachelet's first term, Marta Lagos described 2009 as "el año de la revolución autoexpresiva . . . La autoexpresión no es compatible con el estatu quo, es el origen de las tensiones que vivimos y que muchos creen ser sólo políticas." It was in this sociopolitical climate that not only Chile continued to evolve but also the presidential persona of Bachelet. Tironi describes her modified approach as "muy mesiánica . . . está obligada a caminar rápido, a ser un poquito más hosca, severa, dejar la empatía de lado y empujar y exigir metas" (qtd. in Montes 2016).

There is perhaps no better testimony to Tironi's viewpoint than the aforementioned 2015 cabinet remake. One rationale qualifies it as an attempt "to breathe new life into the second half of her term by building a team of individuals with proven experience in negotiating political-parliamentary matters and skills in establishing dialogs with public and private sectors" (Ramírez et al. 2). Following Waylen's line of reasoning, breathing "new life" signified a waning obligation to maintain the status quo and a growing autonomy on the part of Bachelet:

Significantly, the second administration was able to put things on its policy agenda that were either inconceivable under the first administration or that had a much more realistic chance of success this time, such as the decriminalization of therapeutic abortion, a new constitution and meaningful electoral reform that includes gender quotas . . . Bachelet has been able to utilize the legislative route more effectively, relying less on other mechanisms that reactivated and converted existing institutions and rules rather than creating new ones. (*Comparing* 217)

Whether seen as an expedient shift in leadership style, or a strategy to boost low approval ratings, or the selection of highly qualified individuals to achieve specific objectives, hard choices were in order. In a preliminary analysis, they appear result-oriented, based on Bachelet's own counsel: "you have to put goals that you can fulfill, that you can achieve . . . or people will believe that this new system is not better than the other one and they go back to conflict" (*Lessons*). The shortfalls that have occurred demonstrate that implementing a new way of doing politics entails complex negotiations of ideological mergers. The question is, are Chileans willing to endure a trial-and-error period with a modicum of tolerance? Chilean public opinion specialist Elisabet Gerber is doubtful:

Resulta paradójico que, por una parte, la sociedad parezca desear profundos cambios en lo que hace al ejercicio del poder y a la cultura política, pero, al mismo tiempo, no parezca dispuesta a tolerar los altibajos y hasta ciertas cuotas de desorden que esto pueda generar. (70)

Bachelet's response to the question, "Why are people upset?" echoes Gerber's perspective: "Because they want everything yesterday" (Bachelet, *Interview*). Commentary from news agency *El País* (October 2014) conveys that satisfying the Chilean public is a losing proposition: "It is precisely a lack of sufficient time and the gradual introduction of government policies that Bachelet is being criticized for. She

was a moderate during her first term and a radical populist during her second, her fiercest critics claim" (qtd. in Benedikter et al. 4).

5.5 Political Performance and Power from Below: *El gobierno ciudadano*

Judging by the increase in street protests, the threat of conflict is not overstated. Marta Lagos confirms a "political crisis" in progress based on the statistic that over "70 percent of the population believes that the political system doesn't work" (Bonnefoy, *President*).[160] In 2013, voter turnout fell from the high 80s to a record low of 42 percent ("Chilean: Bachelet"). Stating concrete reasons for this would be premature since Chile practiced compulsory voting from 1925 to 2012; the 2013 vote represents the first to take place on a voluntary basis. Nonetheless, there are two dynamics I consider relevant. First, as of 2010, only 11 percent of Chilean voters "identified with a political party" (Lupu 234). As discussed in chapter three, party loyalties no longer are the primary determinant of election outcomes nor are candidates selected solely on party affiliation. There are stronger determinants in the twenty-first century: an individual candidate's public appeal and their ability to locate and effectively communicate that single, compelling issue that interfaces with voter expectations. What I would define as a psychological privatization of *Volksgeist* could account for lower voter participation. This translates as a reversal of the order found in previous centuries, when political activity was promoted as a nationalistic virtue if not duty. Its prime objective was that of securing the well being of the

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[160] This does not categorize the Chilean system as "illegitimate;" analyses indicate that "there are still many stabilizing forces which prevent a full-scale legitimacy crisis that would compromise the governability or stability of Chile's democracy" (Camila Jara 42-43).

"patria" on behalf of all citizens. The personal lives of individual citizens benefited

from a "trickle-down" effect as the ideological greater good transferred to the

individual's personal reality. In its reversed order, of first consideration is the

perceived benefit to the lives of individual citizens. Of secondary importance, and to

the extent that citizens receive and exploit benefits, the country prospers. This is, in

my assessment, the sociopolitical environment of the current administration (2014-

1018) and impacts both how Bachelet's performance is evaluated by the electorate

and the ways in which she courts it. Citing a PNUD study, literature from 2015 shows

that "el involucramiento ciudadano se enfrenta a una debilidad de sentido de lo

colectivo. Las personas evalúan las soluciones públicas solo desde el prisma del

beneficio individual o familiar. El colectivo o lo social no son parámetros relevantes"

(Palet and Coloma 23). What Jorge Heine diagnosed in 2002 as "un tremendo

deterioro del imaginario colectivo" is, quite possibly, a side affect of this attitudinal

shift.

The need for revised criteria for voter behavior is supported by at least two

more recent developments in the Chilean political scene. First, Bachelet's self-

designation as "Solo soy una servidora pública" (qtd. in Salazar) illustrates a context

wherein representatives are accountable to the represented and political powers exist

to serve the interests of the public, not vice versa. The traditional posture of the elite

entails the image of political leader as public ruler but, whether assuming the role of

public servant or public ruler, political entities can no longer rely on unmitigated

support from the people to operate for the people without their input and consent.

Bachelet's self-designation represents what Díaz describes as "a reconceptualization

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of the notion of citizenship. It has implied the creation of new social actors

empowered to claim their political rights and is a development that challenges the

rules of the game of representative democracy and the balance of power in Chile"

(Díaz 227). Bachelet's first words as president for a second term—"Yo soy una

ciudadana igual a ustedes"—coincide with the amended context (qtd. in Salazar).

Second, I suggest that the profile of the average Latin American voter forms a

rational link to low voter participation:

> The average Latin American voter is, in order of substantive
> significance, in the middle of his or her life-cycle, educated, civically
> active, married, wealthy, employed, partisan, and interested in politics
> . . . a parent with multiple children, Catholic, mobilized by selective
> clientilistic benefits, and male. (Carlin and Love 56)

These criteria may explain a decline in the total percentage for voter participation in

2013. The average voter, in contrast to Bachelet, represents the more conservative

features of Chilean society. If Bachelet was perceived as the probable winner, the

average voter may have abstained based on the futility of changing the outcome.

Bachelet's primary support came from the lower socio-economic classes, young

adults, women, and adults over 60 years of age (Navia and Cabezas 21). All of these

categories lack correlation to the criteria for the average Latin American voter.

Additionally, the "stagnation in the number of citizens who vote in elections" in Chile

relates to the fact that "as much as 80 percent of people under 30 years of age have

not registered as voters" (Maza 255). This latter demographic falls short of the mid-

life age range of the average Latin American voter (Carlin and Love) but quite close

to the median age in Chile of 33.7 years (Central Intelligence Agency 2016).[161] Only

further studies of elections beginning in 2017 can provide a more holistic diagnosis of

the dynamics affecting voter turnout in Chile within the revised context of

proportional representation, gender quotas, and voluntary voting.

5.6 Political Performance and Public Opinion: Friend or Foe?

Perhaps the only predictable trait of public opinion is its mercurial nature.

Bachelet rose on a high tide of acclaim in 2006 only to experience a year later some

of the lowest approval ratings in the region at that time (Weeks and Borzutzky 111).

Early in 2009, her ratings registered an increase while her coalition lost support

(Weeks and Borzutzky 112; Gárate 9). By December 2009, opinion polls registered

an 80 percent approval and named her the "most admired political personality in

Chile" (Weeks and Borzutzky 112).[162] The same poll that afforded Bachelet a high

mark gave the Concertación a much lower percentage of 38 (112).[163] A remark by

Manuel Gárate that "la aparente imagen 'incombustible' de la Presidenta es un

fenómeno político digno de análisis" indicates the singularity of this circumstance

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[161] On 25 January 2012, President Sebastián Piñera replaced the compulsory voting law that fined registered voters for failure to vote with a new system of automatic registration (Shea). His main objective was to politically engage 4.5 million new voters, the majority from a young demographic (Shea).

[162] Similarly, an economic downturn and multiple corruption scandals at the onset of the Lagos presidency diminished support for the Concertación party (Gamboa and Segovia 87); however, at the end of his term a survey rated him as the best of 30 Chilean presidents since 1900 (Rohter, "Chile's Socialist").

[163] By August 2015, neither of the two major coalitions held the advantage: Nueva Mayoría received a 16 percent approval rating and Alianza por Chile received 15 (Benedikter et al. 3).

(9).[164] Navia resolves these variables with the concept of "cariñocracia," a power

relationship rooted in the emotional appeal that Bachelet elicits at the personal level

(Weeks and Borzutzky 114; Carlos Jara).[165] Others address this same concept with

slight variations as to its origin. To the oft-stated reasons for Bachelet's first

election—the novelty of her gender and her personal history— Chilean professor

Vicente Araya adds that Chileans want "development," "economic growth," and

"progress . . . within a context in which there is, let's say, a feeling for what [it] is to

be human" (qtd. in Bucciferro, *For-get* 152). Political scientists Gregory Weeks and

Silvia Borzutzky offer a less emotive interpretation of *cariñocracia*, founding it in

Bachelet's

> ability to be seen not as a head of government but as head of state, one
> who leaves solving the everyday problems of the country to others
> while she spends time in international settings speaking about great
> national projects . . . the delinking between Bachelet's popularity and
> the lack of support for either the coalition's parties or her government
> can be explained as a result of the institutional structure and her ability
> to walk the fine line between elite consensus and the rhetoric of
> popular inclusion. (114)

At the end of the first term, Bachelet's government was negatively assessed as

"incompetent" and "corrupt;" in contrast, Bachelet herself was positively assessed as

having overcome numerous challenges and lauded for her effective management of

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[164] The relative speed with which public opinion shifts is worth noting. One analyst, comparing the Bachelet and Rousseff political contexts in April 2014, wrote that "Rousseff and her Worker's Party have likewise managed to garner strong support . . . After weathering large-scale street protests last year, Rousseff remains the strong favorite in opinion polls for the next presidential election" (Kumar). Rousseff was re-elected in October 2014, removed from office in May 2016, and impeached in August 2016.

[165] I view "*cariñocracia*" as a gender-biased concept. A study on the criteria used by voters to evaluate a woman candidate as qualified found that likability played a major role. Qualified men could win the vote even if they were not likable but qualified women did not receive the vote if deemed unlikable ("Pitch Perfect").

the economic crisis (Weeks and Borzutzky 115; Planas). In spite of the public's favorable reviews of the president, Navia expressed skepticism about the Bachelet legacy, stating in 2010 that she "might go down in history as the last Concertación president" (qtd. in Planas). Considering that the refrain "nunca más una mujer Presidenta" circulated among the "elite política" in the early stages of the first term (Stiegler and Gerber 48), her 2010 legacy could well have included the distinction of being the last female president of Chile. History had the last word and saw Bachelet ensconced once again in La Moneda in 2014. Over the last few decades, several predictions of the Chilean political climate have proven fallacious. In part, I attribute this to the volatility of public opinion. Irving Crespi describes it as a "never-ending flux in which the balance of individual opinions and coalitions of opinions shifts back and forth, a flux in which the relevance and importance of different issues continuously change" (6).[166] This lends an ambiguous quality to the vote. Crespi advises that even winning elections cannot be taken as true indicators of public support; it may be more a message of "what the public does not want than what it does" (142).[167]

5.7 Political Performance: Internal and External Conditions

The cumulative affect of corruption scandals, an upsurge in social mobilization, an unexpected downturn in the economy, and natural disasters have

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[166] Crespi makes distinctions between public opinion as process and public opinion as actor, and between opinions and attitudes. For a discussion of this, see Crespi (1997).
[167] This idea surfaces frequently in discussions about the 2016 United States election.

taken a toll on the Bachelet administrations.[168] These factors, combined with

"important mistakes" in response to her son's "reckless" behavior, provoked her

declaration in 2015, "I will never be a candidate to any position of public

representation in politics ever again" (Bonnefoy, *President*).[169] How this will affect

future political prospects for women in Chile is unknown but there is a message worth

noting: the public political life of women is inextricably linked to the personal and

maternal (Bucciferro, *For-get* 12). In the Chilean political framework, Sonia

Montecino describes a veiled *machismo* that capitalizes on the negative and confirms

a gender bias: "un hombre no habría sido juzgado así por lo que hizo su hijo" (qtd. in

Molina). The immediate consequences of what I refer to metaphorically as Bachelet's

"loss of innocence" is explained by Montecino in light of *machismo's* cultural

counterpart, *marianismo*:

> [Bachelet] representa también una serie de elementos de la cultura
> "mariana," pues en la sociedad mestiza chilena la figura de la virgen se
> procesa en la figura de la madre a cargo de su hijo . . . Y esa lectura
> "mariana" se une a que es una persona que sufrió y perdonó, que es en
> cierta forma, una mártir y una heroina. Todos esos elementos
> conviven en ella, exagerados o no . . . esa imagen es tan compleja, que
> cuando se derrumba, la caída es muy fuerte y lo que viene es la rabia
> (qtd. in Molina).

Political scientist Robert Funk assesses the "nueragate" scandal—an apt example of

"la caída"—as a "personal tragedy for Bachelet . . . There was a sense of moral

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[168] The Bachelet situation does not stand in isolation. Bolivian president Evo Morales,
having ridden the high tide of popular approval for three terms, was defeated in an
attempt to assure a fourth term by amending the constitution. Jim Wyss affirms that
"a combination of corruption scandals, a turning economic tide and growing regional
discontent with the status quo narrowly doomed his aspirations."
[169] In comparison, Kirchner avoided the word "mistake" in discourse; Argentine
political journalist Morales Solá explains that "to her, recognizing errors is to admit
weakness" ("CFK").

superiority around [her], and now she's struggling to regain legitimacy" (qtd. in Romero, *Chile*). Bucciferro's comment that the media exploited Bachelet's "motherly ideal" image (*Chilean* 22), backed by Rafael Gumucio's claim that "women who occupy positions of power in Chile" approximate the "image of a convent's 'mother superior' " (Bucciferro, *For-get* 86), strengthens the argument.

A statement from Bachelet in a 2007 interview accentuates the damage inflicted on the president's credibility by the 2015 familial scandal: "We are also working very hard to get rid of any corruption—we are aware that one rotten apple can destroy the whole crop, but I do not think corruption is part of the Chilean way" (qtd. in Larraguibel and Larraguibel 75). The blow dealt to Bachelet's image by the Caval scandal could hardly have been more effective had it been premeditated and intentional: "women who are labeled as exceptionally honest will be set up for a violent fall as soon as any evidence (or simply an allegation) of corruption comes their way" (Buvinic and Roza 12). The ensuing indignation—"la rabia"—on the part of Chileans may also have its source in what Simón Romero flags as the "strengthening of the region's middle classes this century, accompanied by an emboldened sense of citizenship that holds political leaders to higher ethical standards." On the positive side, Claudia Heiss credits Bachelet with diffusing the initial outrage: she "has deftly channeled anger about the scandals into the constructive reforms of the Probity Agenda, and she has changed the perception of what is achievable in Chile in terms of progressive political and social transformations." The Probity Agenda regulates campaign financing and requires more accountability from political parties.

Bachelet is not the sole casualty of corruption scandals; several leaders in the region have recently been confronted with the demand for "integrity in government" (Castañeda).[170] It might be said that the backlash of public disapproval is partially self-inflicted; Bachelet paved the way for an intensified level of public scrutiny with her promotion of *gobierno ciudadano*. Marta Lagos foreshadowed the potential consequences near the end of Bachelet's first term: "She did things that were not presidential in the eyes of the Chilean establishment. It is very difficult to go back. She lowered the presidency closer to the people" (qtd. in Barrionuevo). I insert that flagging something as "not presidential" is semantically charged in that precedents established by masculine models largely define "presidential." However, even male politicians are not exempt from its expectations. Piñera's "unpresidential" behavior, called "acts of buffoonery" by one source, became so typified as to earn it's own nomenclature: *Piñeri-cosas* ("Chile's Piñera"). During a meeting with President Barak Obama at the White House, Piñera created an awkward moment when he broke protocol by impulsively seating himself at the president's desk in the oval office ("Chile's Piñera").

One journalist presents the dilemma that leaders face in the evolution of their political persona—"Is it riskier to be an austere politician or a humane one?"—and

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[170] It is difficult to link the demand for integrity to a particular ideology in governance. After Kirchner's replacement with a right-wing leader, along with signs of waning support for Maduro, Morales, Ortega, Correa, and Rousseff, there is speculation about a shift away from leftist ideology (Caistor 2015; Castañeda 2016). A different view by Robie Mitchell interprets this as loss of support for a particular leader, not necessarily for the ideology that the leader represents.

adds that the " 'humane' label is becoming equally costly" (Gowan).[171] The decision

is crucial inasmuch as it defines the relationship between leaders and their

constituencies and the extent to which they can achieve their objectives. Chilean

academician Miguel Angel López, in response to Bachelet's declining approval

ratings in 2015, names one of the results that Bachelet faces in her choice of persona

as humane. The very thing that Bachelet relentlessly promoted—a more participatory

role for citizens—has added new facets to the management and implementation of

intended change and reform. López addresses one of those facets: "En su primer

período, se instaló la época del cambio, y ahí empezaron a salir los movimientos

sociales a presionar por el cambio social, económico. Y esos cambios implican más

participación, pero también más inestabilidad" (qtd. in Molina). As implied, the

desirable transition from a passive to an assertive citizenry carries the undesirable

potential to sabotage the presidential agenda:

> Among those who dominate the Chilean political scene the diagnosis
> is still prevalent that the 1973 military coup was the result of an
> excess of participation, . . . this fear explains the continuous emphasis
> on "governability" . . . the concomitant promise of the new
> government of Bachelet to create a "citizens' government" was
> received by the conservatives with apprehension and resistance . . .
> the dangers of an "explosion of expectations" were stressed. (Maza
> 266)

Chilean leadership expert Juan Eichholz acknowledges the expectations as "más cerca

del utopismo y la inconciencia que del realismo y la responsabilidad," but includes

that "Michelle Bachelet no es el enemigo, sino el catalizador de una transición crucial

para Chile. Si se conduce bien, tendremos un país mucho mejor que el que hoy

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[171] One example given by Gowan is Merkel's controversial open-door policy for
refugee populations from the East.

tenemos, pero eso no puede depender solo de ella . . . al final del día, este no es el desafío de Bachelet; es el desafío de Chile" (Eichholz).[172]

Adolfo Díaz advises that "the combination of civic participation and improved education may bring about fundamental changes in society because both strengthen human capital, generate social capital and stimulate the emergence of a new authentically democratic and solidarial culture" (Díaz 235-36). For some Chileans, this poses a threat to "governability," where increased citizen participation may enable "chaos and lawlessness" (Navia, *Top-Down* 323). Following the student protests and the Transantiago debacle during Bachelet's first administration, this concern became great enough so as to eliminate the topic of "participatory democracy" from her public discourse (323). In Navia's assessment, "the commendable objective of strengthening civil society was associated with a soft hand . . . and would eventually end up undermining democracy" (332). In direct opposition to this view, some social scientists interpret grassroots mobilization as a "positive and necessary process for modernization . . . a process of democratic consolidation," stating that in Chile it might serve "to open up the system to new patterns of socialization and behavior . . . as part of a necessary integration-disintegration-reintegration process" (Camila Jara 40-41). Given Bachelet's ambitious reform agenda, the latter circumstance could work to her advantage.

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[172] Juan Carlos Eichholz, founder and director of the Strategic Leadership Center, is author of *Adaptive Capacity: How Organizations Can Thrive in a Changing World.* Greenwich: LID Pub., 2014. He is also founder and partner of Cambridge Leadership Associates Latin America.

López predicts that even though the presidency will probably not recuperate its approval ratings in excess of 60 percent, Bachelet can restore public confidence levels if she practices a "transparencia política que hoy exige su ciudadanía" (qtd. in Molina). The global survey (2014) previously referenced found that "transparent communication is absolutely critical to effective leadership;" it topped the list as the most highly rated attribute of leaders ("Global Leadership"). It was Bachelet's marketing of political transparency that helped cultivate her charismatic appeal preceding her first election. Nevertheless, the initial political currency generated by it was quickly depleted in the first term by what Chileans viewed as mismanagement of large-scale crises like the student protests and the mass transit fiasco.[173] Even though these crises stemmed from preexisting conditions, Bachelet's government was the tangible target, putting her rhetoric of transparency to the test. She assumed responsibility: "It is not common for a president to stand before the nation and say 'Things haven't gone well' . . . But that is exactly what I want to say in the case of Transantiago . . . The inhabitants of Santiago, especially the poorest, deserve an apology" (qtd. in Munger). This was not the first time the Chilean public witnessed an admission of failure by Bachelet. As Minister of Health, she offered her resignation when she was unable to accomplish a mandate for shorter queues in health care settings within a 90-day time frame. It was an "act of honesty that made her very popular" with the people (Navia, *Top-Down* 316). Congresswoman Isabel Allende

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[173] From April to June of 2006, approximately 790,000 students across Chile participated in protest marches coined as the Penguin's Revolution, so named for the black-and-white school uniforms. The students demanded reforms to make quality education equally accessible to all. The Transantiago Plan to restructure the public transport system in the capital was initiated February 2007 and resulted in prolonged commutes with 6 million people stranded.

verifies the appeal of Bachelet's transparency: "Michelle reflects a long hidden reality in Chile, not the fake image of the perfect family or the model politician. When she was health minister she used to laugh and tell people she was overweight and had high blood pressure" (qtd. in Vogler, *Capital*).

Leadership style is closely tied to transparency as part of the equation for building and maintaining trust with the governed. Nye places among the attributes of charismatic leaders those of "being an exemplar, and managing the impressions they create" (Nye, *Soft Power, Hard* 5). In his theory of charisma as "soft power," Nye warns of its capricious nature, naming among its victims Winston Churchill, Hitler, and CEOs who are quickly downgraded after "they fail to make their numbers" (5-6). As Bachelet discovered, the power of her charisma lasted in proportion to her ability to meet the expectations of citizens and, in the present, those expectations show a tendency to become more exacting.

The Chile that Bachelet returned to lead in 2014 was not the Chile of 2006-2010. Before the elections in December 2013, Bachelet commented on the mutable nature of the electorate:

> But what really changed, I would say, is probably as a consequence of democracy, people are more aware of their rights, people are more empowered, people want not only to vote but also to influence . . . the decisions of the leaders, of the people who are making the decisions at all levels. ("Talk")

This assessment is easily synchronized with links between public opinion shaped by polls, citizen mobilization, and pressure brought to bear on political leadership as "parte del escenario político latinoamericano de nuestros días" (Cheresky 2). The growing agency of polls is troubling to political structures due to the potential of polls

to "replace elections as the linkage between collective opinion and governments" (Crespi 158-59). Leaders may find that their "legitimidad depende de una ciudadanía cada vez más autónoma y cambiante" (Cheresky 2). Chilean sociologist Eugenio Tironi writes of this as a "phase of cultural liberalization" and a "new moral climate . . . marked by greater individualism, an erosion of the traditional family structure and greater social tolerance" (Rohter, *With*).[174]

Evidence suggests that the term that began in 2014 is constructed on a much-altered substrate. If the rules of the game have changed, as Adolfo Díaz asserts, then globalization can be identified as one of the highly instrumental game changers. Some of its components—the "broader spread of information," "the heightened involvement of civil society" at both national and international levels, and the "broader and more independent role of the media"—are primary factors that enable "citizens to monitor the activities of government and its capacity to deliver on its promises" (Grindle 195). It is therefore not difficult to establish a symbiotic relationship between these conditions and the media and transparency. Media has come to play a powerful role as a "main pillar of what [Tironi] calls the cult of transparency, which in his opinion constitutes a key demand of Chileans towards the political system" (P. Silva 71). Not only in Chile, but globally, politicians are well-advised to cultivate an understanding of this new configuration where "political actors and media elites now exist in an always-on environment in which it is

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[174] Excerpt from Tironi, Eugenio. Contributors. Tomás Ariztía and Francesca Faverio Bravo. *El sueño chileno: Comuidad, familia y nación en el bicentenario*. Santiago: Taurus, 2005.

impossible to escape the 'little brother' surveillant gaze of citizen-reporters" (Howard and Chadwick 5).

The role of media and the capabilities of electronic monitoring have recent applications that illustrate the validity of Merilee Grindle's assertions. Whereas Bachelet assumed the role of "humane" leader, Rousseff opted for the "austere" model. In light of Rousseff's recent impeachment, these models are of interest. The humane model exhibits pros and cons: Bachelet is admired by some for her close connection to the public and disdained by others for her uncustomary familiarity. On the other hand, the vulnerabilities of Rousseff's austere model have been exacerbated by the developments leading up to her removal from office. Her aloof relationship with the media favored an "uncharacteristically intense public scrutiny, especially from the media . . . In early 2013, even when she enjoyed immense popularity among the Brazilian people, no major news agency supported her" (Kumar).

The leadership model was only part of the problem. Rousseff failed to comprehend the altered political landscape. A former comrade of Rousseff discloses: "She does not understand the new world that has rapidly emerged as a result of globalization and technological development" (qtd. in Watts, *Warrior*). In strong contrast to Bachelet's use of social media during her campaigns and administrations, Rousseff did not utilize social media until 2014. Whether or not a more personable connection with media would have altered the course of events leading to Rousseff's impeachment is subject to speculation. What is significant here is that a leader's relationship with media can curtail their effectiveness and even their political longevity.

Clearly, leaders in the present age must take into account the considerable

power that mass communication, in the role of gatekeeper, exerts by "controlling

what messages reach the public," by manipulating "message content and volume,"

and by converting formal leaders in the industry into "opinion leaders" (Crespi 67).

As friend or foe, it regularly exercises persuasion or dissuasion in the framing of

events. This is evident in Chile, where social media has been used not only to present

issues but also to shape their interpretations. This achieved positive results for the

Chilean student movement, which, according to Camila Vallejo, "is permanently

connected to other student movements, principally in Latin America, but also in the

world" (qtd. in Wilson). As a main agent of student mobilization, Vallejo counted in

excess of 300,000 followers on her Twitter account (Wilson). Based on the ability to

shape social imaginaries by the selective inclusion or exclusion of information

directed at and shared by a cyber community, communication vehicles such as

Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs qualify as the type of opinion-forming associations set

forth by Jürgen Habermas. Andrew Chadwick's comments expand on this

connection:

> [The Internet] potentially allows previously marginalized or even new
> parties to emerge and compete with established players or perhaps
> facilitates nonparty or even antiparty political movements. Parties and
> candidates . . . may bypass traditional media altogether or may use
> alternative spaces on the web to try to influence the mainstream
> media's framing of events. (148)

Vallejo explains how the use of Twitter, an optional "alternative" space,

became an advocate for Chilean student demands: "the public understood that we

were not just students who fought for our own interests and that the youth is also part

of the process of a much greater social transformation that involves the rest of

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society" (qtd. in Franklin, *They Tried*). The Habermasian "public sphere" is comprised of "private persons" assembled to discuss matters of "public concern" or "common interest" that functions as an "institutional mechanism for 'rationalizing' political domination by rendering states accountable to (some of) the citizenry" (Fraser 58-59). Another key feature that ties the Chilean student movement to this concept is that "however limited a public may be on its empirical manifestations at any given time, its members understand themselves as part of a potentially wider public" (67). I believe that a "cyber assembly" with these goals in mind meets the criteria for "public sphere." To press the point, by 2011 entire families joined the ranks of student protestors, as well as citizens that had no history of prior political activity (Pousadela 691). This not only exposed the Chilean government to scrutiny, evaluation and criticism by Chileans but also to scrutiny, evaluation and criticism by a global community.

There were additional political applications of technology. In the 2011-2012 mobilization, "the Internet was both a protest scenario and a combat weapon," when it was used both to recruit support and to hack into and disable "several Minister of Education websites" (Pousadela 693).[175] This form of dissent has provoked debate about "hacktivism" as an act of justifiable civil disobedience (Chadwick 129-34). The brave new world of E-campaigning, E-democracy, E-government, E-mobilization, and E-rule making has given birth to "subaltern counterpublics," defined as "discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate

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[175] In August 2011, the student movement reverted to a pretechnology strategy used by the previous generation: they reenacted the banging of pots employed in the Allende and Pinochet eras (Pousaleda 691).

counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser 67).[176] A complete probing of emerging relationships between technological forms of communication, public spheres, and politics is beyond the scope of this study but a recognition of these developments is essential to an understanding of the political mindset that Bachelet encountered upon her return to Chile in 2013, and its impact on her political methods from 2014 forward.

The revelation that student movements in Chile "have deployed their status as a generation without direct experiences of the dictatorship or the transition to articulate a version of democracy that has questioning, critical engagement with politics at its heart" (Grugel and Singh 364) inevitably informs Bachelet's governance. By the end of 2011, their mobilization efforts had the support of 89 percent of the population (Cruz 83), "forc[ing] most presidential candidates to offer a new political discourse different from the one that dominated the past 20 years . . . they created new electoral patterns destined to impact the political system in a long-term trajectory" (Zlosilo). This made them a force to be reckoned with as Bachelet began her second term. Indeed, the conclusion that "public protest in Chile has been quite successful at accomplishing legal and policy changes" (Grugel and Singh 300) would indicate that the *gobierno ciudadano* so passionately promoted by Bachelet during the first campaign has arrived. Paradoxically, citizens accomplished the desired results of citizen participation by orchestrating their own version of *gobierno*

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[176] For a detailed discussion of these E-groupings, see Andrew Chadwick's *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.

ciudadano, albeit outside the parameters that Bachelet envisioned. Contrary to notions that mobilizations were and are headed by radicals with little or no desire to enter the mainstream political processes, four former leaders of the student movement won seats in the 2013 parliamentary elections: Camila Vallejo, Karol Cariola, Giorgio Jackson, Gabriel Boric. Vallejo and Cariola are females. Although these members have worked in cooperation with the president and her party, Nueva Mayoría, this does not represent categorical loyalty to Bachelet and her party (Zlosilo). They and their constituencies remain circumspect, pending Bachelet's "ability to emancipate from her role as a 'marionette' of the leaders of the left alliance" (Zlosilo).

In the new democracy, Bachelet must engage with an informed citizenry connected to a much larger human community via technology. Bachelet's 2004 campaign worked this to advantage by establishing a blog and framing Bachelet as the progressive choice. Bachelet's speech editor Francisco Javier Díaz described the importance of capturing the vote of the 25 to 28 year-old population: "hubo que recuperar algo así como lo 'cool' que era Michelle Bachelet, una mujer presidenta y algo de matiz internacional, global, de emprendimiento, dejando a Piñera como el político más tradicional" (qtd. in Gerber 52). As demonstrated by the student movement's success with the recruitment of a wide range of sympathizers, technology can diminish social barriers:

> Online forms of interaction have an intrinsically egalitarian quality usually absent from the real world. This is due to the fact that traditional signs of social inequality—particularly gender, ethnicity, and age, but also regional accents and physical disabilities—are hidden from participants in a predominantly textual environment. Cyberspace, it is maintained, is not tarnished by the forms of prejudice that proliferate in visual culture. (Chadwick 26)

The argument that many indicators of inequality are not overtly evident in Cyberspace has its limitations. These "discursive arenas are situated in a larger societal context that is pervaded by structural relations of dominance and subordination," where the ability of all "interlocutors to deliberate as social peers" is highly improbable (Fraser 65). As Nancy Fraser elaborates, the selection of and response to specific topics, and the opinions endorsed or challenged essentially characterize the participant. This modifies the egalitarian aspect proposed by Andrew Chadwick. Additionally, it cannot be assumed that public opinion surveys are completely objective instruments of measurement. Paul Rutherford flags responses to public opinion surveys as acts that "can actually fashion the opinion," depending on what the questions are, how they are stated, and the characteristics of respondents (Soules). These are all important considerations for evaluating performances of political leaders, male or female.

The capacity of technology to disseminate information is invaluable to the messenger but the evaluation of information can be problematic for both the messenger and the receiver. Referencing work by Giovanni Sartori on video "marketing," Gerber concludes that "la era de la nueva política videoplasmada no resulta positiva para uno de los objetivos esenciales de las democracias, que es la comprensión de los problemas" (68). The extent to which this holds true in Chile is difficult to determine but any degree of its validity would question whether the expectations of the electorate take into full account all factors surrounding a given issue. Information is malleable material. There is concern that many people "may not be aware that Chilean media sometimes shows only a one-sided version of reality,"

due to the fact that major newspapers and television channels are owned and operated by entities that tend toward the center-right, politically (Zlosilo).[177] The same author notes that while the center-right employs this kind of media, the left makes more use of "online newspapers and social networks to create critical counter-opinions" (Zlosilo). If election outcomes in Chile are any indicator, it appears that the latter is more effective. Data from a study in the United States on the relationship between Internet use and politics shows that "Internet use patterns more strongly influence trust in people and civic participation than do uses of traditional media, print, and broadcast media, particularly among the youngest adult Americans" (Shah et al. 491). It is unlikely that young adult Chileans differ greatly in this respect from their counterparts in the United States.

The salient feature is that the virtually unchecked flow of information carries the potential to make or break political candidacies and administrations. Bachelet has received support and opposition, praise and criticism from Chilean and international media. Her administrations have utilized interviews, televised addresses to the Chilean public, and the website *Prensa Presidencia* to facilitate communication between the governed and the governing. The website gives Chileans access to current events, news releases, photographs, videos, discourses, the presidential agenda and a hashtag link, *#PresidenciaALDIA*. Taking into account Bachelet's position on controversial issues, I conclude that Bachelet's governance is not constrained by public opinion even though she is informed by it.

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[177] In Chile, television advertising is provided free of charge to candidates, but cannot be funded by the candidates themselves. Advertising through radio, newspapers, billboards, Internet, etc., can be funded by candidates (Boas 20).

The remaining part of this chapter narrows the focus to more specific evaluations of Bachelet's performance in light of the expectations of the Chilean electorate. As previously established, Bachelet was no stranger to centers of power prior to her elections. She held two ministerial positions under Lagos and served as director of UN Women, yet surprisingly little political gravitas is assigned to these accomplishments in Chilean commentary. Prior to the 2013 election, mayor of Providencia Josefa Errázuriz may have had these credentials in mind when she stated: "Chileans will not bother to vote for celebrities . . . They want clear options on social change and commitment to a manifesto" (qtd. in Paranagua).[178] Carolina Tohá, mayor of Santiago, enumerated the list of issues related to social change that Bachelet would have to confront in the event that she won the second bid: "We need to make the presidential election a plebiscite for a programme on education, taxation, energy and political reform" and added that party coalitions "no longer represent the country" (qtd. in Paranagua). If these voices accurately represent the Chilean population as a whole, social change and specific reforms are the prime objectives for the 2014-2018 presidential term.

In the first election, Bachelet captured the imaginary with a focus on gender parity, "[un] intento decidido por avanzar en la agenda de derechos de las mujeres [sin] precedentes" (Mora and Ríos 142). In review, her initial cabinet appointments achieved parity but soon forfeited it with subsequent reformulations. At the end of the first term, performance reviews were mixed. In a 2009 survey (VI Encuesta Nacional

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[178] Van Zoonen references Schwartzenberg's claim that the "only feminine model of celebrity available to women in politics would be that of the mother, tying into myths of femininity as nurturing and caring" (292). Part of the Bachelet appeal emanates from her assigned status as symbolic mother.

de la Corporación Humanas) conducted with Chilean women, 80.3 percent stated that

women gained more rights under the Bachelet governance compared to previous

administrations (Ramil and Leal 146). In spite of those gains and taking into account

additional data, the authors remain unconvinced that Bachelet's first term put into

effect the deep transformations needed to give female aspirants barrier-free access to

political landscapes:

> Michelle Bachelet, más que ser un agente transformador, se convirtió
> en el símbolo del cambio, concentrando en su persona el género como
> elemento distintivo y de igualdad . . . Si bien hubo avances en materias
> concretas, éstos no fueron suficientes para generar un verdadero
> cambio a nivel político, que posibilitara una presencia significativa de
> mujeres en cargos de representación política así como
> transformaciones estructurales que, a nivel económico y social,
> permitieran revertir su condición de subordinación. (152)

Whether expectations are realistic or not, female leaders suffer greater

consequences where "a deep trust in their capacity to fix difficult situations can give

room to sharper disappointment if in the end they are not able to achieve what they

promised" (Campus 49). Moreover, failures on the part of male leaders do not deter

the populace from voting for men in subsequent elections but the relative novelty of

female heads of state places them in a context of almost zero tolerance. At the onset

of Bachelet's first term, Chilean political scientist Rossana Castiglioni warned that

Bachelet's emphasis on women's issues did not imply a "gender-based agenda" and

that "women might be expecting a series of changes that aren't necessarily going to

transpire" (qtd. in Ross, *Bachelet*). Politically, "sharper disappointment" translates as

loss of support from the electorate.

In the second governance, Bachelet had to arrive with an innovative approach

and an aggressive agenda as antidotes to a pervasive cynicism among the populace.

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Two days before the 2013 reelection, Chilean professor Robert Funk advised that in order to meet the electorate's high expectations, Bachelet would have to produce results within "six months or a year" in the areas of "constitutional reform, . . . political reform, tax reform and judicial reform," concluding that, "In Chile, it's not that easy to do these things" (qtd. in Fison). Her declaration to "enact multi-dimensional change so far-reaching and interdisciplinary in scope and extensions that she called it a coordinated array of 'policies that change cultures' " (Benedikter et al. 2) appeared more fictitious than real. As of 2016, the reality is that several anticipated reforms have been achieved or are in the final stages of approval. Still, many Chileans are not satisfied. In an unsolicited response to Bachelet's loss of public support, some six thousand women signed and delivered a letter of appreciation to Bachelet. At the same time, they voiced frustration with "la deslealtad de quienes le pidieron volver y ahora le dan la espalda" and criticized the press for ignoring her accomplishments while highlighting the shortfalls ("Miles"). The discord described here is not necessarily rooted in gender bias: "in a complex, heterogeneous society, collective opinion will normally not be dominated by a single point of view but by opinion competition and conflict" (Crespi 143).

5.8 Practicing Politics in Enigmatic Chile

To some observers—"politicians, scholars and citizens" (Camila Jara 32)—Chilean cynicism is puzzling given the hard data. Under the first two democratic governances (1989-2000), economic growth in Chile was twice that of any country in Latin America, Chile received top marks for the "quality of its institutions, rule of law

and its governability in Latin America," and, in 2013, was named the "best country in which to be born in Latin America" (29). In 2011, life expectancy reached 79, a number slightly higher than those for some developed nations. That same year, the poverty rate dropped from 38.8 to 14.4 percent, and the following year saw the literacy rate reach 97.8 (P. Meyer). The World Bank report for "ease of doing business" gave Chile top rank in South America in 2015. The unemployment rate in May 2015 was 6.1 percent compared to 9 percent in the United States and 21.7 in Spain (*Index Mundi*, 2015). Chile has been awarded status as the "only *full democracy* in Latin America, along with Costa Rica and Uruguay" (Camila Jara, 29-30). The previous Lagos administration enjoyed a 70 percent approval rating and Bachelet exited with over 80 percent (30).

Two commissions, the Rettig and the Valech, actively pursue war criminals of the regime: "Some seventy of Pinochet's top military men—including Manuel Contreras, former director of DINA, the secret police—are currently serving lengthy prison sentences for crimes that include murder, torture and the disappearances; approximately 800 others have been indicted or are being legally investigated" (Kornblut). Cath Collins of the Human Rights Observatory praises Chile's progress as "one of the most active and complete records of judicial accountability anywhere on the continent, and perhaps in the world" (qtd. in Kornblut). A Life Satisfaction Survey covering the period 2007 to 2012 found that of non-European countries, Chile

and Mexico registered the greatest improvement; Chileans report higher life

satisfaction levels than the OECD average (Fron et al. 133).[179]

As early as 2013, Marcela Ríos concluded from a UN study: "Of all its

Millennium Development Goals, Chile has met most. The only ones that won't be

met by 2015 are those related to gender equality: access to power, the pregnancy rate

of teens" (qtd. in Bodzin). Speaking after the fact, the implementation of gender

quotas in 2015 can over time improve access to power for women. If the abortion law

is approved, the pregnancy rate of teens could decline. This would complete the list of

goals referenced by Ríos. In 2016, Chile ranked 21st out of 174 countries for levels of

corruption, the lower numbers corresponding to lower levels of corruption

(Benedikter et al. 5). By comparison, this ranking exceeded those of Austria, France,

Portugal, and Spain, to name a few (5). In the wake of recent corruption scandals,

measures have been taken to investigate and prosecute those involved, with no

exceptions made for members of the Bachelet family.

And yet, Chileans remain discontented. In 2010, under the right-wing

administration of Sebastián Piñera, the most aggressive manifestations of public

revolt in twenty years erupted, "exchanging a previously subdued scenario for one of

large-scale, constant protest, riots and violent demonstrations" (Camila Jara, 30-

31).[180] By 2011, the *New York Times* dubbed this period the "Chilean Winter"

(Wilson). In this environment, "Chilean civil society went from a top-down oriented

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[179] OECD stands for Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, an entity that monitors social indicators of 34 democracies.
[180] The statement that "analysts have characterized the Piñera government as resembling more a fifth Concertación administration than anything radically different" (Shifter 111) lends logic to the discontent with Piñera but makes the Bachelet reelection less decipherable.

transition to one in which citizens took control of the public agenda, defining which issues were given top priority" (Camila Jara, 32). As Bachelet and the Chilean public continue to negotiate their relationship in what I consider an experimental phase, there may be more accommodations and adjustments to her leadership style. Criticisms of her method of making "commissions" to elicit feedback instead of "decisions" as a means to establish unquestionable authority continued to plague the initial period of the second term. One expert in organizational behavior assessed this as a country's "political immaturity" that has not yet comprehended a "female style of leadership"' (qtd. in Balch). A more autonomous approach has also met with disapproval: "While Bachelet was criticized during her first term for exaggerated rounds of dialogue to define laws, she is now criticized for eschewing them altogether" (Benedikter et al. 10). In my opinion, many features of Bachelet's leadership style do not originate so much from gendered behavior as they do from Bachelet's medical training. For comparison, an assessment of Gro Harlem Brundtland's governance,[181] also a trained physician, states that "her approach to designing policy involved building teams of well-qualified people, and gathering facts and expertise presented from as many viewpoints as possible in order to identify weaknesses of reasoning or logic" (Henderson 62). In any case, changes in leadership style have been noted as Bachelet strives for equilibrium in the midst of inconstant circumstances.[182]

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[181] Brundtland served three separate terms as Prime Minister of Norway; she was the first female to occupy that position, and, ironically, also held a post with United Nations.
[182] Bachelet's gender does not create an added vulnerability in this respect. Piñera, caught "off balance" by the scope and strength of the demonstrations, initiated

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5.9 A Feminist Performance in (Sometimes) Hostile Territory

The following segment continues the discussion of Bachelet's leadership style with a more specific analysis of how it correlates to findings by Srilatha Batliwala (2010). Batliwala draws from multiple resources to "document both the strengths and successes of feminist leadership development so far, as well as the ambiguities, dilemmas and silences about its limits and shortcomings" (3).

Feminist leaders "place changes in gender power relations at the center" and "see gender justice and social justice as interconnected" (Batliwala 65). Bachelet's platform has given substantial attention to gender inequality, women's rights and empowerment, the provision of evenhanded educational opportunities to all socioeconomic sectors with the express goal of reducing poverty and increasing productivity, and to quality of life for the aging. She has also taken steps to build relationships between Chile and other countries of the region, and between Chile and an international clientele.

Feminist leaders display "incredible agility and resilience" and must be habile "strategists and negotiators" (65). They engage in "risk-taking" to accomplish goals "because each step forward creates new and sometimes graver challenges or backlash" (Batliwala and Rao 34). To date, the Bachelet administration has experienced several setbacks, yet Bachelet maintains a public face of optimism. As already stated, she has undertaken and accomplished major reforms considered by many to be impossible missions.

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electoral reform to "rejuvenecer la democracia", in the face of "una pérdida de confianza" and a "distanciamiento entre los ciudadanos y las instituciones" ("Piñera").

Feminist leaders self-identify as "people at the vanguard of a broader process of change" and lead "through consultation, participation and consensus-building" (Batliwala 66). This approach acknowledges the "value of the collective and multi-layered leadership," with a "sharing of power and responsibility" in lieu of a "lone ranger" model (Batliwala and Rao 34). The Chilean context still appears resistant to this particular approach, leading to the conclusion that its time has not yet come in Chile. Journalist Oliver Balch finds that Chileans view these "signs of progressive leadership" as "evidence of dillydallying." The complaint that Bachelet "makes commissions, not decisions" is addressed in a previous section of this chapter (Balch). Additional commentary faults her "por resistirse en un comienzo a formar un 'commando' tradicional, con un " 'generalísimo' o 'generalísima,' por no hacer discursos en el tono tradicional y hablar con una racionalidad distinta" (Montaner 182).

This does not indicate that Bachelet has chosen an inferior model. It does indicate that implementation of a different model in the Latin American context poses a potential "double bind" on two fronts. First, when men adopt the anticipated assertive postures, they are assessed as men of "carácter;" when women adopt them, they may be assessed as "histéricas" (Montaner 184). This makes it likely that Bachelet would have been equally criticized for attempting a highly masculinized posture had she taken the "generalísima" approach. Second, the pursuit of change inevitably provokes resistance. The management of opposition involves a careful evaluation of both short- and long-range costs and benefits. In other words, where negotiation with opposition is unsuccessful, Bachelet has less than ideal options:

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postpone the pursuit of change until receptivity improves, stand ground and possibly forfeit support, or abandon the proposal altogether.

Feminist leaders are "introspective and critical about their own leadership and the failings or shortcomings of . . . their organizations" (Batliwala 67). Sufficient emphasis has been given to the fact that Bachelet assumes ownership of her mistakes. During the 2015 APEC summit, her advice to young female students in Quezon City stressed the value of transparency: "In any field, not only in politics, if you are a leader, you should stop thinking that you are a superwoman. You should acknowledge that you need help . . . Go to the field and talk to people, listen to your advisers, especially on things that are not working well" (qtd. in Marcelo). Additionally, feminist leaders "create innovative organizational structures and governance practices" (Batliwala 67). Bachelet has created and developed several agencies (some mentioned in this study) to address specific concerns that existed prior to her presidencies and some that have surfaced during them.

I reserve the remainder of this discussion for a more complex aspect of feminist leadership, that of the "the empowerment and transformation of men" (67). The very concept of empowering men appears at odds with the objective of gaining power for women but it cannot be assumed that all men are equally empowered. For Bachelet, the empowerment of men is not a win-lose proposition. She considers the well being and future development of Chile a joint project where contributions from both genders are essential components.

> It's about everyone being committed to advancing a world that's better for all, for women and girls and for men and boys. A world where everyone can achieve their potential is the best world for everyone . . .

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> we also need more men on board telling the world how important
> gender equality is . . . So we can ensure that men and women are
> convinced that gender equality is essential, not only because it is the
> right thing to do but it's also the smart thing to do. (Bachelet,
> *Interview With*)

Although gender equity has remained a central focus of her agenda, she acknowledges that Chilean society continues to reinforce stereotypes linked to *machismo* (Marcelo). Furthermore, the notion that reinforcement originates exclusively with the male gender is erroneous: "The M of machismo begins with the M of mother" (Balch). As stated in the previous chapter, women can make "their own glass ceiling" by reinforcing and promoting behaviors that nourish *machismo* (Balch).

Bachelet exhibits an awareness of *machismo* as a social construct even though it was absent from her familial context: "My father respected and admired my mother and was a person who was always standing by my side, encouraging me to do more and believed in my capacity . . . I was not born in a home where there were stereotypes" (Bachelet, *Interview With*). In spite of her father's status as a military general, he shared the household chores (*Michelle*). Bachelet names the guiding principles of her upbringing as "justice, respect, dignity, and duty" (*Michelle*). A recognition that this was an atypical upbringing has spurred her advocacy on behalf of women: "Nos ha costado muchísimo a las mujeres hacer retroceder al machismo en todos los ámbitos—y no diría que está resuelto—, muy especialmente en éste, en el ámbito de lo político" (Bachelet, *Democracia* 6). A political gaffe committed by Piñera at a 2011 summit in Mexico illustrates the point.[183] After posing the question about the difference between a politician and a lady, he continued with: "When a

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[183] Piñera served as president of Chile from 2010 to 2014.

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politicians says 'Yes', he means 'maybe', when he says 'maybe', he means 'No', and if

he says 'No', he's not a politician. When a lady says 'No', she means 'maybe', when

she says 'maybe', she means 'Yes', and if she says 'Yes', she's not a lady" ("Chile

Politicians"). This brought significant backlash from international media and female

politicians. Chilean senator Ximena Rincón called the remarks "prehistoric and sexist

. . . an affront to women and an embarrassment for this country, in terms of gender

politics, they set us back some 20 years" ("Chile Politicians"). Former minister Laura

Albornoz advised that President Piñera should "recognize his mistake, as such

remarks send a contradictory signal about the defence of the rights of women"

("Chile Politicians").

Assessments vary widely as to the impact of the Bachelet presidency on the

preponderance of *machismo*. A pronouncement that Bachelet's election signaled "a

leap forward for woman in one of the world's most machista societies" (Vogler,

Chile's) evokes imagery of man's first steps on the moon. There is merit in the claim

that "en pocos años, una región conocida por su secular machismo parece que se ha

convertido en la vanguardia de la igualdad entre sexos, por lo menos en la cúspide del

poder político" (Marugán and Durá). But do these declarations represent reality?

Lagos finds a degree of "hypocrisy" in the fact that 80 percent of Latin

Americans have no problem with the participation of women in politics as long as

men maintain control of economic matters (qtd. in Romero, *On Election*). Analysts

Susana Seisdedos and María Luisa Gascón also address this "under-the-radar"

practice of *machismo*. Evangelina García's publication on the political participation

of women in Venezuela describes a similar mindset. Political parties include women

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to "dar una cierta imagen de modernidad," but it is "una inclusión ficticia que equivale a una exclusión real, mediante el empleo de mujeres simbólicas en un intento de ser políticamente correctos, pero que no cambian la supremacía masculina" (Seisdedos and Gascón 154). A discounting of this assessment is countered by commentary from Chilean women in municipal leadership: "la hegemonía masculina en las élites del poder partidario tiende a reforzar la práctica de utilización de mujeres como monedas de cambio en las negociaciones de los pactos o como aspirantes 'simbólicas' a la representación de zonas sin potencial de elegibilidad" (Carrera and Ulloa 84). Their commentary coincides with Claudia Bucciferro's interviews conducted among Chilean women after Bachelet's first term: "Bachelet's election enabled the beginning of a debate about whether Chile was still a traditional society. But by the time her term ended, feminism continued to be a sad word and most women I talked to didn't really feel empowered" (*For-get* 56). Whether or not a repeat of these interviews at the end of Bachelet's second term (2018) would reveal any changes in perspective holds great potential for future research.

The perspectives of Bucciferro's interviewees represent only one of many facets. A comparison of sociopolitical attitudes among women in Argentina, Uruguay, Brasil, and Chile in the late nineties offers a baseline for what may represent transformations in gender perceptions in the twenty-first century. In response to statements about women's roles—that it is better that women concentrate on the home and [support] a man's work, that a woman should obey her husband, and that a harmonious home with healthy children is what gives the most happiness to a woman—Chile scored the highest in each category, indicating agreement (Braun

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570). These results are attributed to "la creencia en una jerarquía entre los sexos que implica la obediencia de la mujer al marido . . . es entre los chilenos donde aparece un mayor porcentaje de actitudes contrarias a la igualdad entre los sexos" (570). When participants categorized themselves as modern, traditional, or inconsistent, Chilean women scored the highest percentage as traditional (41.5%) and the lowest percentage as modern (31.4%) (571). Traditional women felt that democracy could sow seeds of disorder and disorganization, that military governments were more efficient, and that only the educated should run for office (572). Chileans scored the highest percentage for those opposed to female political participation; interestingly, more women than men in Chile agreed that women should not participate in politics but it must be taken into account that these women, classified as "amas de casa," do not represent the category of professional or employed women (571). Additional data on societal attitudes in Chile and Argentina in the nineties convey a view of women's political participation as " 'cosa sucia' y por lo tanto como un lugar no propicio para una mujer que cuide su 'imagen' o reputación" (Mengo 200). This undoubtedly functioned as an effective deterrent to women's involvement in some sectors and further ensured, for a time, that men would remain the primary political actors.

More recent discourse on the topic takes the optimistic view that "despite a lingering culture of machismo, society increasingly values women's work outside the home and views women as capable political leaders" (Schwindt-Bayer 34). Mengo indicates that female political participation had attained respectability in 2009:

> las mujeres han pasado a ser coprotagonistas de la vida pública, en los partidos y movimientos sociales, en los procesos electorales y en los ámbitos de poder. Y su incorporación ha producido en la política, al igual que en el conjunto de la sociedad, la revolución más importante

del siglo XX. La sociedad no es la misma y el lugar de la mujer en esa sociedad tampoco. (202)

The outcome of that revolution is now both visible and credible. In the 2005 election, Bachelet captured almost equal percentages of male (53.7) and female (53.3) votes, thus indicating no disproportionate bias on the part of male voters (Navia, *Living* 316). Credit is due to Bachelet's campaign platform that interfaced solidly with the expectations of voters. Postelection, her *Estoy Contigo* government initiative acknowledged those expectations: "Chileans . . . want to have more regional and local identity, more decentralization of power, authorities that are close to them and more participation" (Navia, *Living* 317).

I conclude by bringing the discussion full circle. In response to a "crisis of confidence" in May 2015, Bachelet opted for a vertical style more akin to what Marugán and Durá define as an "alpha male" approach by firing and reappointing an entire cabinet. Journalist Paul Vera accentuates the significance of that action: "This is a very broad political crisis, from right to left. It's not about Bachelet, it's all the politicians. There is an overall lack of confidence in institutions" (qtd. in Watts, *Chile*). I propose that within this state of affairs, Bachelet is no more or no less vulnerable than any other leader in the region. The new age of politics could create a more level playing field, where the larger challenges are increasingly less gender-specific and experienced in analogous ways by leaders of both genders. The comparison of regional female and male leadership performance ratings in the first part of this chapter established that both have reaped similarly low levels of disapproval. With this in mind, I predict that future political leaders in Latin America will find themselves accountable to a more assertive electorate under conditions that

operate independently of gender. This is part of the journey towards assimilation into

and identification with a global context:

> The waning of unstable ideological politics and the move toward greater pragmatism and moderation mean that the old ways of seeing and talking about Latin America need an overhaul. Increasingly, the region is behaving politically much like other parts of the world, where standards of performance and effectiveness are decisive in determining electoral choices and outcomes. (Shifter 120)

Should this be the outcome, Bachelet will have the last word: "History is full of

realities that were once thought to be impossible" ("Berkeley"). Given Chile's past

and present, this could prove exceptionally true for one of the "most dynamic, yet

enigmatic nations in the hemisphere" (Strong *ix*).

CONCLUSION

THE EXECUTIVE POWER OF A WOMAN: LESSONS FROM THE BODY
POLITIC

*Some leaders will come forth from our multitude of women . . . Chile will someday
choose a woman to be the President of the Republic.*

—Gabriela Mistral, 1932

C.1 Lessons From the Body Politic

This study examines the relationship between one female executive—

Michelle Bachelet—and the sociopolitical context from which she emerged and in

which she governs. In the first chapter, I argue that an etiological approach, instead of

a strictly symptomatic one, is needed to complete a holistic evaluation of that

relationship. To that end, specific historical push-pull factors were located. Over long

time, these effected the kinds of social transformations that could stimulate

receptivity to the election of a female head of state with an unconventional backstory

in a context deemed incompatible with that prospect. Those factors include early

emphasis on the education of Chilean females, advocacy on the part of male

leadership and governance, the urgency for effective forms of female activism created

by the collective trauma of the Allende and Pinochet periods, and the transnational

exchange of ideas about female status from the nineteenth century forward. In the

aggregate, these have impacted female identity and empowerment, providing a segue

for the emergence of female political leadership. Based on those discussions, I

propose that a reasonable interpretation of the Bachelet Phenomenon requires an

excavation of the historical residue embedded in the transition of Chilean women to full citizen status and political integration. Additionally, the exceptionalities detected in the Chilean case recognize that while many developments in regional and global political landscapes display similarities, their topographies do not.

Current research on leadership and gender studies provides the basis for an analysis of Bachelet's performance as head of state, with comparisons made to a broader context. My findings confirm that the political climate in Chile is undergoing change, and more radically in some institutions than in others. Evaluations of the dynamics of that change occur throughout this work. Based on those evaluations, I suggest that the value of this study not only resides in its interpretation of how the Bachelet presidencies evolved but also in its consideration of crucial factors that may impact electoral outcomes in the future. Clearly, a fuller comprehension of current electoral behavior must play a vital role in the shaping of campaign strategies and candidacies going forward.

The following observations summarize the dynamics at work in the relationship between the Chilean body politic and the emergence of the Bachelet Phenomenon and Bachelet presidencies. Regrettably, the scope of this study does not allow a full exploration of the application of these observations across cultures. An exploration of that category could expand on this research and clarify to what extent diverse political environments experience similar challenges and transformations at this point in time.

Within the Chilean context, my first observation is that gender was not the primary determinant in the election of Michelle Bachelet in 2005. The analyses

encountered by my research, along with recent electoral outcomes across the globe,

sustain the view that the advancement of female empowerment does not

unequivocally secure the female vote for a female candidate. A reduction of the

female vote to an act of gendered solidarity denies its complex nature.[184] That

complexity resides in the fact that "a homogeneity to the female experience" does not

inform the female vote any more than a parallel condition informs the male (Tyre).[185]

For example, in some demographics, the novelty of a female executive may not

represent a significant challenge to the status quo (Schow). Surveys conducted in the

United States indicate that younger female millennials born into a world largely

perceived as egalitarian "feel even less gender identity than their older peers"

(Holtzman) and reject the idea of a female head of state as "necessary to advance

women" (Schow).[186] The debate surrounding the function of *machismo* in

contemporary Chilean society makes it difficult to determine to what degree young

Chilean women perceive their world to be egalitarian. Yet, the narrow gender gaps

for the 2005 Chilean election could indicate similar attitudes about how expectations

for the improvement of women's status are impacted, or not, by a candidate's gender.

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[184] The 2016 election in the United States demonstrates that strategizing the vote based on gender can be counterproductive: "Women don't like to be told that they should support Hillary because she's a woman. That's an insult to their intelligence" (Drew).

[185] The discussion in chapter one of unique historical features of female empowerment in Chile emphasizes the absence of a homogeneous female experience across Latin America.

[186] For some, this entails an ideological component: "the insinuation that without a female president women cannot pursue and achieve their dreams is not only false but recalls the ever-condescending liberal attitude toward women: 'We know what women want, even if they do not' " (Bornhorst).

Initially, Bachelet won 47 percent of the female vote and 44.8 percent of the male; in the runoff, she garnered 53.3 percent of the female vote and 53.7 percent of the male (Navia, *Bachelet's*). Admittedly, the totals represent a female electorate in the aggregate, not a specific generation, and they predate the implementation of gender quotas (2015), proportional representation (2015), and the end of compulsory voting in Chile (2012). Nevertheless, the absence of disproportionate percentages between the male and female vote suggests that the twenty-first century body politic requires a more compelling factor for the selection of a leader than the prospect of a female executive. Potential leaders must exhibit an ability to correctly identify and address pressing concerns at the grassroots level. Bachelet's focus on gender equity during her first campaign and administration demonstrates this. In keeping with modified demands, her second administration shifted the focus to tax, education, pension, and constitutional reforms. As stated in chapter three, Chile has changed. It is not enough to correctly identify pressing concerns once for all time. Looking forward, the marketing of female candidates based on personal merit and competence to govern—not on gender, not on feminist solidarity, and not on political networks— poses challenges to campaign strategists and to candidates themselves. It requires an insightful selection and delivery of a relevant message. Ultimately, the hypothesis that Bachelet's first election was heavily influenced by the novelty of a female executive is unsustainable. As chapter four bears out, a growing male support for female candidacies signals a shift in attitudes about their eligibility. In my opinion, eligibility will become increasingly reliant on merit and less on gender alone.

A second observation finds that although research indicates gender solidarity is not a principal motive for women to vote in the aggregate for a female candidate, a female candidate must communicate a degree of solidarity—mutual identity—to the female voter. The establishment of mutual identity with a particular electorate at a given point in time requires that the candidate possess a distinctive combination of personal attributes. For the body politic, the political is personal. The notion promoted by both journalists and academicians that "voters are much less judgmental about the private lives of politicians" is unconvincing (Sherwin).[187] Research conducted in 2008 reveals that "voters can simultaneously hold explicitly egalitarian views about women candidates while also harboring implicit bias against women" (Sanbonmatsu). Votes for female candidates do not eliminate covert biases expressed through opinions about the attire of female leaders, how they manage their households, who is making dinner, the behavior of their children, and where they go on holiday. Author and editor Joanna Williams noted an additional bias at work in the 2016 race for Prime Minister of Great Britain: "Leadsom's explicit statement that motherhood gave her an edge over her rival [Theresa May] was described as "vile", but wanting a woman [May] to act as nanny to an infantilized electorate is seemingly

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[187] As candidate for Prime Minister of the UK in July 2016, Andrea Leadsom received backlash for appearing to frame her motherhood as an advantage over her childless opponent, Theresa May (Hope). A public apology to May followed, as well as Leadsom's withdrawal from the race ("Andrea"). Only days after the election, MP Anne Jenkins employed a maternal metaphor to reference May's governance: "Yes, Nanny, please come and tell us what to do" (qtd. in Baird). One month after May's win, *The Times* published the article *We Need the PM to Become Nanny Theresa*, requesting that May assume the role of nanny to address the problem of child obesity (Foges). The contradictory nature of the "mummy card" is further emphasized by political scientist Christian Delporte's opinion that in Le Pen's campaign "the constant refrains about women and motherhood . . . helped sanitize the party's image to a degree" (Chira).

fine." Previous chapters examine these points in light of the Chilean electorate's

acceptance of Bachelet's nontraditional biographical elements and their identification

with her as an ordinary citizen. These were pivotal conditions for her election.

A third observation affirms that the influence (or interference) of stereotypes

is both a persistent and unreliable predictor of voter behavior. Of importance here are

the much-publicized contradictions created by Bachelet's backstory that represented a

significant departure from the profile of the stereotypical Chilean presidential

candidate. Chapter three demonstrates how to a large degree the contradictions are

resolved by an understanding of conditions, namely internal conflicts, in progress in

contemporary Chilean identity.[188] As recent research (2015) confirms, context had a

role to play: "The circumstances under which voters rely on feminine stereotypes to

evaluate female candidates are highly conditional and depend on the types of

information voters receive over the course of a campaign" (Bauer 705). I believe that

Bachelet's unconventional political profile defied a categorical stereotypification and

reinforced her identification as a change agent. This partly explains the failure of her

opponents to "typecast" her as incompetent based on a masculine model of

leadership.

A discussion of the double bind theory in chapter four reveals how societal

norms penalize both overly masculine and overly feminine profiles based on

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[188] In May 2017, sociologist Nonna Mayer's comment about Le Pen underscored the electorate's growing identification with less traditional social mores: "She is proud of being a mother of three children, living out of wedlock, she has divorced twice. She gives the image of a modern working woman who does politics" (Chira). The similarities between the Le Pen and Bachelet backstories are notable.

assumptions about accepted stereotypes.[189] This discussion facilitates an

understanding of how female executives shape their political persona or, I argue, how

it is shaped for them. Research on the influence of stereotypes has not reached

consensus, and runs the gamut from those who claim they have no effect to those that

believe they generally harm or benefit female candidates (Bauer 691-92). On the

positive side, what appears less ambiguous is that "stereotypes do not always shape

how individuals perceive female candidates" (693).

On the negative, stereotypes will continue to inform societal expectations for

many. This means that until female executives are more common occurrences, they

are less free to create a persona of their choosing. Based on the concept that "much of

executive power derives from what we want from executives" (Duerst-Lahti 18), I

propose that the image of *supra-madre* is not by personal design. It is a construct

forged by the body politic and accommodated by the elected in order to negotiate an

exchange of power. That unofficial sociopolitical contract allows the body politic

opportunity to determine the parameters of that construct, making it incumbent upon

the elected to make the necessary adaptations. In a positive vein, "as women occupy

more leadership positions, the strength of the association between women and

stereotype weakens" (Bauer 705), thus expanding the range of options for how

women shape their political persona.

A fourth observation confirms that unspoken parameters imposed by gendered

expectations linger even as the body politic pursues more progressive views of gender

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[189] Male leaders are commonly afforded greater autonomy by societal norms. The unilateral appointment of ministers by President Lagos went unchallenged by party leaders; when Bachelet followed suit, it was interpreted as a violation of "past practices," meaning that party leaders expected to be consulted (Franceschet 84-85).

equality. Chapter five details the obstacles overcome by Bachelet in the promulgation of landmark reforms. That process has required a more assertive leadership style in the second term and, according to some, has infringed on informal norms. What has remained a constant is Bachelet's concession to gendered expectations. Much like Mistral's appeal to "not burn our femininity in the crater of politics," Bachelet assumed the "risk" to preserve her female identity in her approach to governance.[190] The option also entails risk: females who adopt the "iron maiden" approach can "play into male political stereotypes that voters are rejecting" (Carlin and Winfrey 328). Chapter five addresses the capricious nature of the body politic's gender expectations. At the conceptual level, they may appear to be consistent; at the pragmatic, they can prove to be inconsistent. This dissonance explains why Bachelet's governance has not been without conflict. At times, Bachelet's leadership style is criticized for its authoritarian approach and, at other times, for its failure to function as the "mano dura." In the role of *supra-madre*, she exercises the option to negotiate those expectations as part of the social contract. I propose that her selective compliance with gender expectations has mitigated to a degree the potential for conflict within the political machinery and courted support for her agenda. Kira Sanbonmatsu cites information from the Barbara Lee Foundation that "women candidates are more advantaged by their gender today than in the past" (5), but I add that maintaining that advantage in the postelection period can experience uneven progress.

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[190] The "feminization" of Le Pen's campaign, seen as a "tactical shift," suggested to some that the "French traditional feminism of the left may be ebbing" (Chira). The risk came in the form of female politicians, not male, who "denounce[d] her strategy as opportunistic" (Chira).

Findings support my fifth observation that likability and trust factors are notable liabilities for women (Alter) in their bid for power.[191] This concurs with the data: "success and likability are positively correlated for men and negatively correlated for women" (Sandberg).[192] How, then, did Bachelet's profile as a highly successful woman circumvent the data? Sociologist Marianne Cooper clarifies Sandberg's claim: success is not the core problem. It is how success transfers to behavior: "if a woman acts assertively or competitively, if she pushes her team to perform, if she exhibits decisive and forceful leadership, she is deviating from the social script that dictates how she 'should' behave." Bachelet's likability factor— *cariñocracia*—earned substantial political capital during the Lagos ministries and continued to build during her campaigns and early days of administration. In spite of her unconventional biography, her behavior complied with conventional qualities valued by the body politic: nurturing, maternal, consensus building, trustworthy. These compose a formerly denigrated category of executive leadership referenced in chapter three as emotional intelligence. Here, I suggest that a female leader whose behavior is largely in compliance with gender expectations can negotiate some "minor" violations of that code in her methods without extreme penalty. What Bachelet's image has not been able to reconcile is a major violation of that code—the Caval scandal—even though it was ostensibly beyond her control.

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[191] Reminiscent of Bachelet's designations as "everyday" Chilean and "woman's woman," Le Pen won substantial support from working class women with her image as "strong Everywoman" (Chira).

[192] Sheryl Sandberg is COO of Facebook and founder of the Leanin organization that promotes the advancement and leadership of women in the global workforce.

Bachelet initiated both administrations on a high tide of approval. When natural disasters and economic downturns decelerated the rate at which expectations of the populace were met, and the personal proximity of the Caval scandal eroded citizen trust in the second term, the supply of *cariñocracia* was quickly depleted. Rumors of resignation were discounted, a major cabinet reshuffle took place, and a Presidential Advisory Council on corruption was formed to ameliorate the damages (Engel). Yet, even these measures and the achievement of several groundbreaking reforms failed to restore earlier approval ratings. In August 2016, they sank to 15 percent (Mizrahi). As established in chapter four, approval ratings wield significant power in a political landscape where technology allows a leader's performance to be measured and broadcast at cyber speed, twenty four hours a day, to a global jury. The accuracy of this mode of measurement cannot be addressed within the constraints of this study but there is sufficient literature to raise doubts. Nonetheless, skepticism will not eliminate its use as a tool of evaluation that exercises considerable influence in the present context of social media.

A sixth observation is that the twenty-first century Chilean body politic is characterized by increasing assertiveness, declining confidence in leadership, and chronic discontent. Chapter five confirms that Bachelet has delivered the desired outcome to many of the electorate's demands, yet her poll ratings remain low. To understand Chilean discontent in the face of significant gains requires a view beyond the borders of Chilean experience. Historian Yuval Harari contends that global leaders in the current "broken" political system operate with diminished status and less real power (Harari). In its extreme application, Harari proposes that declaring war

might be easier for a leader than solving the complex issues of inequality. This underscores the arduous path of Bachelet's gender equity reforms, considering that Chile continues to hold first position on the OECD list of the most unequal countries in the world.[193] This prompts the consideration that "heroic leadership rests on the illusion that someone *can be* in control. Yet we live in a world of complex structures whose very existence means they are inherently uncontrollable" (Wheatley and Frieze).

Tangent to a lack of confidence in leadership, the body politic exhibits a growing intolerance for corruption in governance. Demands for a "day of reckoning" in the form of mass protests have replaced inertia (Ghitis). Resignation rumors are not taken lightly. The September 2015 resignation of Guatemalan president Otto Pérez Molina in response to a corruption scandal was immediately followed by a prison sentence: his. This development, noted as "a striking rarity in a country long known for the impunity of its political establishment" (Ahmed and Malkin), has emboldened the electorate. Protesters warned that if Molina's replacement "doesn't hear the things we are saying, we will push him out too" (Ahmed and Malkin). Guatemala is joined by Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Colombia, Argentina, and Chile as governments under fire for violations of citizen trust in various forms (Ghitis; "Latin America;" Miller et al.). Again, Bachelet's Caval scandal is a major downward turning point from which she will not fully recover before her term ends.

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[193] In the top ten, Chile is followed by Mexico, the US, Turkey, Israel, Estonia, the UK, Latvia, Spain and Greece (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Nov. 2016).

My final observation confirms that multiple difference markers can give

candidates an advantage. This was most evident in the first Bachelet election. Chapter

five demonstrates that Bachelet's message, encapsulated as "Yo soy una ciudadana

igual a ustedes," gained the vote because it spoke to the electorate's burning issue of

disenfranchisement and conveyed a sense of shared experience. Politician Rona

Ambrose reinforces the effectiveness of this level of identification: "the more out of

touch you are with regular working people . . . the more you will be rejected" (qtd. in

Cotter).[194] Sanbonmatsu asserts that "A campaign . . . can neutralize the

disadvantages associated with being a woman," and "women candidates work to take

advantage of stereotypes that work in their favor" (4). These combined factors were

evident in the Concertación's marketing of Bachelet's gender to "represent the

embodiment of a new period;" it successfully captured an electoral sector anxious for

change (Ruiz 81). The *Financial Times* establishes the presence of additional

difference markers:

> Many Chilean political analysts . . . have never understood the sources
> of Ms. Bachelet's appeal . . . They have regularly dismissed her and
> her leadership abilities. They did so before the 2005 elections, during
> her four years as president, and continue to do so now. They do so
> because she was never part of the political establishment, she does not
> use their code words and she does not play by their rules ("Chileans").

In politics, exceptionality is a volatile commodity. Three months into the first term,

Bachelet's difference marker of change was compromised when she "was absorbed

by the world to which she was supposed to be immune" (Ruiz 76). To the extent that

the Bachelet administration conforms to the practices of its predecessors, the

differential edge is forfeited. In consideration of this dynamic, I maintain that it is less

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[194] Ambrose also names this as a factor in the Brexit outcome.

difficult to keep that edge sharply defined as an aspirant in a campaign setting; it is far more difficult to do so as an instated head of a political mechanism.

Based on election outcomes in Chile (and other nations) in recent decades, I propose a need to reconceptualize criteria used to predict and interpret the behavior of present-day electorates that seek change even as they simultaneously produce it with increasing momentum.

C.2 Climate Change in *Tierra de hombres*

The twenty-first century has seen an increase in females appointed to top government posts. Referencing chapter three, a decline in party affiliation can accommodate female access to those positions. Chile's steep shift from "having the highest level of citizen identification with parties shortly after the transition, to having the second lowest in the region" (Siavelis, *Bachelet* 47) favors this possibility. At the same time, I find the decline in party affiliation brokers greater influence at the polling station—by favoring the election of an "outsider"—than in actual governance. Elected officials have more to lose by noncompliance with informal norms associated with party mechanisms, even the "petty" ones. By initially discarding the practice of *segundo piso,* appointing a cabinet characterized by gender parity, and assuring that *nadie se va a repitir el plato,* "Bachelet created the worst of all worlds for herself" (53).[195] As seasoned ministers observed, Bachelet needed appointees with "a good

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[195] In Chile, the concept of *segundo piso* involves preferential interaction with an inner circle of advisors closest to the president; *nadie se va a repetir* entails the replacement of entrenched interests, often veteran politicians, with new actors; gender parity is complicated by the *cuoteo*, wherein the president is expected to evenly distribute appointments across all parties in the ruling coalition.

network of connections, . . . recognition, respect, and credibility," as well as knowledge of "how to engage in political battles" (78). The number of females with these qualifications was, and is, limited. An unintended negative consequence to the positive move towards gender parity in cabinet appointments occurred when Bachelet's "autonomy rankled some party leaders, leaving some of her female ministers without party backing when political crises hit" (Franceschet, *Disrupting* 84). This confirms Bachelet's assessment in chapter four that having women in positions of power does not eliminate deep-rooted *machista* elements ("Bachelet Critica").[196] Encoded in that claim is that access to crucial tools of leverage operating through party affiliations requires expert maneuvering of entrenched interests. Rossana Castiglioni's observation that "las instituciones chilenas fueron diseñadas para reproducir el sistema existente, no para procesar transformaciones" accentuates the obstacles to Bachelet's ambitious reform agenda (qtd. in Mizrahi).

This study has examined several conditions that restrain or abet the ascent of women to executive office. Yet, one aspect remains undetermined: do those elections expedite the process for successive female aspirants? Georgia Duerst-Lahti suggests that the appointment or election of women to high profile positions can favor future access for women by "regendering" those positions as not exclusively male (13-14). Duerst-Lahti clarifies that this is not an equivocal exchange: "a female cannot enter a

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[196] Raiesa Frazer, Research Associate at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, confirms the persistence of *machista* culture in the region. As example, she cites a recent magazine portrayal of Marcela Temer, the wife of Brazil's president, as "bela, recatada, e 'do lar' (Beautiful, Maiden like, and "A Housewife")" or, in Frazer's interpretation, "a woman who has nothing else to offer besides the role of a typical household wife, which is clearly not true." Chapter four recalls a preelection reference to Bachelet as a "nice housewife."

post previously held by a male and be entirely interchangeable with him—in meaning at least" (20). I agree that the attainment of a position by a woman redefines what is possible for others to attain but does that, in fact, regender the position? Duerst-Lahti recognizes the tendency to interpret a female performance of a masculinized post in terms of the masculinized standard. I consider this in light of three possible performance scenarios.

First, a female will execute the position in a distinctly gendered (female) way. Second, a female will execute it in a manner identical to a male counterpart. Third, a female will execute it in a different manner, where "different" may or may not be synonymous with "gendered."[197] Each performance contains unspoken variables that impact interpretations. The first option presumes that all males holding that position execute it with such uniformity so as to make a female performance of it the obvious exception to a male norm. The diversity of male leadership styles and the distinct networks of which they are a part make a homogeneous male performance that can serve as the standard unrealistic. Additional complexities emerge. How would the masculinized standard interpret the execution of a post by a male implementing stereotypically female methods? Would this "regender" the position since its performance does not comply with the male standard?

The second option presupposes a similar circumstance: that all males holding that office perform it in the same way. This is contested by possible variations in the performance of a single individual serving more than one term. For example, this

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[197] "Gendered" is used in the sense of conformity to norms.

study establishes that Bachelet adopted a noticeably different leadership style and points of focus in her second term (Waylen, *Comparing*).

The third option requires delineation between "different" and "gendered." I argue that the longevity of politics as a masculine domain without a significant counterpart to challenge makes the association between "different" and "female" unavoidable. But does this account for variables that operate independently of gender? How much of a political performance emanates from the uniqueness of the individual? How much of that uniqueness can be attributed to gender? How much of a performance is shaped by the temporality in which it occurs? How much is constrained by the formal and informal institutions of a sociopolitical context? To what extent is a performance impacted by the skill set that one brings to the position? Even though responses to these questions may reveal less real gender influence than perceptions allow, confirmation bias makes a regendering of criteria for interpreting a political performance untenable.[198] I am convinced that while the election of female executives removes some barriers by presenting new possibilities, those who seek and attain power will continue to confront gender bias in covert, when not overt, ways. At the same time, I am also convinced that we have entered an era when male executives will find themselves increasingly subject to some of the same criteria used by the body politic to evaluate female executive performance.

The preceding section suggests that variables related to gendered expectations for roles obscure a clear reading of executive behavior. Giddens provides an alternative approach where "social systems are not constituted of roles but of

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[198] Confirmation bias is "the seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations, or a hypothesis in hand" (Nickerson 175).

(reproduced) practices." I offer this as a more accurate way to evaluate observable phenomena. The analysis of practices, "regarded as the 'points of articulation' between actors and structures" (Giddens 117), places focus on how the office is performed through the reproduction of or challenges to norms. By way of illustration, I revisit Bachelet's promotion of *gobierno ciudadano*, criticized by the elite for "lowering" the presidency to the level of the masses.[199] Even though it was viewed as weak leadership and a negative reflection on her sex, it did not, in my opinion, regender or devalue the executive office. Instead, it attempted an alternative channeling (or practice) of power. When rising incidences of citizen mobilization appeared to validate the elite's fear that a sense of entitlement among the electorate would lead to social unrest, Bachelet abandoned the rhetoric of power from below in favor of a more conventional approach. This was an undesirable yet predictable outcome. A perspective on organizational behavior by Margaret J. Wheatley acknowledges that

> new leaders must invent the future while dealing with the past . . .
> when crises mount and people feel fearful and overwhelmed, we
> default back to practices that are familiar, even if they are ineffective.
> We want right answers quickly . . . we seldom give adequate time for
> the explorations and failures that are part of mapping a new territory.

Robert Reich's observation that Hillary Clinton was the "most qualified candidate for president of the [existing] political system," but Bernie Sanders was most suited to "create the political system we should have" (Wilz) describes Bachelet's dilemma. In Chile, "continuity and change" have yet to form a peaceable union.

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[199] This produced commentary of a classist nature. Piñera criticized Bachelet for being unduly influenced by "la voz de la calle que normalmente es vociferante, extremista, que no respeta a nada ni a nadie" instead of by "la voz de la gente que es mucho más serena, más profunda, más madura," meaning the middle class (Piñera).

Furthermore, establishing a link between social unrest and Bachelet's gender is complicated by collateral circumstances. Following Bachelet's first administration, mobilizations escalated during Piñera's presidency and, presently, several male presidencies in the region are subject to similar crises where no woman has held the executive position. Whether the crises be "growing pangs" of nations in transition or self-inflicted by deficiencies in leadership (male or female), I do not foresee a devaluation or regendering of the executive office as an outcome. I do support predictions of a further devaluation of political parties, with more independents or "outsiders" as future candidates of choice (Arnson). The announcement of Chilean senator Alejandro Guillier as candidate of the center-left on 7 January 2017 (A. Jara) lends gravitas to my position. He was described in 2016 as the "unexpected darkhorse," an "independent," and a "principled outsider" ("Chilean Presidential"). Following the Bachelet model, he "has painted himself as a change from the status quo and a 'transition' to the next generation," stating intentions to further Bachelet's education and pension reforms (A. Jara).[200] If similar predictions materialize, the potential restructuring of bedrock political structures could greatly impact the attainment of female political power, with the categories of "darkhorse," "independent," and "outsider" favoring access.

In the world of gendered dichotomies, the old model of vertical leadership is associated with masculine styles, the horizontal with feminine, but the social conditions of the twenty-first century have created "un mundo menos jerárquico, más

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[200] The "next generation" refers to former leaders of the student movement currently holding government posts that are too young to run for executive office. Some are named in chapter five.

reticular" (Marugán and Durá 96). As male candidates attempt and gain access to leadership under the same conditions as female aspirants—as outsiders, independents, and newcomers with little or no prior political experience—the hard edges of the dichotomy become less rigid. I propose that contemporary leadership of both genders will draw more freely from both models, depending on the context and issues of the day.

For the moment, old attitudes persist in *tierra de hombres*. In spite of the increasing presence of women in cabinets, ministries, and legislatures, positions occupied by women continue to be viewed by some as squandered opportunities. According to one minister in the Bachelet administration, party leaders consider a key post awarded to a woman as a "lost spot" (Franceschet, *Disrupting* 85). Academician Laura Rohma confirms that "many men still subscribe to the false notion that women's gains are their losses;" in other words, "gender equality is a zero-sum game" (28). Rohma, like Bachelet, is explicit about transforming this view to one of "strategic partnerships between men and women" that benefit the human race at large (32).

The adoption of measures by Bachelet and other leaders to advance female empowerment and gender equality has not dispelled rumors of efforts to discredit female leadership. Rousseff's impeachment, Kirchner's indictment for finance fraud, Bachelet's Caval scandal, Merkel's immigration dilemma, and May's Brexit turmoil fuel suspicions about efforts to magnify the flaws, real or imagined, of female leaders. Jalalzai removes the ambiguity: "It's as if women leaders are getting all of the backlash for the corruption of men" (qtd. in Gilbert). Nonetheless, I would argue that

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the apparent crisis of leadership seems to reach beyond questions of female competency and gender bias. Male counterparts are also subject to backlash, as demonstrated by data in chapter four.

The current state of affairs appears to indicate that the paths of critique directed at political performances of male and female executives both diverge and converge, with a growing trend towards convergence. I suggest that the conflictual climate afflicting more than one government and their constituencies at present is the side effect of a greater ideological identity crisis at the state level. Harari identifies one root problem as "retrograde vision," where governments advocate a return to a prior era of nationalistic strength and security. According to Harari, attempts to manage connections to a global economy using policies and practices of nationalist politics cannot effectively address many of the issues faced by twenty-first century populations.[201] As Bachelet warned the new Egyptian government, the failure of leaders to provide relevant solutions to contemporary problems ultimately threatens their legitimacy. In this century, those problems acquire a global nature that require globally informed solutions.

In the preliminary stage, my research centered on Chile, the Bachelet Phenomenon, and the polemics of female executive power. As the thesis entered the final stage, it became clear that the Bachelet Phenomenon is not an anomaly: it is a microcosmic sample of an emerging global phenomenon that I predict will replicate itself in other nations, as it has most recently in the United States. The causal factors

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[201] British politician Paddy Ashdown observes that global "power is not just shifting vertically, it is shifting horizontally . . . west to east," which impacts an administration's management of international affairs in conjunction with the local.

in progress that are producing similar outcomes within a fairly close time frame are material for further research.

Those causal factors carry the appearance of something entirely new and unprecedented. I restate my position that they are neither. The concept of emergence developed by Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze interlocks with my argument for the cumulative affect of historical processes:

> Change always happens through *emergence*. Large-scale changes that have great impact do not originate in plans or strategies from on high. Instead, they begin as small, local actions . . . if they become connected, their separate efforts can suddenly emerge as very powerful changes" (Wheatley and Frieze).

The same authors implement the metaphor of the perfect storm to demonstrate the power of emergent phenomena as a "result of a number of discrete and often invisible factors converging in perfect synchrony;" taken individually, they do not give the appearance of the power that resides in the "*simultaneity of their convergence*" (Wheatley and Frieze). This study lends substantial support to that concept and makes the rise of the *supra-madre* a plausible outcome.

My findings do not presuppose the rise of another *supra-madre* in the near future in Chile, but recent developments in a global context suggest a weakening of barriers to that possibility. Between July 2016 and May 2017, the UK saw two female candidacies for the office of prime minister, the United States saw its first female candidacy for Head of State, and France saw the second female candidacy for the presidency. On 11 March 2017, Bachelet's coalition Nueva Mayoría declared senator Carolina Goic the Christian Democrat candidate for the Chilean presidential election of November 2017 (Brown). The left-wing party Frente Amplio nominated journalist

Beatriz Sánchez (Castillo). Neither candidate is predicted to win but their party

nominations add to the number of female aspirants for executive office in the region

and worldwide. One German news source proposes an evolving "femokratie," while a

British news source suggests the "dawn of a female world order" (Baird). While

precise interpretations of these developments remain open to debate, at least one is

resolved by Chile's present *supra-madre*: "No hay marcha atrás."

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