

Chilean Women and Democratization: Entering Politics through Resistance as *Arpilleristas**

Kelley Boldt**

American Bar Association, USA

Timothy J. White

Xavier University, USA

Boldt, Kelley and Timothy J. White (2011) "Chilean Women and Democratization: Entering Politics through Resistance as *Arpilleristas*"

ABSTRACT

Historically, women played a very traditional role in Chilean society, and under Pinochet women were assumed to continue playing a private role while men dominated the public sphere of politics. Ironically, Pinochet's regime with its neo-liberal economic policies and political oppression resulted in women's collective action which meant that women's role in politics was transformed. They now began to play more public roles as they took on more economic and political roles outside the home. This article focuses on the *arpillera* workshops which allowed women to play an important political role in the democratization process and assist in removing Pinochet from power. After the transition to democracy, women's political role was not suddenly and unequivocally expanded, but the election of Michelle Bachelet illustrates the legacy of the *arpillera* movement and how women have become more effective public actors and active participants in Chilean democracy.

Key Words: Chile, democratization, women, *arpilleristas*, social movements

From 1973 to 1990, Augusto Pinochet's authoritarian regime disrupted civil society and halted open political life in Chile. Estimates of the number of people disappearing under this regime range from 1,500 to 3,000 and the

* We would like to thank Jennifer Wies, Philip Williams, Mack Mariani, Marjon Kamrani, Natalia Jacovkis, and José María Mantero for their comments on earlier drafts. We take sole responsibility for any errors or omissions in this article.

** Kelley Boldt is program coordinator of the Commission on Domestic Violence of the American Bar Association. Timothy J. White is professor of political science at Xavier University, USA. Direct correspondence to Timothy White (white@xavier.edu).

government tortured thousands more in order to maintain a firm grasp on power. The regime's oppression and economic policies shattered the lives of many families. Because most of the disappeared were men and boys, women faced the daunting task of supporting their families. Thus, they were among the first to create a culture of resistance to protest the regime. The traditional public and private spheres men and women inhabited prior to 1973 were dissolved as men were forced out of public politics and women were pushed into the political arena. Women's groups emerged not only to protest the human rights abuses of the government but also as a means of economic survival. After the coup, the Vicariate of Solidarity under the Catholic Church created craft workshops in which women were provided a safe haven to make *arpilleras*, textiles which depicted the atrocities of Chile through their maker's eyes. The workshops not only provided these women the opportunity to earn a little income to feed their families but also to form a connected group whereby they could vocalize their repression to the outside world through their artwork and eventually learn to mobilize and engage in public political activities. Women played a critical role in the democratization process. Even if the immediate aftermath of the democratic transition may have not yielded a society more empowering of women, the democratic political process has increasingly incorporated women's rights and interests. By process-tracing the women's movement as it first emerged in the 1920s and 1930s to today, we can see that the mobilization of women, and especially women's groups such as *arpilleristas* expanded the range of women's political activity and undermined the traditional patriarchal structures that had kept Chilean women hidden at home for so long.

WOMEN AND DEMOCRATIZATION: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Historically, most literature on social movements and democratic transitions has been written about males from a male perspective and downplayed the role of women in society and politics (Krause 2004; Waylen 1993; 1994). A full accounting of women's political role in Chilean society is needed to provide us with a more complete understanding of democratization. However, Hurtig and Montoya (2005, 200) warn against focusing only on women and argue that "a gendered analysis of women's political power requires the concomitant theorization of men as gendered political actors" as well. While the inclusion of women is critical for a more comprehensive understanding of democratic transitions and social movements, we must situate actions of both men and women in the process of resistance to authoritarianism and the transition to democracy.

Once women were accepted as social actors, scholars diverged between those who formulate theory based on incomparable, individual case studies that are contingent on a particular context for their analysis and those who formulate theory based on universal, comparative analysis that moves across place, time, and history encompassing a totality of experience (Hurtig and Montoya 2005; Markowitz and Tice 2002; Ray and Korteweg 1999). On the one hand, scholars that focus on the particular exaggerate the uniqueness of their argument and overlook common themes that could be utilized to develop and strengthen theory as a whole. On the other hand, those who focus on the universal presume that all people across time have the same experiences and thus desire similar outcomes (Ray and Korteweg 1999, 66). A dialogue between the universal and the particular allows for the conceptualization of local experiences within the context of broader, more encompassing theory and thus helps to enhance and clarify the theory within which the local and general interact.

The women's movement is heterogeneous and complex as women possess a multitude of different interests. Originally, the feminist paradigm sought to frame the mobilization of women in terms of "women's interests". Following the lead of Molyneux (1985) who rejected the simple notion of "women's interests", many scholars concur that interests defined in terms of gender are preferable because they incorporate the way that men's and women's experiences are socially constructed and thus do not limit analysis to women alone (Hurtig and Montoya 2005; Jaquette 1991; Stephen 1997). Practical gender interests "arise from women's position in the sexual division of labor and tend to involve struggles not for liberation but for the ability to fulfill their roles as wives and mothers. These interests, which stem from women's lived experiences, are inductively derived [...] [Strategic gender interests] on the other hand, are derived deductively, seek to change the rules under which women live, and can be arrived at only after practical interests have been taken into account" (Ray and Korteweg 1999, 49). While still retaining the same definitional meaning, it is important to note that other scholars have preferred to use the term "feminine" for practical interests and "feminist" for strategic interests. Women can co-opt the patriarchal notion of their femaleness as a strategy for subverting power structures and facilitating women's empowerment.

The literature on women's social movements emphasizes that women's identities shape their interests which in turn mobilizes women for political action (Ray and Korteweg 1999, 52). In this way, women conceptualize their particular circumstances and conditions in terms of their identity and act concertedly as a result of their collective identification. Framing women's social movements by appealing to gender identity permits women from varying backgrounds that have conflicting economic and social interests to converge based on their exclusion from power (Baldez 2002, 11; Mohanty 2002, 198). Therefore, while

not all women share common interests or a common identity (Martin and Mohanty 1999, 518), those who do form a social movement based on their shared identity and common struggles. The women who form a social movement mobilize around common issues pertaining to particular interests (Baldez 2002; 2003; Dandavati 2005; Domínguez and Shifter 2008; Markowitz and Tice 2002). Often, this collective identity or action frame has empowered women who are victims of repression to mobilize and take action (Noonan 1995, 85; Waylen 1992, 301). Specifically, women mobilize to achieve political rights and as some feminist scholars emphasize seek to achieve common economic interests as well (Mohanty 1997).

In order to situate this discussion of interests and identities and the resulting collective action in a working framework, most feminist scholars closely examine the various spaces within which people function in society. Traditionally, the public sphere has been reserved exclusively for men as they engage in organized politics and the governing of society while the private sphere has revolved around the functioning of everyday life. This has historically been the role assigned to women in society. While some interaction between the spheres occurs, it is often assumed that women must leave the private sphere they have traditionally been assigned to engage in meaningful or socially transformative political activity (Hurtig and Montoya 2005, 190). While acknowledging the existence of public and private spheres, scholarship on women's social movements in Latin America focuses on a *public sphere that was often closed to men and women* by authoritarian regimes that excluded the average citizen from politics. Stephen (1997, 7) argues that Latin America does not conform to the traditional public/private dichotomy and is better described as "a unity of experience" among women. Unity is easily employed when collective action becomes the nexus through which women conceptualize and achieve their goals. This public/private dichotomy is particularized and developed throughout the history of multiple Latin American nations in their transition to and away from authoritarian regimes throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Women's movements that emerged under authoritarianism did so in an unusual space that allowed women who were not traditional actors in the political arena to become politically engaged and mobilized. As women experienced oppression, the political space that was once only open to men subsequently opened and allowed them to enter and take on new roles. This newly created political space is often referred to as a political opportunity or opening (Baldez 2003; Jaquette 1991). Fortuny Loret De Mola, Ribeiro, and Solís Lizama (2009) refer to this opportunity as an "in-between" or intermediate space where women develop new skills and become engaged in politics. When political opportunities present themselves and women mobilize around them, what happens after the movement succeeds when the political alignments

restructure? Do women retain political opportunities or are they pushed out of the system once again after they have contributed to the fall of the old regime?

While much of the social movement literature emphasizes an evaluation of democratic outcomes rather than analyzing the process of democratization (Bordreau and Meyer 2009, 357), this literature offers some valuable insight into how different actors influence transitions to democracy (Sorensen 2008, 74-77). Scholars often study the underlying and overt causes and effects of the multiple forces in a society that potentially induce regime change. Tarrow (1994, 155) identifies “cycles of protest” in social movements where collective action becomes increasingly mobilized until the state either represses, reforms, or is overthrown in a revolution. Dandavati (2005, 5) finds that military-authoritarian regimes tend to marginalize citizens’ roles and rights, depoliticize the media, and extinguish political parties. In most cases, a social movement is born in resistance to this repression. However, when the social movement succeeds in overthrowing a repressive regime, a “tension exists between the need to ally with a formally organized, electorally experienced political party and the (perceived) benefits of a nonallied, independent political position” (Beckwith 2000, 441). Only after particular cases are analyzed and the contingency of history, norms, and structures that govern society are considered can generalizations be made about the fate of social movements in this post-transition period. In this article, we employ the case-study and process-tracing method to connect and test the theories that have emerged from the study of women during and after transitions from authoritarian rule. This method has a long history and has been adopted by many scholars in the fields of international relations and comparative politics (Beck 2006; Bennett and Elman 2006; Caporaso 2009; Gerring 2004; 2007; George and Bennett 2005; Hawkins 2009; Maoz 2002; Rueschemeyer 2003). The evidence presented here relies on the existing scholarly literature, first-hand observations of *arpilleras*, and testimonies of women in the movement. By process-tracing we can examine closely the evolution of the women’s movement, its role in bringing democracy to Chile, and the fate of women once the authoritarian regime was removed.

THE HISTORIC ROLE OF WOMEN IN CHILEAN POLITICS

Chilean women’s first attempt at a feminist movement arose in the 1920s and 1930s. The movement made small gains for women and culminated with women earning the right to vote in 1949. Despite this advance, traditional gendered roles were reasserted and the patriarchal power structure was

reinforced. Throughout the remainder of the twentieth century women were defined by their traditional, maternal role as political elites utilized the position of women to advance their own agenda. If women were to become involved in politics, it was much more likely that they would become involved informally rather than through formal means of political action and representation (Franceschet 2005, 6). When Eduardo Frei was elected president in 1964, he created the Centros de Madres (Mothers' Centers), known later as CEMA, which served to reinforce the domesticity of women and their roles as supportive housewives, good mothers, and patriotic citizens. Even under the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende that began in 1970, CEMA continued to function and women's roles remained traditionally defined. Allende declared that he valued Chilean woman as mothers above all else (Agosin 1987, 27). However, much to his dismay, women were subsequently led by right wing groups to fight his government that they claimed threatened the traditional family way of life in Chile. Women took to the streets, banging empty pots (ironically a feminine object) to protest Allende's socialist and ineffective economic policies (Stern 2006, 62-63; Waylen 1992, 303). In 1973, General Augusto Pinochet led a coup and installed an authoritarian regime. Before the coup, political freedom existed in Chile, and this minimized the need for political protests. However, the oppression of the Pinochet regime eventually spawned social movements that emerged to challenge the regime's policies. While other social groups, such as students and workers, played a role in the eventual ousting of Pinochet, our focus is on the unique ways in which women emerged and formulated an autonomous movement, utilizing their traditional role to challenge the dictatorship.

Like Allende, Pinochet also underestimated the power of women. Immediately following the coup of 1973, Pinochet publicly thanked women for their support of the overthrow and transition of the government, saying that "women are the 'pillars' that support the 'reconstruction of the country'" (Agosin 2008, 40). Women's interests were defined as domestic and deferential to the patriarchal figure, in this case Pinochet (Agosin 1987, 34; Stern 2006, 58; Valenzuela 1991, 161). The traditional, apolitical role of women was thus reinforced. The ideology of the authoritarian government revolved around the national security doctrine which created even greater patriarchal structures that pushed women farther into their conventional domestic and familial roles. In order to maintain control of the state, the government enforced a gendered dichotomy of society, causing women to fear the collapse of their beloved Chilean culture if the traditional gender roles were not upheld. Initially, Pinochet's economic policies caused widespread unemployment and underemployment which led to many women assuming the role of the primary breadwinner of the family, a development which

undermined the assumed gender roles enforced by the Pinochet dictatorship and placed more economic pressure on women to challenge the regime (Dandavati 2005, 40). In addition, the regime's murder and oppression of thousands of Chileans, mostly men and boys, left many women alone both economically and psychologically. As women encountered and endured excessive repression by the government in the form of economic devastation and disappearances of their loved ones, they begin to organize collectively into a movement for change (Garretón 2003, 80).

WOMEN'S ENTRANCE INTO POLITICS AS *ARPILLERISTAS*

During the first ten years of military rule all organized opposition was forbidden, and any movement that formed to resist the regime had to do so surreptitiously. This provided an opportunity for women to organize on the basis of their identity. Because the authoritarian government pre-constructed an identity of women as domestic care-takers who were to remain within the boundaries of their private lives, they ignored most actions by women. The disparaging economic situation and the disappearance of loved ones caused women to mobilize to combat these hardships. In order to survive in the face of dire poverty, many women who had historically conformed to the traditional female role in society were now forced to take on a more active and public role. Some women formed popular economic organizations (*organizaciones económicas populares*) while others joined shopping collectives (or *comprando juntas*) to buy food at lower prices. In addition, human rights groups emerged as the number of disappeared and political prisoners grew (Chuchryk 1991). One of the most notable groups to mobilize during this time was the *arpilleristas*. Formulated to sustain women economically and protest the human rights violations of the authoritarian government, the *arpillera* workshops provide an epitomic example of a collective women's organization that arose in opposition to the authoritarian regime (Moya-Raggio 1984).

The Catholic Church played an integral role in providing a haven under which women could organize in an effort to support themselves and resist the authoritarian regime. Following the coup, the Church summarily organized the Pro-Paz (For Peace) Committee whose immediate function was to aid those whose human rights had been violated and later to provide basic items to people in need. However, the military Junta dissolved the Pro-Paz Committee after only two years because it believed it had aided people the regime considered to be terrorists. Subsequently, the Catholic Church, an organization protected from government persecution, formed the Vicariate of

Solidarity to continue the work of Pro-Paz. The Vicariate worked to assist many of the regime's victims, including the economically marginalized and those who had been victims of Pinochet's repression. Its programs included therapies and medical help for victims of torture or disappearance, soup kitchens, unemployment groups, and craft workshops (Adams 2002a, 29). As the sole organization in the country that denounced the human rights violations of the military regime, the Vicariate established twenty regional offices in various areas of Chile which aided some 700,000 people within the first months of its existence (Agosin 1987; 2008).

The Vicariate organized craft workshops for women who were mostly from poor shantytowns as a place of refuge in which they could be heard through the daunting task of creating *arpilleras*. *Arpilleras*, which means burlap in Spanish, are "tapestries embroidered with scraps of recycled cloth [which] depicted the political struggles of human-rights activists, protests, and stories of the disappeared, as well as scenes from everyday life" (Baldez 2002, 130). The women in these workshops first and foremost converged on practical, feminine lines as they were most affected by the crippling of their daily, private lives by the government. Thus, women conceptualized their situation in Chile in terms of their particular interests. However, because the authoritarian regime closed off the public sphere to all citizens and subsequently emphasized the traditional role of women, its efforts backfired and women's daily lives and practical interests were thus politicized. In a state where opposition was banned, women protested the repression of the military government as *arpilleras* were made to be political statements protesting both the human rights abuses and economic policies of the Pinochet regime. Moreover, as Adams (2000) demonstrates, these art workshops in Chile allowed for the education and socialization of Chilean women to become effective political actors in a pro-democracy social movement.

The first *arpilleru* workshop was created in March 1974 by fourteen women who came to the Vicariate seeking assistance and solace amidst the disappearances and financial downturn. Prior to this meeting, these women had come to know each other while searching for their loved ones at police stations. Workshops were established throughout Santiago, approximately 200 groups in total, mostly in the city's shantytowns, and they were all organized in a similar fashion in that they depended on the Vicariate to provide materials and also to sell their work, often abroad. Due to the clandestine nature of the workshops, the vast majority of the *arpilleras* were exported to nongovernmental organizations and Chilean exiles (Adams 2002a, 30-31). Many people outside of Chile came to recognize these *arpilleras* as artistic illustrations of the human rights violations of the regime and thus added to the external pressure and eventual downfall of Pinochet.

Women in these workshops earned a modest income from the making and selling of their *arpilleras*, but they were also provided an outlet through which they could channel their anger and suffering in the form of political resistance. As one of the members of the first *arpilleru* workshop explained, “[w]e are here to denounce what happened to us and to put our anguish into the *arpilleras* so others will know. Our first motive was to use our terrible pain to tell about our demolished lives” (Agosin 2008, 47). While the *arpilleristas* began by depicting scenes associated with their disappeared loved ones and their economic hardships, they evolved and eventually illustrated a variety of human rights issues such as hunger, unemployment, soup kitchens, lack of water, political oppression, missing family members, lack of education, exile, crime, lack of health care, torture, the military, death, and even imagined reunions with disappeared loved ones. The progression of the *arpilleru* movement reveals how women, first coming together for practical, typically feminine reasons to fulfill their roles as mothers and caretakers of the family, internalized their domestic role and emerged with the ability to mobilize and fulfill their social and political roles. With the political world closed to the public the private was made political. Because of the environment the government inadvertently constructed, the *arpilleristas* were able to undermine the patriarchal framework that had forced on them a traditional gendered structure. They used their labor and capital in this newly opened political space to create something tangible that served as a form of communication and protest (Chuchryk 1991, 155).

The movement mobilized women, often causing those who had never before participated in anything outside their home to discuss, learn, develop, and eventually take political action. Andriana Rojas, who began making *arpilleras* in order to feed her three small children, commented that “[m]aking *arpilleras* allowed me to mature and liberate myself. Before, I was not able to converse, but I discovered I could be valued as a person, I could create something and be paid for it” (Agosin 2008, 160). Another *arpillerista*, Charo Henríquez, related how through these workshops, many of the women began to understand the oppressive power structures that governed their society and discuss their identities as women for the first time. She explained that “there were lectures informing women about their rights [...] I was educated about women’s bodies and about who I am as a person. We began to work on the theme of being women so that we would begin to value ourselves as people so that we would love ourselves as we were” (Agosin 2008, 150). Many women had never before been engaged in public political activities. The *arpilleru* workshops educated women about the world and oppression that was occurring not only by the military-authoritarian regime but by the traditional patriarchal power structure as well. Thus, through this collective learning and dialogue, women were empowered and mobilized politically to protest and

reveal the atrocities they encountered. Many *arpilleristas*, beyond the making of *arpilleras*, began to protest openly in marches and demonstrations and participated in hunger strikes, for example. When Agosin (2008, 51) asked if the women were afraid while taking part in a demonstration, they commented that “[a]fraid, no. In fact, just the opposite. That demonstration, like the *arpillerera*, is a way of saying what can’t be said in any other fashion, to tell what is really happening in our country. The fact that we meet together here in the workshop is very important because we give each other courage to go out in the street together”. *Arpillerera* workshops were more than just places for women to make a little money and record the abuses of the time to inform others; they provided women a means through which they learned to mobilize and resist the regime through multiple outlets.

From these women’s experiences, we begin to understand how resistance can be gendered and how particular mechanisms of political resistance inform the progression of the women’s movement as a whole. A myriad of groups, the *arpilleristas* being one, had emerged in the shadows after the coup that brought Pinochet to power. Women had mobilized in different groups around economic concerns, human rights violations, and feminist issues. On June 20, 1983, twenty-four women’s groups came together to form MEMCH-83 (Movement for the Emancipation of Chilean Women) (Baldez 2002, 150; Valenzuela 1991, 172). Women’s organizations continued to participate in and hold protests of their own in order to alleviate the economic, social, and political problems they encountered. However, women began to realize that in order to create a united political front against the Pinochet dictatorship they would have to find a way to integrate into the larger political movement while striving to maintain their particular interests (Friedman 2010, 294). As in other democratic revolutionary contexts, women in Chile joined forces with other forces for democracy in order to overthrow the dictatorship (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). The women’s movement ultimately divided in 1988 between those feminists who sought to operate autonomously from the political party framework and the state (the Concertación de Organizaciones Sociales de Mujeres) and those who willing to struggle for greater equality for women within the political framework (Concertación de Mujeres por la Democracia) (Schild 1998, 100). Because Pinochet’s regime was not in as severe an economic crisis as many other military dictatorships in the 1980s, it was able to hold onto power longer and negotiate its withdrawal from power (Haggard and Kaufman 1995, 76-83). This meant that women and other groups seeking power were forced to negotiate the withdrawal of the authoritarian regime rather than simply replace it. The subsequent new democratic regime was less able to bring dramatic social change, including a redefined role for women in public life, as a result

(Munck and Skalnik Leff 1999, 196-198; Whitehead 2002, 213-236).

WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

With mass mobilization, opposition political parties, such as The Democratic Alliance (AD) and the Popular Democratic Movement (MDP) that had been defunct for many years, seized this opportunity to reemerge. During the era of the dictatorship, parties had been replaced by popular organizations that organized the poor, women, and grass-roots opposition (Oxhorn 1995). The two opposition parties galvanized women by creating Women For Life (*Mujeres por la Vida*, or MPLV) which sought to unite women and develop policies in gendered terms (Baldez 2002, 156). MPLV staged a rally in Santiago which brought together members of the opposition, those from the AD and MDP and various economic, human rights, and feminist groups, in order to urge a return to democracy. Nearly 10,000 women attended and from there the MPLV organized and participated in more than 170 protests, demonstrations, and hunger strikes (Baldez 2002, 158). Even though it received more support than any other women's coalition at the time, the MPLV still existed as only one coalition among many. Women were left with the choice between integrating with the political parties or continuing their autonomous movement to enact change. Prior to the 1973 coup, parties had aided the state in its assertion of traditional public and private roles for men and women. Now, despite their established hostility towards political parties, women's groups were compelled to either integrate with them or risk being eliminated from the political space they had created. During this transition to democracy the party elites realized that to defeat the opposition in the 1988 plebiscite women's votes were crucial. In the end, a cooperative relationship developed between the political parties and the women's movement. Women's groups were now active in open, public political activities as they presented demands and proposals to the parties with the expectations that the parties would work to achieve their agenda (Dandavati 2005, 87-88).

This strategy proved successful. In 1988, Pinochet was defeated, and he stepped down in 1990. However, the democratization process was limited and controlled in the Chilean case so that the social movements that had emerged during Pinochet's dictatorship were constrained in gaining power in the period of democratic transition (Paley 2001). Democracy and party politics officially returned to Chile with election of Patricio Aylwin to the presidency in 1990. Aylwin had initiated contact with women's organizations and incorporated women's interests in his policy agenda. However, despite the important role

that women played in the transition to democracy, little if any legislation regarding women's issues emerged under Aylwin. The traditional gendered political roles of society reemerged and began to permeate Chilean society once again (Adams 2002b). Women had done their part to help fight the opposition; now they could return to their homes. Democracy had become institutionalized, and women found it difficult to fit into the political space created by these institutions that had traditionally been dominated by the public male figures in society (Franceschet 2005). In the early 1990s, women formed only five percent of the parliament (Waylen 1993, 579). More importantly, few if any laws were passed under the new democratic regime that promoted greater gender equity in society (Baldez 2002, 183). Thus, the arrival of democracy, which owed so much to the efforts of women and their social movement of resistance against the dictatorship, provided women little immediate reward for their alliance with traditional political parties.

In addition, those women's groups that formed around practical interests were marginalized once again when the more traditional party politics returned. The new democratic government never fully investigated the human rights abuses committed by Pinochet's regime, partly because Pinochet had been able to negotiate his own demise rather than quickly and dramatically be removed from power. Clear confirmation of the democratic government's limited attention paid to practical women's groups following the transition can be seen in what happened to the *arpilleristas*. Following the return of democracy in 1989, the Vicariate of Solidarity ceased their sponsorship of the *arpillera* workshops in 1992 (Agosin 2008, 60). The Vicariate saw the *arpillera* workshops' purpose of providing a haven for women under the oppressive military regime as no longer necessary. The Church now reassumed a more conservative political role it had historically played. Even though *arpillera* workshops continued on a small scale following the transition to democracy, they no longer served their purpose as they had during military rule. The institutional barriers that had once existed to keep women out were again erected. Regrettably, the regaining of political rights for women was not accompanied by a widening of social rights (Waylen 1994, 343). The major political parties have provided "lip-service" to women's equality, but they never seriously attempted to follow through on the issues that were of importance to Chilean women.

Despite the difficulties for women after the transition to democracy, some progress does merit noting. The Chilean government has created the Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (SERNAM), "a national governmental body directly responsible to the president and staffed by feminists from the Christian Democrats and Socialists, coordinating, evaluating, and executing government policies on women" (Waylen 1993, 581). Thus, women have not been totally

excluded from the government although some question the legitimacy and authority that SERNAM possesses in advancing feminist causes (Ríos-Tobar 2005, 144; Schild 1998, 101-102). After what women and men experienced under Pinochet, it is safe to say the Chilean political and social landscape had been altered. Such extensive suffering and passionate resistance by many of the nation's people cannot merely be forgotten. Mobilized and empowered women cannot be simply pushed back into traditional roles. Even though the public presence of the women's movement was scaled back after the democratic transition, feminists' demands have increasingly been incorporated into public agendas (Ríos-Tobar 2005, 139-140). Moreover, Schild (1998, 95) contends that the efforts of feminist activists in Chile have been transformed into resources through which the state has redefined the appropriate behavior of citizens.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN CONTEMPORARY CHILEAN POLITICS

In a conservative, tradition-lad country historically dominated by male politicians and the Catholic Church, the 2006 electoral victory of Michelle Bachelet, “a woman, a Socialist, separated, [and] agnostic”, is an anomaly that has allowed women less stigmatized access to public office and the Presidency to develop a more intimate relationship with the people (Rieff 2007). The Pinochet regime politicized Bachelet. She was briefly imprisoned with her mother, and her father was tortured and died in military custody in 1974. As the first woman to be elected President of Chile but also a President who personally experienced Chile's charred past, Bachelet broke barriers. Even though there is still much work to be done in terms of a women's agenda, she improved the lives of Chilean women, for instance, by building more day-care centers than any previous administration, improving the enforcement of laws dealing with violence against women, legalizing alimony payments to divorced women, and introducing gender parity in her initial cabinet (Barrionuevo 2009; Chavarría 2010).

While the election of a President does not mean sexism or patriarchic attitudes have disappeared, Bachelet's personal characteristics and past do not conform to the traditional gendered image of women in Chilean society. Thus, Chileans have experienced a change in their perception of women, not only in terms of the election of a woman President but increased attention to issues of concern to women (Friedman 2010). This has been a critical step for post-transition Chile. The Chilean women's movement may not have achieved major victories immediately after the transition to democracy, but it has slowly

impacted the Chilean conceptualization of women as legitimate actors in public life and helped to bring attention to issues of concern to women. As Michelle Bachelet stated, “I believe that we have succeeded in creating a stable, solid democracy, and surely I’m not being self-serving when I say that it is extraordinary that women can be elected in a society like this one. There are tremendous expectations. Symbolically, we’ve opened the windows and doors to let ordinary people in, to encourage them to participate, but things simply cannot move as fast as people hope” (Rieff 2007).

CONCLUSION

Process-tracing of the women’s movement that emerged in Chile during Pinochet’s regime and the transition to democracy reveals the complexity but also the necessity of applying grand theories and concepts to a particular case. Many women, once occupying only a private role in Chilean society, became politicized and empowered in their resistance to the oppressive Pinochet regime and the patriarchal power structures under which they had been living. The *arpillera* movement is a quintessential example of the women’s movement at-large. The *arpilleristas*, through their creation and denouncement of the regime, formed an opposition movement that contributed to the greater resistance. While many women in the transition to democracy had high hopes of their interests and concerns being quickly integrated into governmental policies, these hopes have not been fully realized. As Bachelet alluded to herself, change takes time. However, Bachelet and her high approval ratings when she left office in March of 2010 have paved the way for the consolidation of democracy in Chile and a greater role for women in Chilean politics.

Further case-studies on women’s social movements would be useful to examine whether these movements chose to integrate or remain autonomous after democratic transitions. With the examination of similar movements, we could ascertain what actions women who are seeking greater involvement in the government following a transition could take in order to increase their chances of a more expedient integration of their agenda and policies. In order to ensure successful democratic transitions, it is evident that the concerns of women should be addressed. The *arpillera* represents a symbol of the women’s movement that emerged and has had profound effects on Chilean society. As Agosin (2008, 34) contends, “[t]he *arpillera* belongs to the history of marginality; it assumes a truth that the country has tried to deny”.

REFERENCES

- Acemoglu, D. and J. A. Robinson(2006), *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Adams, J.(2000), "Movement Socialization in Art Workshops: A Case from Pinochet's Chile," *Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 615-638.
- _____(2002a), "Art in Social Movements: Shantytown Women's Protest in Pinochet's Chile," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 21-56.
- _____(2002b), "Gender and Social Movement Decline: Shantytown Women and the Prodemocracy Movement in Pinochet's Chile," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 285-322.
- Agosin, M.(1987), *Scraps of Life, Chilean Arpilleras: Chilean Women and the Pinochet Dictatorship*, Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press.
- _____(2008), *Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Baldez, L.(2002), *Why Women Protest: Women's Movements in Chile*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- _____(2003), "Women's Movements and Democratic Transition in Chile, Brazil, East Germany and Poland," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 253-272.
- Barrionuevo, A.(2009), "Chilean President Rides High as Term Ends," *New York Times*, October 29.
- Beck, N.(2006), "Is Causal-Process Observation an Oxymoron?," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 347-352.
- Beckwith, K.(2000), "Beyond Compare? Women's Movements in Comparative Perspective," *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 431-468.
- Bennett, A. and C. Elman(2006), "Complex Causal Relations and Case Study Methods: The Example of Path Dependence," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 250-267.
- Boudreau, V. and D. S. Meyer(2009), "Social Movements," in Todd Landman and Neil Robinson, *The Sage Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Los Angeles: Sage, pp. 348-361.
- Caporaso, J.(2009), "Is There a Quantitative-Qualitative Divide in Comparative Politics? The Case of Process-Tracing," in Todd Landman and Neil Robinson, *The Sage Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Los Angeles: Sage, pp. 67-83.
- Chavarría, P. E.(2010), "In Chile, Departing President Michelle Bachelet Proved Women Can Lead," *Washington Post*, March 14.
- Chuchryk, P.(1991), "Feminist Anti-Authoritarian Politics: The Role of Women's Organizations in the Chilean Transition to Democracy," in Jane Jaquette, *The Women's Latin American Movement*, Boulder: Westview, pp. 149-184.
- Dandavati, A.(2005), *Engendering Democracy in Chile*, New York: Peter Lang.
- Domínguez, J. I. and M. Shifter(2008), *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Fortuny Loret de Mola, P., L. Ribeiro, and M. Solís Lizama(2009), "Brazilian and Mexican

- Women: Interacting with God in Florida,” in Philip Williams, Timothy J. Steigenga, and Manuel A. Vásquez, *A Place to Be: Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican Immigrants in Florida's New Destinations*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, pp. 188-226.
- Franceschet, S.(2005), *Women and Politics in Chile*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Friedman, E. J.(2010), “Seeking Rights from the Left: Gender and Sexuality in Latin America,” in Amrita Basu, *Women's Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms*, Boulder: Westview, pp. 285-314.
- Garretón, M. A.(2003), *Incomplete Democracy: Political Democratization in Chile and Latin America*, (trans.)R. Kelly Washbourne and Gregory Horvath, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- George, A. L. and A. Bennett(2005), *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Gering, J.(2004), “What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2, pp. 341-354.
- _____(2007), *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Haggard, S. and R. R. Kaufman(1995), *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hawkins, D.(2009), “Case Studies,” in Todd Landman and Neil Robinson, *The Sage Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Los Angeles: Sage, pp. 50-66.
- Hurtig, J. and R. Montoya(2005), “Women's Political Lives in Latin America: Reconfiguring Terrains of Theory, History, and Practice,” *Latin America Research Review*, Vol. 40, No. 1, pp. 188-201.
- Jaquette, J. S.(1991), *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy*, Boulder: Westview Press.
- Krause, W.(2004), “The Role and Example of Chilean and Argentinean Mothers in Democratisation,” *Development in Practice*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 366-380.
- Markowitz, L. and K. W. Tice(2002), “Paradoxes of Professionalization: Parallel Dilemmas in Women's Organizations in the Americas,” *Gender & Society*, Vol. 16, No. 6, pp. 941-958.
- Maoz, Z.(2002), “Case Study Methodology in International Studies: From Storytelling to Hypothesis Testing,” in Frank P. Harvey and Michael Brecher, *Evaluating Methodology in International Studies*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 161-186.
- Martin, B. and C. T. Mohanty(1999), “Feminist Politics: What's Home Got to Do with It?,” in Morag Shiach, *Feminism and Cultural Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 517-539.
- Mohanty, C. T.(1997), “Women Workers and Capitalist Scripts: Ideologies of Domination, Common Interests, and the Politics of Solidarity,” in M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, New York: Routledge, pp. 3-29.
- _____(2002), “Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of

- Feminism,” in Philomena Essed and David Theo Goldberg, *Race Critical Theories: Text and Context*, Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 195-219.
- Molyneux, M.(1985), “Mobilization Without Emancipation? Women’s Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua,” *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 227-254.
- Moya-Raggio, E.(1984), “*Arpilleras*: Chilean Culture of Resistance,” *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 277-290.
- Munck, G. L. and C. Skalnik Leff(1999), “Modes of Transition and Democratization: South America and Eastern Europe in Comparative Perspective,” in Lisa Anderson, *Transitions to Democracy*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 193-216.
- Noonan, R. K.(1995), “Women Against the State: Political Opportunities and Collective Action Frames in Chile’s Transition to Democracy,” *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 81-111.
- Oxhorn, P.(1995), *Organizing Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy in Chile*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Paley, J.(2001), *Marketing Democracy: Power and Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ray, R. and A. C. Korteweg(1999), “Women’s Movements in the Third World: Identity, Mobilization, and Autonomy,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 25, pp. 47-71.
- Rieff, D.(2007), “After the Caudillo,” *New York Times*, November 18.
- Ríos-Tobar, M.(2005), “Chilean Feminism(s) in the 1990s: Paradoxes of an Unfinished Transition,” in Jude Howell and Diane Mulligan, *Gender and Civil Society: Transcending Boundaries*, New York: Routledge, pp. 139-162.
- Rueschemeyer, D.(2003), “Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 305-336.
- Schild, V.(1998), “New Subjects of Rights? Women’s Movements and the Construction of Citizenship in the ‘New Democracies,’” in Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar, *Culture of Politics, Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements*, Boulder: Westview, pp. 93-117.
- Sorensen, G.(2008), *Democracy and Democratization: Processes and Prospects in a Changing World*, 3rd ed., Boulder: Westview.
- Stephen, L.(1997), *Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power from Below*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Stern, S. J.(2006), *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet’s Chile, 1973-1988*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Tarrow, S.(1994), *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Valenzuela, M. E.(1991), “The Evolving Roles of Women under Military Rule,” in Paul W. Drake and Iván Jaksic, *The Struggle for Democracy in Chile, 1982-1990*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 161-187.
- Waylen, G.(1992), “Rethinking Women’s Political Participation and Protest: Chile 1970-1990,”

Political Studies, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 299-314.

_____(1993), "Women's Movements and Democratisation in Latin America," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 573-587.

_____(1994), "Women and Democratization: Conceptualizing Gender Relations in Transition Politics," *World Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 327-354.

Whitehead, L.(2002), *Democratization: Theory and Experience*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Article Received: 2011. 04. 07

Accepted: 2011. 04. 28