Pieper Mooney, Jadwiga E. "On the "F"-Word as Insult and on Feminism as Political Practice: Women's Mobilization for Rights in Chile." *Women's Activism and "Second Wave" Feminism*. By Barbara Molony and Jennifer Nelson. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. 123–146. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781474250542.ch-006>>.

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On the “F”-Word as Insult and on Feminism as Political Practice: Women’s Mobilization for Rights in Chile

Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney

Women’s activism in the first decades of the twentieth century: Fashioning feminist beliefs and cross-class alliances

In 1922, Chilean educator Amanda Labarca addressed her audience at a gathering in the United States and declared that she expected “a new feminist creed” to develop in the Latin American Southern Cone. She envisioned a feminist practice that was “more domestic, more closely linked to the future of the home, the family, and the children” than the “Saxon feminism” marked by the “exaggerated individualism” that she had encountered in the United States.¹ As a student at Columbia University and the Sorbonne, Labarca had come across feminist ideas in New York and Paris. She returned to Chile with the conviction that Chilean women needed a feminist consciousness that originated from their own historical experiences.²

Labarca’s engagement exemplifies the direction of feminine activism within the Chilean elite and middle sectors during the first decades of the twentieth century. Labarca and others promoted education as a key tool to extend the range of political rights and obligations of citizens, and they sought to pave the way for women’s political participation through such organizations as the *Círculo de Lectura* (the Women’s Reading Circle), which Labarca founded in 1915. Educated women, like Labarca, also brought their vision of how to improve society to the *Consejo Nacional de Mujeres* (the National Council of Women), an organization that endorsed an extension of women’s civil and legal rights.³ In 1944, Labarca became the president of the *Federación Chilena de Instituciones Femeninas* (the Chilean Federation of Feminine Institutions, FECHIF) which justified its advocacy for female suffrage and women’s political participation by arguing that women should be both responsible citizens and mothers. The FECHIF followed goals comparable to another women’s organization, the *Movimiento Pro-Emancipación de la Mujer Chilena* (the Movement for the Emancipation of Chilean Women, MEMCh), that lobbied for women’s suffrage but used a different mobilization strategy, discussed below.⁴

In the first decades of the twentieth century, many Chilean female activists prioritized political participation in service of the improvement of family and community life and rejected those feminist projects that sought women's emancipation exclusively for the sake of new individual freedoms. They expected that women who mobilized for political rights would also give adequate attention to motherhood. Women's activism, at times, mirrored benevolent maternal engagement. Indeed, women who sought to expand their political responsibilities often used references to motherhood as a justification for their actions—a pattern that fit what historian Karen Mead succinctly characterized as beneficent maternalism, referring “to any organized activism on the part of women who claim that they possess gendered qualifications to understand and assist less-fortunate women and, especially, children.”⁵ Chilean women employed both religious references as well as the understanding of women's “natural” maternal responsibilities to overcome the institutional hostilities of their patriarchal environment. Roman Catholic religious practice emphasized the view of womanhood as synonymous with motherhood, thereby contributing to the gendered expectations of women's biologically determined qualities as benevolent caregivers driven by compassion. Elite women's beneficent activism in urban settings often consisted of charitable missions aimed at saving poor women who lived difficult lives in a tense urban environment.⁶

In Santiago, Chile's capital city, women engaged in this form of beneficent maternalist activism in such organizations as the Liga de Damas Chilenas (Chilean Ladies' League), which sought to alleviate the alarming consequences of urbanization, industrialization, and modernization. They presented political positions in their publication *El Eco de las Señoras de Santiago* (The Echo of the Ladies of Santiago), claiming that they had to step in where men had failed to protect the proper values of their nation. They claimed to be obliged to get involved in the political process not for their own sake, but for the sake of the fatherland.

Why ... remain cold spectators of the political-religious drama that started to unravel in the Chamber of Deputies ... Because we are ladies? NO. You have declared us unfit to elect representatives of the nation, ... You have excluded us from political meetings ... But you have not sealed our lips, nor can you seal them, AND WE WILL TALK. We have the right to write AND WE WILL WRITE. Yes, we will defend the threatened institutions, the violated religious rights, and the dignity of the tainted fatherland.⁷

The Liga united elite women who sought to resolve their society's problems also by correcting the misguided behaviors of the poor, both men and women. They made it their mission to “uplift” poor women and sought to improve working-class motherhood.⁸

Historian Asunción Lavrin asserts that maternalist activism was quite common not only in Chile but throughout the Latin American Southern Cone, where feminists extended women's role at home to society at large. According to Lavrin, women's “‘innate female qualities’ ... were called forward to serve the general cause of social reform and to validate women's presence in politics. Their presumed ‘higher sensitivity’ to others’ feelings and their higher sense of moral duty were the bases for their claim

to a place in the sun.”⁹ Political scientist Elsa M. Chaney even identified women she called *supermadres*. She coined the term to show that a woman who accepted a political position often defined her own role “as a kind of supermadre, tending the needs of her big family in the larger *casa* of the municipality or even the nation.”¹⁰

Women, as mothers, often expanded the realm of their involvement in politics by accepting multiple tasks outside the home, but in this capacity, they did not eradicate the restrictive effects of the Chilean patriarchy of the time. Women's activism remained situated in a patriarchal society that constrained women's political and economic participation and placed extraordinary restrictions on married women: the Chilean Civil Code secured the uncontested legal authority for male heads of household to control the lives of wives and children. Political leaders rejected proposals to reform the Civil Code to return to women the rights they had lost in marriage; in their view, changing the code would have seriously challenged not only the authority of the *pater familias* but also the entire social order.¹¹

Although they did not seek to overturn the foundations of the patriarchal regime, women nonetheless sought to break old boundaries by challenging those biological determinisms that limited women's political and professional choices. Not all women simply accepted women's “natural” role as mothers. Some contested the biologically determined traditions and simplified gendered binaries that assigned political responsibilities to men and domestic duties to women. In her writing on feminism, Labarca insisted that “not all men have the aptitude for abstract ideas or a vocation for the political struggle; it is the same with women. Modern science has demonstrated that there are no fundamental differences between the two; but rather an immense variety of types among one and the other, happily.”¹²

Individual women's writings offer rich evidence to show the “immense variety of types” of women activists that Labarca defined as a reality of life. In the 1930s, Chilean author and feminist Marta Vergara wrote a memoir in which she exposed the ill-effects of what she considered the misguided biological determinism that limited the choices women could make about their lives. She described her own difficulty with conforming to societal norms and to the culturally prescribed expectation that a wife would obey her husband's rules. She asserted that women had to take action and expressed her support of the extraordinary campaigns of the MEMCh. *Memchistas*, she asserted, adequately addressed the concerns of “women of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat” and confronted issues ranging from “the right to vote to the spread[ing] of methods of contraception among the destitute.”¹³

Memchistas, women, workers, and the political left

In the 1930s, MEMCh became the first women's organization to effectively cross class boundaries, connect the issue of women's rights to the discourse of the political left, and make a case for the expansion of women's rights as citizens. *Memchistas* spoke out for maternalist mobilization as well as the individual rights and responsibilities of women workers, and they helped women gain the right to vote in municipal elections in 1934 and win unrestricted suffrage in 1949.

Memchistas effectively linked issues of motherhood to the needs of working women, taking as their cue the discourse of multiple leftist initiatives.¹⁴ They took up the call for suffrage and demanded the improvement of women's legal status, subjects promoted earlier by such leaders as Luis Emilio Recabarren, founder of the 1912 Socialist Workers' Party (Partido Obrero Socialista), which later became the Communist Party.¹⁵ Both male and female workers participated in actions to improve wages and working conditions, in keeping with socialist and anarchist political agendas. Women workers also formed unions of their own, and male-dominated labor unions relied on the participation of both men and women.

While women workers helped carve out new spaces for women to be leaders and brought feminist positions to labor struggles, working-class feminists did not challenge normative gender roles. Historian Elizabeth Hutchison shows that political elites addressed what they saw as the challenges caused by industrialization and modernization by supporting the growth of an industrial female labor force without compromising fundamental components of patriarchy and the gendered definition of citizenship.¹⁶ Working women sought to improve their labor conditions and challenged some aspects of gender-based discrimination; they contributed socialist feminist critiques of capitalism that significantly strengthened the political presence of the Chilean left, but the transformative power of working-class feminisms was compromised because male-dominated unions and political parties incorporated and marginalized their demands. However, despite the marginalization of feminist claims in some contexts, *Memchistas* could still draw directly on extant notions, presented by leftist parties, of women's rights as mothers' and families' rights.¹⁷

The progressive agenda of the MEMCh emerged within the accelerated climate of mobilization for social reforms in the 1930s and the new channels of political participation provided during the Popular Front period.¹⁸ Starting in 1935, *Memchistas* were most active in Santiago and also maintained a national presence. They followed political developments and legislative proposals, submitted proposals of their own, and provided a regular forum for the discussion of significant and timely questions from a woman's perspective. Addressing the needs of working women with particular urgency, they demanded "equal pay for equal work" as a central ingredient of women's emancipation.¹⁹ *Memchistas* defended women's choices in the labor market and commanded better working conditions for mothers, and they also changed the discourse of women's rights by addressing women as *individual* wage earners.²⁰ The latter helped provide arguments for maternity leave as a woman's *right*, not as a privilege.²¹ From the perspective of *Memchistas*, rights and responsibilities went hand in hand; ergo, national politics should not remain an exclusively male affair.²²

Testing the "F"-word: On "feminist silence" and new paradigms of women's rights

Chilean feminists have often lamented a so-called feminist silence that allegedly ensued in the 1950s, in the aftermath of their successful struggle for the right to vote; ostensibly, this silence was due to a lack of feminist demands that could incite new

rounds of action. Feminist activist Julieta Kirkwood, who coined the term, traced women's activism and found a lack of public engagement as well as an absence of relevant publications by Chilean feminists from the 1950s to the 1970s. Indeed, we find less evidence of publications and activism by organizations that challenged patriarchal gender systems and provided spaces where women organized as women, for women. But we cannot conclude that women withdrew from political participation altogether.²³

Recent studies that trace the history of a women's movement in Chile have examined women's political engagement and feminist activism in the context of traditionally male-dominated political parties and "traditional" political networks. Historian Anna Travis explores the changing roles of women in Chile's political parties from 1950 to 1970 and agrees with Kirkwood's assessment of a change in activist patterns. She confirms that women's diverse ideological and class interests stood in the way of activism comparable to *memchista* mobilization—thus preventing the consolidation of a cross-class and multiparty women's movement. However, Travis also shows that Chilean women hardly "retreated" from politics after gaining the right to vote. Parallel to the contraction in the realm of women's independent organizing, women increased their participation in political parties and mobilized within the system rather than outside of it. We can thus conclude that women consolidated their political presence and adopted new strategies to integrate feminist perspectives into party politics in the 1960s.²⁴

In the 1970s, a key decade of change, we find new feminist practices that are inseparable from the politics of dictatorship. When deaths, disappearances, and human rights violations affected all people in the nation, women defended both practical gender needs and strategic gender interests as they defended their families and protested against the regime. In the process, they helped legitimize feminism as a political practice. Chilean activists also benefited from new international paradigms of women's rights that legitimized feminism as a vehicle for social change.²⁵

Contradictions of patriarchal pacts under military dictatorship (1973–89): From women's resistance to the forging of feminisms

On September 11, 1973, a military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet terminated the democratically elected government of President Salvador Allende and the Unidad Popular coalition. The violence committed by the military junta is well documented in testimonial accounts, international human rights commissions, and, more recently, truth commissions that help support the reconciliation effort in a re-democratizing nation. Arrests, political assassinations, and "disappearances" followed immediately after the coup—and military leaders remained as ongoing threats. The military defended the supreme authority of the regime, as well as patriarchal, authoritarian values, to "save" the nation. The use of violence had gendered dimensions, which also

contributed to the resistance strategies that different groups of women adopted in the course of almost two decades of dictatorship.

The military's effort to consolidate "traditional" gendered expectations proved critical in the formation of the new regime. Its politics revealed quintessential expressions of patriarchal values; in the words of sociologist Maria Elena Valenzuela, "The Junta, with a very clear sense of its interests, has understood that it must reinforce the traditional family, and the dependent role of women, which is reduced to that of mother. The dictatorship, which institutionalizes social inequality, is founded on inequality in the family."²⁶ Officials placed public rhetoric on the family and gendered responsibilities center stage, creating the model of "natural," transhistorical characteristics of family life in service of the nation. First Lady Lucía Hiriart de Pinochet proclaimed that "the family is the basic unit of society. It is the first school . . . , the mold in which the moral character of each citizen is formed, [so that] the Nation is truly the reflection of the hearth."²⁷ Governmental institutions, like Mothers' Centers and the Women's Secretariat, helped consolidate the connection between women's patriotic duties, proper family values, and the fixed, unchanging notion of *family*.²⁸

The new First Lady helped promote feminine virtue in speeches and publications, confirming that military leaders sought to emphasize the "natural" duties of women as mothers and wives and advocated rigid gendered family traditions even as they attacked the families they claimed to defend. Hiriart de Pinochet encouraged Chilean women to excel in their natural "inborn" responsibilities as they served others in "self-surrender." She insisted, "The current role of women in Chilean society has undergone substantial change. After holding an outstanding position within its structure, they have now directed all their inborn generosity, so singular to our idiosyncrasy, to serve others. This self-surrender has had only the national interest in view and, above all, a concern for the actual advancement of women in our country."²⁹

Women who witnessed military violence observed that the regime dishonored the same family values and alleged sanctity of motherhood that it claimed to defend. A woman we know only as Hilda, a *pobladora*, or shantytown resident, remembered the fear of residents of Santiago's shantytown Nueva Havana on the day of the coup. People could, initially, gather and try to plan collectively, but the *junta's* curfew soon made all gatherings high-risk affairs. Residents who violated curfew laws were the only ones able to observe soldiers in military vans arresting people or firing shots at fellow residents, turning neighborhoods into battlefields.³⁰ We know now that Hilda's experiences paralleled others' throughout the city. A woman from the shantytown La Victoria, for example, testified: "every day new bodies arrived, nude and headless. They floated in the river . . . We cried, please no more. They took my husband on the twelfth [of September, the day after the coup]. A police patrol arrived . . . The wife of my older son was six months pregnant. She was disappeared . . . we learned that anything was possible."³¹

While the military praised the family as a pillar of stability, few families remained untouched by curfews, arbitrary raids, arrests, and disappearances. Women, in public discourse honored as mothers and wives who protected the moral values of family and nation, witnessed the regime's violations of these allegedly sacred roles. Some women who saw their families destroyed by arrests and disappearances responded to the contradictions of gender-based doctrines that sought to prevent them from expanding

their range of economic and political responsibilities even when male breadwinners could no longer fulfill their patriarchal duties. Women began to redefine their familial responsibilities immediately after the coup, and that redefinition encouraged feminist critiques of the gender system that prioritized the rights of men. In the process of seeking to address immediate threats to their families, some women recognized that the authoritarian and patriarchal practices used by the regime to control the nation resembled those employed by men to control women at home.³² As a result, some women took an active role not only by braving the streets in public protests against the dictatorship in the 1980s, but also by demanding the interpretive power to shape the politics of re-democratization in the 1990s.³³

Scholars and activists have provided rich documentation of the histories of women's activism under dictatorship and have pointed to self-help, human rights, and feminist initiatives to show the variety of responses to military violence.³⁴ Women's organizations were part of survival strategies in which collective action helped overcome practical gender issues, such as financial problems and food shortages when male breadwinners were arrested or disappeared. Through soup kitchens, for example, women found more affordable ways to feed their families. Solidarity groups and self-help organizations included consumer cooperatives, and in Santiago alone, over three hundred groups remained active in neighborhoods all over the city.³⁵ Women used references to their families as they organized to document the disappearances of relatives and to search for their whereabouts. But they also addressed what Maxine Molyneux called strategic gender interests.³⁶ In the midst of women's collective strategies for survival and resistance, they exchanged information and experiences and engaged in awareness-raising processes that encouraged critiques of patriarchal structures. Examples from one organization, the *Círculo de Estudios de la Mujer* (the Women's Studies Circle), illustrate the types of interactions that helped encourage feminist formations.³⁷

Women who joined the *Círculo*, one of many women's groups active during dictatorship, initially relied on the protective umbrella of the Catholic Church through the *Vicaría de Solidaridad* (the Vicariate of Solidarity), founded by Raúl Cardinal Silva Henríquez in response to the massive human rights violations in the nation.³⁸ The Vicariate documented human rights abuses, kept records on the "disappeared," and offered help and support to individuals whose family members were missing.³⁹ It also offered such services as workshops to teach women to make *arpilleras*, quilts, with scraps of recycled cloth. Indeed, *arpilleras* became part of women's practical survival strategies, both as a way to express the horrors of dictatorship as well as to earn a small income. The quilts often depicted life—and deaths—under the dictatorship and gained such prominence that they were sold all over the world.⁴⁰ In 1975, Silva Henríquez added an academic branch to the Vicariate, the *Academia de Humanismo Cristiano* (the Academy of Christian Humanism), which provided meeting spaces for human rights groups and study circles, and also offered the first safe haven to the *Círculo*.

The *Círculo* offers insight, first, into gender-based expectations which cast suspicion and distrust on women who acted as individuals, independent of their families. Reminiscent of traditional gender systems, the women who came to the academy were deemed trustworthy only when they submitted personal data on their families.

Academy representatives requested a list of names and occupations from *Círculo* members, and it was not until women identified themselves through their husbands that they were deemed acceptable. Second, it reveals the remarkable transformation of women's organizing, from maternal- and family-based demands to quests for gender equality and rights. Women formalized their institutional affiliation in 1979, only after they overcame prejudices against women's mobilization. They also increased their negotiating power through external support from the Ford Foundation, which lent credibility to their actions.⁴¹

The expertise of the individual women who sponsored the call to the first *Círculo* gathering further strengthened the initiatives. They were about twenty professional women who already had connections to feminist traditions, or to left-of-center politics, and who sought to create an organization that would "struggle against all forms of discrimination and oppression against women."⁴² In 1979, they sent out invitations to a gathering aimed at discussing "the situation of women in Chile," and the response they received exceeded all expectation: over three hundred women replied that they would attend.⁴³ They defined their mission as "political, since it proposes to eliminate a form of domination that is strongly embedded in the social, economic and cultural spheres." They also elaborated on "feminist praxis" by asserting, "The Feminist commitment entails revolutionary changes because the elimination of sexual oppression compromises all forms of social relations. And it is necessarily democratic because only in conditions of equality between the sexes is it possible to create a social project that is just and libertarian."⁴⁴ For participants, resistance to the oppression by dictatorship in particular, and to gender-based oppression in general, went hand in hand. In the words of some of the founding members in a publication used in the first meeting, women had to start thinking critically about their roles because "one is not born a woman, one learns to be a woman."⁴⁵

Comments by women who participated in *Círculo* activities not only illustrate a shared sense of solidarity and collectivity, but also show that the group provided unprecedented spaces for women of different backgrounds and a wide range of experiences to articulate and define solutions to their problems. A woman we know only as Ema, for example, was impressed by the safe space provided in the midst of diverse women:

When I left I had the worst argument with my husband; so when I came to the meeting I felt very bad, guilty, that I had caused trouble again, that my marriage would end. And the best thing was that the meeting started with everybody talking about how difficult it had been to get there, everybody had encountered similar problems: those who were married, with children, were feeling terribly guilty, felt that they had put the family in second place. And, at the same time, their fears were connected to the coup and the dictatorship; well, for many people it meant that they had to shut the doors of the house, stay inside, and the family was the most important, trying to carry on in spite of the dangers outside.⁴⁶

Indeed, *Círculo* participants like Ema found a platform to draw conclusions about their roles within the family, community, and nation—and inspiration to organize

for their rights.⁴⁷ Women began to work collectively to defend human rights and to mobilize for *women's* rights.⁴⁸

Círculo practices reveal the effectiveness of *concientización*, consciousness-raising, as a first step toward a new feminist praxis of human rights. In meetings and publications, participants sought to identify some of the roots of gender-based inequalities, including the political and the personal. Themes ranged from institutional discrimination in the legal system to individual women's internalization of repressive roles.⁴⁹ Círculo women also challenged the military dictatorship and articulated the urgent need for action.⁵⁰ Emphasizing that arrests, disappearances, torture, and rape were hardly compatible with the military's ideological exaltation of femininity and its quintessential incarnation, motherhood, they insisted that "we believe that it is our, and only our, responsibility to demand that women receive their rights. If we don't fight for ourselves, no one will fight for us."⁵¹

On this basis, women also challenged the understanding of maternal responsibilities; just as the military addressed all women as "natural" mothers, Círculo women were compelled not only to question motherhood as a generic and naturalized identity, but also to address *women*, not *mothers*, first. One document, prepared for the Círculo's initial outreach gathering, presented a reassessment of the meanings of motherhood.

We have learned that motherhood is the fundamental reason for our existence ... We have learned to love our children, not as independent and autonomous people but as extensions of ourselves, as if we existed, for the world, only to the extent that they exist ... We have learned to use motherhood as a justification for what we do and what we don't do ... Some of us have learned to emancipate ourselves ... We work, we read, we are up-to-date with work issues, we can have conversations, analyze, intellectualize ... Nevertheless, we are between waves of guilt as a result of having abandoned the house and the children.⁵²

Here, the authors encouraged a critical assessment of the exploitation of women's reproductive labor—linked to the contradictions of a capitalist, patriarchal society that depended on the domestication of women. Motherhood, in this discourse, remained central to womanhood and remained the signifier of a collective identity in which non-motherhood represented a void. The striking novelty in Círculo initiatives lay in the challenge it posed to motherhood as a fixed, essentialized identity and the link it established to a new political praxis.⁵³ While women of the Círculo did not make a radical break from the "motherist" agenda, their discussions reveal a new brand of "radical feminism": women were adopting new responses to experiences of gender-based violence and taking on new obligations under the extreme conditions of military rule. Chilean feminists tracked the increase in women's mobilization and showed that "since the foundation of the Círculo in 1979, the nongovernmental organizations that addressed [the role of] women in research and social activism multiplied: in 1987, there were eighty-seven institutions."⁵⁴

There is limited evidence to document just how much appeal the feminist arguments of the Círculo, or the new range of feminist publications, had for shantytown women, but we have evidence to show that *pobladoras* had their own mobilization strategies that

addressed gender and class-based inequalities.⁵⁵ As one *pobladora* confirmed, collective organizing had been a familiar strategy long before the military coup: "We have always been organized; just like that. We had to, with our problems ... we formed a committee to address unemployment. And we asked the Church for help."⁵⁶ Another *pobladora* activist made clear that feminist activists in shantytowns set different priorities than did activists with means: "We could never count on the support of maids ... we had to organize ourselves. Some women go to meetings with [all of] their children, I take just the younger ones."⁵⁷ Even if the realities of shantytown women set them apart from educated, professional women, self-help strategies through collective organizing and the critique of the double oppression of dictatorship and patriarchy were present in both.

The history of the Comité de Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer (the Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights, CODEM), illustrates just how effective *pobladoras'* organizing could be. Since its foundation in 1980, CODEM has addressed such subjects as women's health and the need for birth control. In 1981, it launched its own journal and documented the implications of the changes in the health care system for women's health, including high maternal mortality rates. The committee also studied such problems as teenage pregnancy, the ill-effects of the lack of sexual education, and gender-specific demands that overlapped with other feminists' critiques of Chilean society.⁵⁸ In May 1982, CODEM, in collaboration with middle-class feminist organizers, held its first national meeting. Participants joined discussion groups that addressed such themes as "women and identity" and "women and sexuality." They also concluded that "women had to be integrated into the struggle for health, housing, work, [and] social and legal change." They had to organize as women "to confront repression."⁵⁹ Women presented a platform of demands and strategies to overcome the lack of gender equity in Chilean society and to ensure women's participation in the re-creation of democratic rule.⁶⁰

They also strengthened the ties between the many organizations formed by women in poor neighborhoods—even if not all agreed that gender-based inequalities needed more attention than class-based inequalities. In May 1982, *pobladora* leaders brought together twelve smaller organizations under one central leadership, now called the Movimiento de Mujeres Pobladoras (the Movement of Shantytown Women, MOMUPO).⁶¹ Shantytown women engaged in feminist organizing, but for some, class-based inequality remained central to collective protests. Some MOMUPO members admitted that the double exploitation of women needed attention but prioritized their working-class identity: "MOMUPO sees [itself] as part of the working class and understands that our class as a whole [including men] needs to confront ... oppression."⁶² The competing priorities, which pitted those who prioritized mobilization to eradicate class-based causes of inequality against those who sought to address gender-based inequalities, were neither new in Chile nor in the Americas.⁶³

Class or gender, *políticas* or *feministas*: Rethinking the "F"-word

In 1998, I asked a Chilean socialist who had been particularly active in struggles for women's rights under dictatorship if she thought of herself as a feminist. I provoked an

angry reaction and a response filled with a high degree of hostility. She explained that feminism, surely, is not a proper preoccupation for those who demand the eradication of the true inequalities in society, class-based hierarchies, given that women's exploitation and the inadequate rights of women workers are the by-products of capitalism. Her explanations were reminiscent of a position held by Latin American leftists in earlier decades, when many women of the left rejected feminism as a misguided, decadent project of the bourgeoisie, and held that feminism and struggles that prioritized women's rights over those of men were bourgeois and divisive. Cuban women had a particularly strong voice among leftists in the Americas, and while the official Cuban position on feminist activism was hardly static or undivided, some rejected any association with feminism. In 1977, Cuban communist and head of the Cuban Women's Federation, Vilma Espín, asserted that feminism was not only a dangerous project of the bourgeoisie but a manifestation of the imperialist influence of the United States; she claimed that Cuba "never had a feminist movement. We hate that. We hate the feminist movement in the United States. We consider what we are doing is part of the struggle. We see these movements in the USA which have conceived struggles for equality of women against men! That is absurd!"⁶⁴ Outspoken orthodox women of the left still mixed and mingled with a wide range of others who set out to mobilize for women's citizenship rights, often blurring the divide between class-based and feminist activism. But international conferences—as well as local manifestations such as the one cited above—confirm that the division did have an impact on feminist organizing.

Feminist *Encuentros* in the Americas

Beginning in 1981, and roughly every two to three years thereafter, Chileans joined others who attended international *Encuentros Feministas* (Feminist Encounters), which were hosted by women's groups of different Latin American and Caribbean countries and provided unprecedented spaces for exchanges and networking among women activists in the Americas. These gatherings were inspired, initially, by middle-class, professional, and educated feminists who sought to create new spaces for women to share experiences, ideas, and strategies for change. The *Encuentros* served as markers of shifting (feminist) priorities, and, according to some participants, they represented "springboards for the development of a common Latin American feminist political language."⁶⁵

The *Encuentros* had a liberating effect. Those women who came from countries under military rule experienced the 1981 Bogotá *Encuentro* as a place that was finally free of censorship and fear, in stark contrast to curfews and violence at home. In the words of Julieta Kirkwood, Bogotá became a "(re-)conquest of space," where women gained access to an international realm that was, until then, a patrimony of patriarchal culture.⁶⁶ Other Chilean participants learned to connect the domestic violence against women in patriarchal societies to the political violence against women exhibited by military regimes. They translated this understanding into specific demands for "democracy in the nation and democracy at home" and, subsequently, into the motto that guided their mobilization against dictatorship at home.⁶⁷

The *Encuentros* also helped foment collective strategies to protest violence, human rights abuses, and, specifically, violence against women. Women met others who shared their concerns about the power of patriarchal institutions and realities of violations of women's rights. In formal presentations and informal discussions, attendees provided critiques of both state-led violence and family violence as tools that perpetuated male dominance. All agreed on the need to reduce gender-based violence, and collectively declared November 25 as the International Day of Nonviolence against Women. However, due to participants' seemingly irreconcilable commitments to either party politics or feminism, disagreements persisted on the strategies of women's involvement in the future.⁶⁸

Participants brought with them multiple experiences of political activism and feminist organizing and did not always agree on the best, most effective mobilization strategies. At *Encuentros* in such places as Lima (1983), Brazil (1985), and México (1987), women discussed the priorities of feminist organizing, and Chilean feminists found their international counterparts to be as ideologically divided as they were themselves. Participants agreed on the importance of consciousness-raising, solidarity, and collective learning. But they were split by competing histories of political militancy and feminist organizing.⁶⁹ Women in the Americas, and in Chile as well, had long negotiated the disagreements between the *políticas*, women who prioritized their active engagement in party politics, and *feministas*, feminists who were primarily dedicated to feminism, including socialist feminism.⁷⁰ Both *políticas* and *feministas* agreed on the need to promote women's rights and gender equity but often disagreed about the most appropriate path to implement change. In Chile, questions of feminist strategy gained prominence as the power of the military regime crumbled.

Parallel to the international *Encuentros*, women actively protested the violence of dictatorship in Chile; in a period many refer to as *Las Protestas* (the Protests), they introduced a new intensity of resistance to dictatorship. In December 1983, over ten thousand women of different political and class backgrounds came together at the Caupolicán Theatre in Santiago to participate in what was the largest public gathering since the military coup. Those who came to the theatre argued that women had a role to play in politics, that they had to help bring down the dictatorship, and, indeed, that "freedom has a woman's name."⁷¹ Women's protest continued in the midst of critiques of dictatorship in the country, and from such places as the United States, the latter no longer willing to tolerate human rights violations uncritically. Women not only demanded "*Democracia en el país y en la casa*"—democracy in the country and at home—but also had an active voice in the collective organization of a referendum that promised to end Pinochet's rule.⁷²

Women met, marched, and mobilized in preparation for the 1988 plebiscite proposed by General Pinochet to secure the longevity of his regime. Chileans voted *Sí* or *No* to the question of ongoing support for the military. Over 1.9 million women, or 51 percent, supported the *No* campaign, as did 58 percent of male voters.⁷³ Significantly, conservative women who supported the *Sí* campaign in the plebiscite appealed to the idealized image of womanhood that the military relied upon: proper Chilean women, often addressed as mothers, would collaborate with the military and would help conserve a stable, reliable system for the sake of their families. Such right-wing

women's organizations as *Mujeres por el Sí* (Women Vote Yes) relied on considerable resources to mobilize women as a conservative force and also claimed to represent the legitimate moral guidance for the nation. In their campaigns, they appealed to women's maternal responsibilities of helping to prevent anarchy and bloodshed by relying on military power, a strategy which helps explain why more women than men supported Pinochet.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, other women who framed their campaigns in support of human rights for all Chileans challenged this "natural" connection, and their victory signified the first official step toward the return of democratic elections in 1990. From that moment, women's demands for rights appeared in a new light, connected to the right of equal citizenship under an elected government. There was hope for a new positioning of women's rights, but the changed political climate under re-democratization, combined with a new dynamic of women's activism, also posed obstacles to gender equity in the 1990s.⁷⁵

From redemocratization in the 1990s to the new millennium

The process of re-democratization—referring to the implementation and consolidation of the political culture, mechanisms, and institutions that define a democratic government—offered opportunities as well as challenges for feminists who sought to expand women's citizenship rights. Indeed, those who partook in the efforts to implement a basic set of democratic institutions encountered authoritarian enclaves left behind by the Pinochet regime. These enclaves, or authoritarian legacies, had legal, political, and cultural dimensions. In 1980, the military had ratified a new constitution with multiple restrictions on popular sovereignty, including Pinochet-controlled senatorial appointments, anti-majoritarian features in the electoral system, and the autonomy of the military from civilian control. The many unresolved cases of human rights violations, as well as the lingering presence of Pinochet himself as commander-in-chief of the Chilean armed forces, represented "authoritarian enclaves" that disproportionately affected women.⁷⁶

Feminists who had mobilized for rights, including reproductive rights, experienced firsthand the contradictions between two final acts of the Pinochet dictatorship: the abolition of therapeutic abortion and the signing of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).⁷⁷ Just as the dictatorship paid lip service to the international norms of women's rights defined in the Convention, it violated women's rights to bodily integrity at home. In August 1989, as one of its last legal acts, the military replaced Article 119 of the Chile Health Code with Act No. 18.826, stating that "no action may be executed that has as its goal the inducement of abortion."⁷⁸ Jaime Guzmán, lawyer and influential ideologue under the regime, was adamant about the need to outlaw abortions and to prosecute those who violated the law.⁷⁹ He asserted, "The mother must give birth to her child, even if it will be born abnormal, if she did not plan it, if it was conceived as a result of a rape, and even if giving birth will kill her."⁸⁰ Guzmán also succeeded in having a right-to-life clause added to the Constitution. In 1995, the Chilean CEDAW representative reported "that although abortion was illegal in Chile, in 1990 one out of every three pregnancies

had ended in abortion."⁸¹ Five years later, doctors documented that illegal abortion remained one of the main causes of maternal mortality in the nation.⁸²

Yet, feminists could claim accomplishments in other spheres, including their success in convincing the democratic government to make a public and official commitment to gender equity; in 1991, the persistent demands of Chilean women's groups helped establish the National Office for Women's Affairs (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer, SERNAM). SERNAM successfully supported a number of feminist campaigns, including the feminist mobilization to end violence against women. The office sponsored research on domestic violence and lobbied for legislative changes to help victims.⁸³ In October 2005, the Chilean government passed a new law on family violence, which facilitated police intervention and efforts to prevent domestic violence.⁸⁴ The following year, the Chilean daily *El Mercurio* reported that sixty family courts with over 250 judges were prepared to tackle the issue.⁸⁵ Victims of violence could also access information on legal procedures on the website *Trámite Fácil* (Simple Procedure),⁸⁶ where links led to a network of Regional Domestic Violence Prevention and Services Centers that provided psychological counseling.⁸⁷

Feminist activists agree that the attention to family violence has introduced some important changes in the understandings of women's needs, but they also note that it places limits on gender-specific demands. The legislation about domestic violence focuses on the family unit, seeks to strengthen the family through therapeutic measures, and emphasizes such goals as family reconciliation. While this legislation can, potentially, save lives, it fails to address some of the root causes of violence against women. Unequal power relations within the family unit, which can lead to violence against women, remain interconnected with institutionalized gender-based inequalities in Chilean society and with a culture that ignores the links between gender inequality and violence. Indeed, feminist critiques of the dangerous consequences of patriarchal hierarchies remain relevant to re-democratization. SERNAM and other institutions addressed questions of women's rights, but at times they weakened an independent feminist discourse that sought to problematize sexual violence against women. The politics of democratization created spaces for restructured patriarchal relations and sought to silence candid feminist demands that questioned male privilege. Ongoing debates about sexual violence against women, as well as reproductive rights and the quest for the legalization of therapeutic abortion, are just a few examples on a long list of queries that remain goals of feminist organizing. Furthermore, the neoliberal reorganization of Chilean society, one of the legacies of the dictatorship, has widened the gap between wealthy and poor Chileans. Patriarchal structures, in conjunction with the myth of a Chilean economic miracle, disproportionately affect women who struggle with higher levels of poverty than men. Over the years, data on the gender gap promises a more equal distribution of rights and an increase of the choices women can make: in 2015, for example, the UN documented that women's enrollment in secondary education remained equal to that of men and that women's tertiary education surpassed that of men.⁸⁸

The real gains of state-led feminism have remained the subject of ongoing debate, and some feminists claim that SERNAM continues to isolate their demands from mainstream politics. They point out that gender-specific legislation receives varying

FIGURE 6.1. Feminist demonstration against capitalism and machismo, March 2016.

Source: Photo by and with permission of Adriana Gómez Muñoz

<http://articulacionfem.cl/ante-la-agresion-y-violencia-machista-voz-propia/>.

degrees of attention depending on the changing interests of elected governments. SERNAM still continues to mediate multiple demands by women's groups and feminist activists. At times, this process can help promote feminists' contributions to policy designs for particular government programs.⁸⁹ Alternatively, SERNAM may reject propositions that appear too radical from the perspective of the governing party. In the past decades, the agenda of the Christian Democrats, for example, made it hard for feminists to convince the ministry to prioritize their urgent quests for reproductive rights.

At the same time, there is rich evidence to show that SERNAM promotes women's education, professionalization, and public presence in a nation that continues to negotiate new paths toward economic and social modernization, including modernization of gender roles. In 2009, the number of women in higher education exceeded that of men—and economists expect a dramatic growth of the female skilled labor force.⁹⁰ While political leaders emphasize that the growth of an educated labor force in Chile has produced promising social and economic effects and has strengthened the country's human capital, women stress that the wage gap between men and women remains large and that gender-specific discrimination within the labor force needs to remain on the public agenda.⁹¹ SERNAM continues to inspire alternative, decentralized activism in support of women's rights that addresses these and other remaining shortcomings in the realm of gender equity. In the new millennium, we can

document a wide variety of women's activism through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and through groups that build on multiple traditions of women's activism in Chile. According to feminist scholar Sonia Alvarez, this new terrain of women's activism has created multiple feminisms and a new degree of heterogeneity, but she states that it also suffers the ill-effects of fragmentation.⁹²

Conclusion

Chilean feminism as a powerful political practice, I argue, is inseparable from the history of military dictatorship (1973–89), when women's mobilization contributed to the acceptance of feminism as a vehicle for the promotion of women's citizenship rights. Even as the military glorified women as wives and mothers who "naturally" protected the moral values of family and nation, women reacted to the regime's parallel destruction of "sacred" families. Responding to arrests and disappearances, women protested both the patriarchy of the military authoritarian regime and patriarchal practices at home, and created new forms of resistance. Feminists, like Julieta Kirkwood, wrote about *nudos*, knots of wisdom that helped untangle the contradictions between feminist theory and activism, thereby encouraging women to "weave" new feminist knots and feminist knowledge to help shape feminist politics. We can map the close connections between feminist, self-help, and human rights mobilizations that formed during the dictatorship, and we can trace the continuity of activism—in changing forms and manifestations—through the period of re-democratization in the 1990s and into the new millennium. In short, Chilean and Latin American feminists who protested authoritarian rule and the abuses of military dictatorships in the Cold War period tested the usefulness of a range of previously untested strategies of feminist resistance, contributed dynamic methods of activism, and explored new theoretical considerations. Focusing on those contributions encourages us to rewrite the history of feminisms in a way that moves beyond the framework of "waves," which can easily reduce complex feminist trajectories to abstract, streamlined chronologies.

Epilogue

*A woman holding the reins of a country ... is serving ... as a catalyst to the cultural changes that move us toward greater equality and towards the more horizontal relations which we are already seeing in other countries.*⁹³

—Michelle Bachelet

More work is needed to explore the multiple sources of Chilean women's empowerment and to test the strategies of political leaders as well as grassroots feminist activists. In 2006, Michelle Bachelet made history by becoming Chile's first female president. A socialist by political affiliation, she pledged to take a path toward "change with continuity," and promised to address the needs of women and the poor.⁹⁴ Some of her political weight stemmed from real and symbolic connections to military rule, from her

personal experience of prison, torture, and forced exile from Chile, and from her loss of family; the dictatorship killed her father. Completing her first term, President Bachelet could claim some credit for an increase in women's access to political positions, which rose to a remarkably high level in some sectors of government.⁹⁵ She has also been a controversial figure in Chilean politics. Based on historical evidence, we know that "a woman holding the reins of a country" can represent a catalyst for cultural change and the creation of greater gender equality. But surely, in light of the new constraints on women's choices in Chile that are firmly anchored in the Constitution, as well as the persistence of cultural legacies that promote gender bias, strategies for political change must reach across class and ideological divides. Feminism, with its roots in political protest and activism, and its status as an accepted vehicle for the promotion of women's citizenship rights, still holds tremendous value as a strategy for democratic, political mobilization.

Notes

- 1 As cited in Estelle B. Freedman, *Feminism, Sexuality, and Politics: Essays* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 91.
- 2 For more detail on Labarca's views on women's activism in the United States, see Amanda Labarca, *Actividades femeninas en los Estados Unidos* (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta universitaria, 1914); For information on her political engagement, see Amanda Labarca and Peter J. Sehlinger, "Educator to the Women of Chile," 1970. Educator to the women of Chile/oral history transcript Amanda Labarca; Peter J Sehlinger, UC Berkeley: Bancroft Library, BANC MSS Z-Z 100:158. See also Patricia Pinto Villarroel, "Mirada y voz femeninas en la ensayística de Amanda Labarca: Historia de una anticipación chilena," *Nuevo Texto Crítico* 2, 4 (Segundo Semestre de 1989): 57–67.
- 3 For some of the priorities that Labarca set in the context of the turmoil of transition of the nation, see Richard J. Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago, Chile, 1891–1941* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 179–81.
- 4 For the competitions between FECHIF and MEMCh, see Karin Roseblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920–1950* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 243–7.
- 5 See Karen Mead, "Beneficent Maternalism: Argentine Motherhood in Comparative Perspective, 1880–1920," *Journal of Women's History* 12, 3 (2000): 120–45; quote on p. 120.
- 6 Ericka Verba, *Catholic Feminism and the Social Question in Chile, 1910–1917: The Liga De Damas Chilenas* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2003); see also Elizabeth Q. Hutchison, "Señoras y Señoritas: Catholic Women Defend the *Hijas de Familia*," in *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900–1930* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 171–97.
- 7 For background information on the Liga and full quote, see <http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-100790.html>
- 8 For a detailed account of early elite and middle-class women's mobilization, see Ericka Verba, "The Círculo de Lectura de Señoras [Ladies' Reading Circle] and the Club de Señoras [Ladies' Club] of Santiago, Chile," *Journal of Women's History* 7, 3 (Fall 95):

- 6–33; and Verba, *Catholic Feminism and the Social Question in Chile, 1910–1917*. Also see Asunción Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, 1890–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).
- 9 Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change*, 48.
 - 10 Elsa Chaney, *Supermadre: Women in Politics in Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 21.
 - 11 Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change*, 211–16.
 - 12 Amanda Labarca, *Feminismo Contemporáneo*; citation in Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises*, 244.
 - 13 Marta Vergara, *Memorias de una mujer irreverente* (Santiago de Chile: Editora Nacional Gabriela Mistral, 1974), 174.
 - 14 On MEMCh, see Corinne Antezana-Pernet, "Mobilizing Women in the Popular Front Era: Feminism, Class, and Politics in the Movimiento Pro-Emancipación de la Mujer Chilena (MEMCh), 1935–1950," PhD diss., University of California at Irvine, 1996, 176–85.
 - 15 Judy Maloof, *Voices of Resistance: Testimonies of Cuban and Chilean Women* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 117.
 - 16 Elizabeth Q. Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900–1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); and Hutchison, "La Mujer Esclava to 'la Mujer Limón': Anarchism and the Politics of Sexuality in Early-Twentieth-Century Chile," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 81, 3/4 (2001): 519–53.
 - 17 Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises*; and Antezana-Pernet, "Mobilizing Women in the Popular Front Era," both draw conclusions that support this characterization of the role of the MEMCh. Both help link the details of political discourses by the Partido Obrero Socialista (POS) and Partido Comunista de Chile (PCCh) to MEMCh activists—and to make discursive connections to individual feminists such as Olga Poblete and Elena Caffarena.
 - 18 Antezana-Pernet, "Mobilizing Women in the Popular Front Era: Feminism"; and Corinne Antezana-Pernet, "El MEMCh en provincia. Movilización femenina y sus obstáculos, 1935–1942," in *Disciplina y desacato. Construcción de identidad en Chile, siglo XIX y XX*, ed. Lorena Godoy et al. (Santiago: Eds. CEDEM-SUR, 1995), 287–329. For information on women's mobilization and suffrage, see also Antezana-Pernet, "Chilean Feminists, the International Women's Movement, and Suffrage, 1915–1950," *The Pacific Historical Review* 69, 4 (2000): 663–88; Edda Gaviola Artigas et al., *Queremos votar en las próximas elecciones: Historia del movimiento Femenino Chileno 1913–1952* (Santiago: Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Condición de la Mujer, 1986); Diamela Eltit, *Crónica del sufragio femenino en Chile* (Santiago: SERNAM, 1994); Asunción Lavrin, "Suffrage in South America: Arguing a Difficult Case," in *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives*, ed. Caroline Daley and Melanie Nolan (Auckland: Auckland University Press-Pluto Press, 1994), 184–209; Erika Maza Valenzuela, "Catholicism, Anticlericism, and the Quest for Women's Suffrage in Chile," Working Paper 214, The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame (1995): 184–209.
 - 19 See "La mujer obrera es doblemente explotada," and "Proyecciones del movimiento emancipacionista femenino," *La Mujer Nueva* 1 (November 1935): 1–2.
 - 20 See "Los niños proletarios tienen hambre," *La Mujer Nueva* 1 (November 1935): 2.
 - 21 *La Mujer Nueva* 22 (December 1938): 4.

- 22 See, for example, "La Mujer y la Política," and "Manifiesto," in *La Mujer Nueva* 13 (March 1937): 3. Both articles evoke women's responsibilities to participate in the political process. For more context, see Jadwiga Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), pp. 13–43.
- 23 For some of the key texts on Chilean feminisms and women's activism, see Julieta Kirkwood, *Ser política en Chile. Las feministas y los partidos políticos* (Santiago: FLACSO, 1986); Edda Gaviola, Ximena Jiles, Lorella Lopresti, and Claudia Rojas, *Queremos votar en las próximas elecciones: Historia del movimiento femenino en Chile 1913–1952* (Santiago: CEM, La Morada, 1986); Paz Covarrubias, "El movimiento feminista chileno," in *Chile, mujer y sociedad*, ed. Rolando Franco and Paz Covarrubias (Santiago: UNICEF, 1978); Patricia Chuchryk, "Protest, Politics and Personal Life: The Emergence of Feminism in a Military Dictatorship, Chile 1973–1983," doctoral thesis, York University, 1984; Adriana Muñoz Dálbora, *Fuerza feminista y democracia: utopía a realizar* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Documentas, 1987); Alicia Frohman and Teresa Valdés, "Democracy in the Country and in the Home: Women's Movement Chile," in *Serie Estudios Sociales* no. 55 (Santiago: FLACSO, 1993); Marcela Ríos, "Socialización política y acción colectiva: Organizaciones de pobladoras en Chile 1973–1993," master's thesis, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales México, 1994; Josefina Rossetti, *Las mujeres y el feminismo* (Santiago: Cuadernos del Círculo de Estudios de la Mujer, 1993); Teresa Valdés, "Movimiento de mujeres y producción de conocimientos de género, 1978–1989," in *Mujeres y participación política. Avances y desafíos en América Latina*, ed. Magdalena León (Bogotá: TM Editores, 1994); Teresa Valdés and Marisa Weinstein, *Mujeres que sueñan: Las organizaciones de pobladoras en Chile 1973–1990* (Santiago: FLACSO, 1993); Lisa Baldez, *Why Women Protest: Women's Movements in Chile* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- 24 Anna M. Travis, "Consolidating Power: Chilean Women in the Political Party System, 1950–1970," PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2007.
- 25 Maxine Molyneux, "Analyzing Women's Movements," *Development and Change* 29, 2 (2002): 1467–7660.
- 26 Maria Elena Valenzuela, "El fundamento de la dominación patriarcal en Chile," paper presented at the Second Chilean Sociology Congress, August 1986, Santiago, Chile, as cited in Marcela Ríos Tobar, "‘Feminism is Socialism, Liberty and Much More’: Second-Wave Chilean Feminism and Its Contentious Relationship with Socialism," *Journal of Women's History* 15, 3 (2003): 129–34.
- 27 Chile, *Valores patrios y valores familiares*, Cuadernos de Difusión no. 7 (Santiago, Chile: Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer, 1982), 11.
- 28 The Secretariat worked to promote patriotic and family values, primarily addressing middle- and elite-sector women. The Mothers' Centers were dedicated to the promotion of the same values, but had the potential of empowering women.
- 29 Sra. Lucía Hiriart de Pinochet, First Lady, introducing the new CEMA-CHILE. *Cema Chile* (Santiago: CEMA-Chile, n.d.).
- 30 Taller de Acción Cultural (Santiago, Chile), *La Organización fue como nacer*, 87.
- 31 As quoted by Judy Maloof, *Voices of Resistance*, 122.
- 32 Kirkwood, *Ser política en Chile*, 180.
- 33 Nelly Richard, "Género, valores y diferencia(s)," in *Residuos y metáforas. Ensayos de crítica cultural sobre el Chile de la Transición* (Santiago: Cuarto Propio, 1998),

- 201, as discussed in Mary Green, "Diamela Eltit: A Gendered Politics of Writing," *Cardiff University New Readings* 6 (December 5, 2000), <http://www.cf.ac.uk/euros/newreadings/volume6/greenm.html#14>. I also discuss these processes in detail in Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood*, 134–62.
- 34 For the distinction between self-help, human rights, and feminist organizations, see Jo Fisher, *Out of the Shadows: Women, Resistance and Politics in South America* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1993); for examples on Chilean feminist activisms, see Fisher, *Out of the Shadows*, 177–200. For key texts, see n. 23.
- 35 Luis Razeto, *Las Organizaciones económicas populares la experiencia de las nuevas organizaciones económicas populares en Chile: situación y perspectivas* (Santiago: Programa de Economía del Trabajo, Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, Arzobispado de Santiago, 1983).
- 36 For context of the term, see Maxine Molyneux, *Women's Movements in International Perspective: Latin America and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 140–202.
- 37 Also referred to as Círculo de Estudios de la Condición de la Mujer. I use Círculo de Estudios de la Mujer, and will refer to it as Círculo hereafter.
- 38 For the role of the Church and moral resistance, see Pamela Lowden, *Moral Opposition to Authoritarian Rule in Chile, 1973–90*, St. Antony's Series (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).
- 39 On the Vicariate of Solidarity, also see Hugo Fruhling, "Resistance to Fear in Chile: The Experience of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad," in *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*, ed. Juan E. Corradi, Patricia Weiss Fagen, and Manuel A. Garretón Merino (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 121–41.
- 40 Eliana Moya-Raggio, "Arpilleras': Chilean Culture of Resistance," *Feminist Studies* 10, 2 (1984): 277–90; Baldez, *Why Women Protest*, 130.
- 41 See Chuchryk, "Protest, Politics and Personal Life," fns 28 and 29, 360–1. Ford Foundation grants, already supporting a number of South American progressive women's groups, significantly eased the negotiations between the Academy and Círculo women. Cornelia Butler Flora, personal correspondence with the author, January 2007.
- 42 Círculo de Estudios de la Mujer, "Reflexiones sobre la práctica feminista," paper presented at the III Encounter for Popular Education, Santiago, June 1983, as cited in Marcela Ríos Tobar, "'Feminism is Socialism, Liberty and Much More' Second-Wave Chilean Feminism and Its Contentious Relationship with Socialism," *Journal of Women's History* 15, 3 (2003): 129–34.
- 43 Rosa Bravo, María Isabel Cruzat, Elena Serrano, and Rosalba Todaro, "Y así va creciendo ... el feminismo en Chile," in *Movimiento feminista en América Latina y el Caribe: balance y perspectivas* (Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Isis Internacional de las Mujeres, 1986), 26.
- 44 Círculo de Estudios de la Mujer, "Reflexiones sobre la práctica feminista," 129–34.
- 45 See Bravo et al., "Y así va creciendo," 26.
- 46 As cited in Edda Gaviola, Eliana Largo, and Sandra Palestro, "Si la mujer no está, la democracia no va," *Proposiciones* 21 (1992): 81.
- 47 Claudia Adriasola et al., *Algunas ideas respecto a la condición de la mujer* (Santiago, Chile: Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, 1979). Also see Chuchryk, *Protest, Politics and Personal Life*, 280.
- 48 Patricia Crispi, ed., *Tejiendo Rebeldías: escritos feministas de Julieta Kirkwood* (Santiago: CEM La Morada, 1987); Julieta Kirkwood, *Feminarios* (Santiago: Ediciones Documentas, 1987).

- 49 See Annabel Ipsen, "The Women's Movement in Chile, From Grassroots to Nongovernmental Organization: A Case Study of La Casa de La Mujer, La Morada," master's thesis, University of New Mexico, 2000, 96–7; Bravo et al., "Y así va creciendo," 26.
- 50 Adriasola et al., *Algunas ideas*, 14.
- 51 Ibid., 14.
- 52 Ibid., 4–6.
- 53 For more detail on the working groups, see Cornelia Butler Flora, "Socialist Feminism in Latin America," Women in International Development, Working Paper No. 14 (East Lansing: Michigan State University, Office of Women in International Development, 1982), 21.
- 54 Valdés and Weinstein, *Mujeres que sueñan*, 195.
- 55 Ton Salman argues that women, more than men, engaged in *collective* resistance under dictatorship; he also proposes that the lasting political involvement of shantytown social movements under re-democratization was compromised by the top-down incentives that inspired their mobilization. Ton Salman, *The Diffident Movement: Disintegration, Ingenuity and Resistance of the Chilean Pobladores, 1973–1990* (Amsterdam: Thela, 1997), 8–31.
- 56 Patricia López-Stewart and Elisabeth Gumberger, "Ich bringe das Salz" *Chilenische Frauen berichten: Erfahrungen, Situationen, Positionen* (Bremen: Edition CON, 1985), 108.
- 57 Eda Cleary, *Frauen in der Politik Chiles zur Emanzipierung chilenischer Frauen während der Militärdiktatur Pinochets* (Aachen: Alano, 1988), 225.
- 58 See, for example, *Vamos Mujer* 3 (1989): 7–8, 10.
- 59 Cleary, *Frauen in der Politik Chiles zur Emanzipierung chilenischer Frauen während der Militärdiktatur Pinochets*, 214.
- 60 For references to CODEM and MOMUPO, also see Martina Schöttes, *Lebensbedingungen, Widerstand und Verfolgung von Frauen in Chile* (Berlin: Berliner Institut für Vergleichende Sozialforschung, 1991), 47–8; and Cleary, *Frauen in der Politik Chiles zur Emanzipierung chilenischer Frauen während der Militärdiktatur Pinochets*, 206–33.
- 61 For details on demands, see "Mujeres, volveremos a casa?" in *Chile, No estás Muerto: compromisos y demandas desde la Iglesia de los pobres* (Santiago: Centro Ecueménico Diego de Medellín, n.d.), 34.
- 62 Cleary, *Frauen in der Politik Chiles zur Emanzipierung chilenischer Frauen während der Militärdiktatur Pinochets*, 221. Patricia Richards argues that class-based concerns remained central to pobladora activism; see Patricia Richards, *Pobladoras, Indígenas, and the State: Conflicts Over Women's Rights in Chile* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 84.
- 63 For contexts of Círculo, MOMOPU, CODEM, and other initiatives, see also Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood*, 134–62.
- 64 Maxine Molyneux, "State, Gender, and Institutional Change: The Federación de Mujeres Cubanas," in *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, ed. Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 299.
- 65 Nancy Saporita Sternbach, Marysa Navarro-Aranguren, Patricia Chuchryk, and Sonia E. Alvarez, "Feminisms in Latin America: From Bogotá to San Bernardo," *Signs* 17,2 (1992): 396.
- 66 Kirkwood, *Ser Política en Chile*, 233–49; Marysa Navarro, "El primer encuentro feminista de Latinoamérica y el Caribe," in *Sociedad, Subordinación y Feminismo*, ed.

- Magdalena Leon (Bogotá, Colombia: Asociación Colombiana para el estudio de la población, 1982), 261–7.
- 67 Chilean feminist, Círculo founder, and Encuentro-attendee Julieta Kirkwood coined the rallying cry, "democracy in the nation and democracy at home."
- 68 "Testimonio," *Boletín* no. 6 (September–October 1981): 5.
- 69 At the 1985 *Encuentro* in Brazil, for example, academics, labor leaders, union organizers, and political activists lamented a "lack of resolutions, strategies and theories" and left dissatisfied. Others felt that the presentation of theories and resolutions "would handicap the dynamic thought process which is the very nature of an *Encuentro*." Eliana Ortega and Nancy Saporta Sternbach, "Gracias a la Vida: Recounting the Third Latin American Feminist Meeting in Bertioga, Brazil, July 31–August 4, 1985," *Off Our Backs* 26, 1 (January 1986): 1.
- 70 Marcela Ríos Tobar, "'Feminism Is Socialism,'" 129–34.
- 71 Teresa Valdés, *Las mujeres y la dictadura militar en Chile*, Material de Discusión, No. 94 (Santiago: FLACSO, March 1987), Anexo III, 35.
- 72 "Democracy in the country and in the home." See Alicia Frohmann and Teresa Valdés, *Democracy in the Country and in the "Home": The Women's Movement in Chile*, Serie Estudios Sociales No. 55 (Santiago: FLACSO, 1993) for insights into women's reconceptualization of democracy.
- 73 *La Epoca*, October 7, 1988, 9.
- 74 Catherine M. Boyle, "Touching the Air: The Cultural Force of Women in Chile," in *Feminist Communication Theory: Selections in Context*, ed. Lana F. Rakow and Laura A. Wackwitz (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004), 147.
- 75 Marcela Ríos Tobar shows the difficulties of Chilean feminists to secure spaces for gender-based concerns and access to political participation. Ríos Tobar, "Chilean Feminism(s) in the 1990s," in *Gender and Civil Society: Transcending Boundaries*, ed. Jude Howell and Diane Mulligan (London: Routledge, 2005), 139–62. See also Marcela Ríos Tobar, Lorena Godoy, and Elizabeth Guerrero, *Un nuevo silencio feminista? La transformación de un movimiento social en el Chile posdictadura* (Santiago: Centro de Estudios de la Mujer, 2003).
- 76 Manuel Antonio Garretón, "Human Rights in Democratization Processes," in *Constructing Democracy: Human Rights, Citizenship, and Society in Latin America*, ed. Elizabeth Jelin and Eric Hershberg (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 39–56; Manuel Antonio Garretón, "Human Rights in Processes of Democratisation," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 26,1 (1994): 221–34. Garretón distinguished between multiple authoritarian enclaves, the institutional enclave, the military enclave, and the ethical-symbolic enclave—and argues that human rights policies were part of a comprehensive transition strategy that could have helped in the process of overcoming the ill-effects of authoritarian legacies.
- 77 The end of therapeutic abortion violates a number of basic women's rights, including reproductive rights. See José Barzelatto, María Cristina Calderón, Stephen Isaacs, and Lidia Casas B., *El aborto en Chile elementos para el debate* (Santiago, Chile: CORSAPS, 1996).
- 78 *Annual Review of Population Law* 16 (1989): 28.
- 79 Lidia Casas-Becerra, "Women Prosecuted and Imprisoned for Abortion in Chile," *Reproductive Health Matters* 5, 9 (May 1997): 29.
- 80 Actas Oficiales de la Comisión Constituyente, Sesión 87 del 14 de noviembre de 1974. "La madre debe tener al hijo aunque éste salga anormal, aunque no lo haya deseado, aunque sea producto de una violación o, aunque de tenerlo, derive en su muerto ..."

- As cited in Claudia Lagos Lira, *Aborto en Chile el deber de parir* (Santiago: Lom Ediciones, 2001), 11.
- 81 See Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Concluding Observations: Chile, UN Doc. A/50/38, 105–159 (1995). <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/cedaw/cedaw-chile.htm>
- 82 Pieper Mooney, *Politics of Motherhood*, 134–62 and 193–202; Jorge Szot and Cristina Moreno, “Mortalidad por aborto en Chile: Analisis epidemiologico, 1985–2000,” *Revista chilena de obstetricia y ginecología* 68, 4 (2003), 309–14.
- 83 See Carlos A. González, *Ley de violencia intrafamiliar* (Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Publibey, 1998); for references to the problem of sexual violence, see Verónica Oxman, *La Violencia sexual en Chile* (Santiago, Chile: SERNAM, 1995); for a study of domestic violence and police response, see Uca Silva and Ximena Ahumada, *Sensibilización sobre violencia intrafamiliar a carabineros de Chile SERNAM, 1992–1993* (Santiago, Chile: Servicio Nacional de la Mujer, 1994).
- 84 *El Mercurio*, July 22, 2006; August 16, 2006, 13/14.
- 85 *El Mercurio*, August 16, 2006, 12. <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/ndp/ref/?action=view&doc=chl102427fe>
- 86 *El Mercurio*, October 27, 2005. <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/ndp/ref/?action=view&doc=chl102427fe>
- 87 *Centros Regionales de Atencion y Prevencion en Violencia Intrafamiliar, El Mercurio*, June 19, 2006, <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/ndp/ref/?action=view&doc=chl102427fe>
- 88 For data on gender gap index, see <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/economies/#economy=CHL>
- 89 For different views on the role of SERNAM, see Merike H. Blofield and Liesl Haas, “Defining a Democracy: Reforming the Laws on Women’s Rights in Chile, 1990–2002,” *Latin American Politics & Society* 47, 3 (2005): 35–68; and Susan Franceschet, *Women and Politics in Chile* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 111–15.
- 90 <http://en.mercopress.com/2010/08/10/since-last-year-chilean-women-are-a-majority-in-higher-education-and-increasing>
- 91 For comments on women’s roles and the (limits of) policy changes under President Bachelet, see <http://www.economist.com/node/7281220>
- 92 Sonia Alvarez, “Feminismos Latinoamericanos,” <https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/ref/article/viewFile/12008/11293>; Sonia Alvarez, “Reflexiones Teóricas y Comparativas sobre Feminismos en Chile y América Latina,” *Conversatorio, Universidad de Chile, Santiago de Chile*, April 2–3, 1998.
- 93 Elizabeth Q. Hutchison, Thomas Miller Klubock, Nara B. Milanich, and Peter Winn, *The Chile Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 597.
- 94 See Larry Rother, “A Leader Making Peace With Chile’s Past,” *New York Times*, January 16, 2006; Larry Rother, “Chile Inaugurates First Woman to Serve as Its President,” *New York Times*, March 12, 2006.
- 95 In 2006, Bachelet elevated the presence of women in Parliament to 15 percent (slightly below the Latin American average) and female senators to 50 percent (the highest percentage in Latin America). About 18 percent of the seats of national legislatures in Latin America and the Caribbean were held by women. Pamela Marie Paxton and Melanie M. Hughes, *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective* (Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, 2007), 228–9.