

**SERVICIO NACIONAL de la MUJER AND THE WOMEN'S
MOVEMENT IN CHILE, 1991-2009**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfilment in
requirements for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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Date: 25th July, 2011

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Servicio Nacional de la Mujer and the Women’s Movement in Chile, 1991-2009**” submitted by me in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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FOR MY FAMILY

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I own sole responsibility for the contents of this text.

ACRONYMS

- AD: Democratic Alliance
- AFDD: The Chilean Association of The Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared
- ANAMURI: *Asociacion Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indigenas*
- CEDAW: United Nations Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- CIDEMS: Women Information Centers
- CMD: *Concertación de Mujeres por la Democracia /Coalition of Women for Democracy*
- CNI: National Center for Information
- COPACHI: Cooperative Committee for Peace
- CPD: *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia / Coalition of Parties for Democracy*
- DINA: Directorate of National Intelligence
- GDP: Gross Domestic Product
- GIM: *Grupo Iniciativa Mujeres*
- IMF: International Monetary Fund
- ISI: Import Substitution Industrialisation
- MDP: *Movimiento Democrático Popular /Popular Democratic Alliance*
- MIDEPLAN: Ministry of Planning and Cooperation
- MOMUPO: Movement of Shantytown Women

- MPLV: *Mujeres Por la Vida* or Women for Life
- MUDECHI: Women of Chile
- NSC: National Security Council
- PDC: Christian Democratic Party
- PS: Socialist Party
- SAP: Structural Adjustment Programmes
- SERNAM: *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*
- REMOS: *Red de Mujeres de Organizaciones Sociales*
- UNO: United Nations Organisation
- UP: *Unidad Popular*

CONTENTS

	Page No.
Acknowledgement	iv
Acronyms	v-vi
CHAPTER ONE	1-9
Introduction	
CHAPTER TWO	10-32
Military Regime and the 'Re-foundation' of Women	
CHAPTER THREE	33-61
<i>Servicio Nacional de la Mujer</i> and the Women's Movement	
CHAPTER FOUR	62-70
Summary and Conclusion	
References	71-75

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

The women's movement in Chile had emerged as a response to the brutal authoritarianism of the military regime under General Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990) marred by censorship, violence, torture, executions and disappearances and in support of the emancipation of women. The various political and economic changes imposed by the military had directly and adversely affected women in countless ways. Once in power, the military introduced its 'Re-foundation' programme aimed at transforming the Chilean nation with a patriarchal discourse as an integral part of it. The family was thus to be the building block of Chilean life and a pillar for political stability. A woman's role was restricted to the home and raising a family (Moenne and Webb, 2005).

However the brutal dictatorship, under which any resistance to it was crushed and men were killed, incarcerated or simply disappeared, destroyed the fundamental fabric of what constituted a family by leaving it without its breadwinner. This contradiction, when women were now left to fend for themselves and their families and the failure of the neo-liberal economic policy adopted by the regime which resulted in unemployment, poverty and rising costs, compelled women to mobilise and engage the public/political sphere once reserved for men, giving rise to a woman's movement (Baldez, 2004).

Also, the women's movement broadened the definition of politics with its slogan "Democracy on the streets and in the home" to include personal and domestic relations and thus challenged the patriarchal power in the society. It developed a critique of women's social, political, economic inequality as a part of their larger opposition to the military rule. In the struggle against the military regime, the women's movement had displayed a considerable degree of cross-class and multi-party solidarity (Baldez, 2004 ; Mooney and Campbell, 2009)

After the transition to democracy the women's movement witnessed a political dissolution. The cracks in the movement had already appeared during the transitional

period. Many reasons have been cited for the dissolution of the movement such as the reassertion of the public /private or political/social distinctions which were blurred under the dictatorship when formal political arenas were closed and day to day private issues politicised; the re-emergence of political parties and the resumption of their central role as the representative institutions responsible for “interest articulation and aggregation”; the debate over “autonomy” versus “integration” i.e. to rejoin political parties or maintain their autonomy which comes up as political activities become more formalised during the democratisation process ; NGO-ization with many grass root movements converting themselves into NGOs (Waylen 1996, 2000; Richards, 2002, 2004).

Besides these, *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (SERNAM) has also been credited for weakening the women’s movement. It was established in 1991 to “collaborate with the executive branch in the design and coordination of public policies that will put an end to the discrimination that affects women in the family, social, economic, political and cultural spheres” by the *Concertación* government of Patricio Aylwin, following up on the demand made for such a government agency by a women’s group during the transitional period.

Placed within the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (MIDEPLAN) which is responsible for the majority of Chile’s social programs, SERNAM was created with a non-ministerial status. However, the director of SERNAM enjoys the ranking of Minister of State and can therefore participate in cabinet meetings. Its mandate is achieved through inter-sectoral coordination, legal reforms, training public servants in a gendered perspective on public policy, designing social policy, increasing women’s social and political participation, international cooperation and research aimed at the community level.

SERNAM, it is argued, affects the women’s movement by shaping power relations among different segments, contributing to divisions between those on the inside and outside of the emerging gender policy networks. While SERNAM is extending policy access to one aspect of the movement- women activists in the NGOs -little access is being created for grassroots organisations. The policy access being created is thus limited to one segment of the movement. This is fostering resentment and a sense of exclusion among women on the “outside” of these newly emerging gender policy

networks. This is the direct result of SERNAMs stronger relationship rather a clientelist relationship with activists in the NGO community and their failure to forge links to grassroots women's movements. By drawing activists from the civil society to the state, SERNAM has been blamed not only for weakening women's movement by depriving women of crucial leadership but also facilitating state control over women's movement (Waylen, 2000; Alvarez, 1999).

The success of SERNAM is limited by the agency's structure. Its mandate is to propose and create policy not to work directly with women which conflicts with the earlier expectations of the women's movement that SERNAM would work more directly with women's organizations. It is also prohibited by law from implementing its own programme as it is not a ministry on its own and is rather charged with proposing and creating public policies for other ministries or agencies. SERNAM's indirect role in government restrains it from helping to enact legislation concerning equal representation of women. Instead, SERNAM addresses its goals by operating as an executive agency that channels the demands of women into policy suggestions for the other ministries within the Chilean government. It is also faced with problems such as low budgets and low status within the bureaucracy which adversely affects its efficiency. SERNAM also continues to avoid addressing potentially controversial issues such as birth control, instead sticking to low-volatility issues and it has also been observed that the SERNAM leadership has consistently been appointed from the same party as the elected president and thus sticks to issues that best suit the interests of the political party in power (Matear , 1997; Baldez, 2001 ;Waylen 2000)

To the contrary, it has also been argued that SERNAM instead of weakening the women's movement actually provides it with important resources and a discourse of women's rights and a set of objectives around which to mobilize. The women's organization in Chile are using SERNAMs own discourse to pressure the state to fulfill its commitment to women and also to address class and ethnicity besides gender as sources of women's marginalization (Franceschet, 2003).

It has also been argued that the cross-class unity and the high levels of public visibility displayed by the women's movement under the dictatorship were linked to particular circumstances posed by it. These were forged when they had a common enemy –the dictatorship and a common goal- democracy. The lack of cross class

unity, fragmentation and less public visibility post transition are reflective of a normal state of affairs as differently situated women in a democratic context have different interests and different ways to pursue them (Franceschet, 2003).

This chapter proceeds as follows:

2. Literature Review

Sonia Alvarez (1998) while defining a women's movement stresses on "autonomy" arguing that a women's movement must somewhat be autonomous from other political and social organisations.

Maxine Molyneux (1998) argues that a women's movement need not have a single organisational expression and that it may be characterized by a diversity of interests, forms of expression, and spatial location.

Jane Jacquette (1989) and Veronica Schild (1994) opine that women, living under authoritarian regimes, mobilize when their capacities to fulfill their social responsibilities are undermined due to state repression and/or economic policies that negatively affect living standards.

According to Maxine Molyneux (1985), women organise around both "practical" gender interests as well as "strategic" gender interests. The "practical gender interests do not challenge women's subordination and they address their immediate needs and concerns such as consumption issues. The "strategic" gender interests on the other hand challenge women's subordination.

Helen Safa (1990) argues that the collectivisation and politicisation of the "practical gender interests" may lead to a greater consciousness of gender subordination which results in the transformation of the "practical gender interests" into "strategic gender interests".

The repression of the conventional political space by the authoritarian regime contributed towards the emergence of the woman's movement. With the political parties and institutions clamped down by the military, the locus of political activity shifted from institutional to community based actions where women have greater opportunities to participate. This gave women's activities greater prominence and significance (Alvarez, 1990; Waylen 1993, et.al)

Moreover, the authoritarian regime did not consider women's activities as dangerous enough to warrant repression as they did not consider their activities to be political in nature. Women used their traditional roles as the linchpin of their protests. This made it harder for the military, which supposedly elevated motherhood, to persecute women who argued that they were only fulfilling their maternal roles by looking for their missing children. (Waylen, 1993).

Georgina Waylen (1993) opines that the women's movement had, by bringing about an "end of fear" through their protests against the human rights violations, played an important role in the initial breakdown of the military rule.

According to Lisa Baldez (2004) , et.al, the exclusion of women from the process of realignment, the point at which actors within the democratic opposition formed new alliances with one another (with the reconstitution of the conventional political space) and the exclusion of their concerns from the agendas which articulated by primarily male opposition leaders heightened the political salience of gender relative to other cleavages and triggered the formation of a united front among women's organisations. The women's movement therefore coalesced when women framed their mobilisation in terms of their status outside the political arena. This exclusion had led to the achievement of across-class and multi-party solidarity.

Philip Oxhorn (1994), Haas (2005) et al, opine that there has post transition to democracy the women's movement has demobilised and that it no longer displays the cross class and multi-party solidarity that it achieved under the authoritarian rule.

Waylen(2000), Haas (2005) argue that post transition to democracy the Chilean women's movement has witnessed a political dissolution and that the democratic transition itself and the "institutionalisation" of gender policy within states have contributed to this dissolution.

Nikki Craske (1998) opines that the simultaneity of the transitions to democracy which led to the reassertion of the political/social distinctions (blurred under the dictatorship) and the neoliberal economic restructuring which involved the withdrawal of the State support from many important sectors posed obstacles to women's activism by increasing women's burden, leaving them with less time for

political activism led to the demobilization of women's movement post transition to democracy.

Philip Oxhorn (1994) blames the government policy that seeks to tame potentially destabilizing movement demands by co-opting organizations for the demobilisation.

Another reason cited by many scholars such as Waylen (1994), Alvarez (1999), Baldez(2004) is the "autonomy" versus "integration" dilemma which they state has been divisive and has split many women's movements. This dilemma comes up with the reconstitution of the conventional political space, once the democratisation process starts to unfold. All social movements then are faced with the choice of either working with the new institutions and risk being co-opted and losing autonomy, or remaining outside, preserving their independence but risking marginalisation and loss of influence as power shifts towards the political parties.

The NGOization which occurred post transition to democracy, when many grass root movements post transition converted themselves to NGOs with the shift in the nature of international funding has also been blamed for the demobilization of the women's movement. It has also led to the narrowing down of the visions of women's group.

SERNAM affects the women's movement by shaping power relations among different segments, contributing to divisions between those on the inside and outside of the emerging gender policy networks argue Waylen(2000) , Alvarez(1999) , et al. They argue that while SERNAM is extending policy access to one aspect of the movement- women activists in the NGOs –it is creating little access created for grassroots organisations. The policy access being created by state feminism is limited to one segment of the movement which is fostering resentment and a sense of exclusion among women on the “outside” of these newly emerging gender policy networks. They argue that SERNAMs has a stronger relationship, a clientlist relationship with activists in the NGO community, on the one hand , and on the other, it has failed to forge links to grassroots women's movements.

By drawing activists from the civil society to the state, SERNAM has been blamed by Schild (1998) Matear(1997) and many others for weakening women's movement by depriving women of crucial leadership.

To the contrary Susan Franceschet (2003) opines that SERNAM instead of weakening the women's movement actually provides it with important resources, most notably a discourse of women's equality and a set of objectives around which to mobilize.

Susan Franceschet (2003) argues that the dictatorship era movement should not be held up as the "norm" and instead, the movements in other democracies where they are seldom unified and conflict among segments of the movement over strategy and ideology is common should be taken as the "norm" - the fragmentation is thus an expression of "normalisation" of movement politics.

Susan Franceschet (2003) also opines that collective action has not declined but has become less visible because since the return of democracy, attention has shifted to the "formal" political arena and away from the "informal" arena of civil society and that women continue to be active but are having trouble finding expressions for their activism that would draw greater public attention.

Organisation of Research

Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

The study is an analysis of the impact that SERNAM has had on the women's movement in Chile post transition to democracy.

The study aims to analyse how the women's movement in Chile has fared, after transition to democracy, in the new institutional context posed by the establishment of SERNAM.

The scope of the study will focus on the following themes:

- A background of the women's movement that arose in reaction to the brutal authoritarianism of the military regime under General Pinochet (1973-1990).
- The women's movement during the transitional period.
- The establishment of SERNAM with focus on its organisational structure.
- Women's movement post transition to democracy and the analysis of the movement within the new institutional context posed by the establishment of SERNAM.

Chapters

Chapter Two: Military Regime and the 'Re-foundation' of Women

- A study of the women's movement that emerged in Chile during the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990).

Chapter Three: *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* and the Women's Movement

- An analysis of the women's movement post transition to democracy in the new institutional context posed by the establishment of SERNAM- has SERNAM contributed to the dissolution of the women's movement or has it in fact helped in strengthening the movement?

Chapter Four: Conclusion

- This chapter will contain the conclusion of the research focussing on assessment of the effect that SERNAM has had on the women's movement post transition.

CHAPTER TWO

MILITARY REGIME AND 'RE-FOUNDATION' OF WOMEN

Chile, in the first half of the twentieth century, witnessed its first wave of women's mobilisation when a suffragist movement emerged in the 1930s. This suffragist movement is often referred to it as Chile's first wave of feminism. This period was marked by the flowering of women's organisations in Chile, many of which devoted themselves to the struggle for women's suffrage. Women's reading circles, a political party, a pro-emancipation organisation and a confederation of over 200 women's organisations are just few of the examples of the activist organisations that marked the political landscape in Chile before 1953 (Noonan, 1995).

This was a time when women concentrated on female oppression and feminist critiques of social systems that subordinated women (Kirkwood, 1983). The Chilean Civil Code, in force since 1887, secured uncontested legal authority of the male heads of households to administer the lives of wives and children (Mooney and Campbell, 2009; Htun, 2003).

For instance, Article 132 of the Code defined marital power as "the set of rights that the laws concede to husbands over the person and property of their wives" which included the right of the husband to oblige his wife to live with him and to follow wherever he decides to establish residence; the right to manage the wife's property; the right to prevent the wife from appearing in court or initiating a civil suit; and the right to prevent the wife from entering into contracts or breaking them, from paying a debt, from accepting or rejecting a gift or inheritance, from acquiring property, or from serving as guardian or administrator (Htun, 2003).

Propelled by these aims and a favourable political landscape resulting from the shift in the main cleavage in party politics from religion to class, with the formation of center-left coalition known as the Popular Front, a movement emerged in the 1930s which led to the attainment of universal suffrage for women by 1949 (Franceschet, 2004; Baldez, 2004).

Post the attainment of this suffrage however, the women reverted from the political sphere and went back to their traditional priority, ushering in a twenty-five period of

“feminist silence” (Kirkwood, 1983; Baldez, 2003; Noonan, 1995). What followed thereafter was partisan control of women’s issues and their feminist demands of greater participation were put in the backburner. The parties refused to view women or their social issues as anything other than maternal. In fact, the mother-child relationship became the fulcrum around which the political frame of the political parties revolved. Women’s involvement in Chilean politics during this time was thus an extension of their role in the family, and therefore, became a key target audience for anti-communist rhetoric (of the right-wing parties), prevalent at the time, which portrayed communism as threatening children, the safety of the family and the church and educational freedom, issues commonly recognized as women’s domain (Noonan, 1995; Baldez, 2004).

This period was followed by another wave of women’s movement during the military dictatorship which is the focus of this chapter and shall be discussed in detail as the chapter proceeds.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section I, Military Regime and ‘Re-foundation’ of State, discusses the political and economic restructuring of Chile under the military regime, as part of its larger goal of transforming the country. In section II, ‘Re-foundation’ of family and Women, the role of women in Chilean society and politics as envisioned by the military junta, the impact of its policies on women and their contribution to the rise of women’s resistance are discussed. Section III, Rise of Civil Society and Coalescing of the Women’s Movement, discusses the coalescing of women’s movement with the rise of civil society and the re-opening of the political space. Section IV follows with the summary and conclusion.

Military Regime and ‘Re-foundation’ of State

In September 1973 Salvador Allende’s democratically elected *Unidad Popular* (UP), left-of-centre coalition government, was overthrown in a coup d’etat staged by the Chilean military, ushering in a sixteen year “reign of terror”. The nation was at first ruled by the same four men junta composed of the heads of the army, the air force, the navy and the national police that had led the coup with General Augusto Pinochet, the head of the Army, designated as the President of the junta. However, in December 1974, the military junta appointed General Pinochet as the President of Chile by a

joint decree. What followed the coup was a massive restructuring of the Chilean economy, its political and social systems, entailed by the military's 'Re- foundation' programme of the Chilean nation. The objective of the programme was to transform the Chilean nation - to create the nation anew (Moenne and Webb, 2005).

Political and social institutions that had been formed over the decades to ensure greater participation by all Chileans were systematically destroyed or neutralised and in their place the military attempted to establish a new political and social order which would exclude the Left and the popular forces, ensuring the continuity of this exclusionary system. This programme was initially a reaction to the contemporary Chilean history which the military felt had become too politicised.

The military preached and pursued a doctrine at variance with that of the civilian politicians and the civil society. It believed that class struggle, which had become the mainstay of Chilean society pre 1973, hampered development. They thus appointed themselves as guardians of Chilean society and stood against all social forces advocating social change. The military enforced its rule, taking inspiration from the National Security Doctrine, introduced in the training of Latin American militaries by the United States to fight communism after the Cuban Revolution of 1959. A brutal reign ensued where opposition to promote capitalism and adherence to communism or class struggle, was dealt with appropriately- by physical elimination or political neutralisation (Oppenheim, 1999).

The Political Restructuring

The junta suspended the Constitution of 1925, placed a ban on political parties associated with the *Unidad Popular* branding them "treasonous enemies" of the nation while declaring the others "in recess", subjected mass media to strict censorship, overhauled the school curricula to instruct the students on the evils of Marxism and the glories of Chile's armed forces and ended the autonomy of the universities while also purging them of faculty and students who had any kind of leftist credentials. It established a secret police force soon after the coup on June 15, 1974 called the Directorate for National Intelligence (DINA) to centralise the work of the military intelligence agencies of the different branches of the armed forces. The various articles in the decree that established the directorate gave its agents unlimited power to raid and search houses and take prisoners without charges and also

subordinated all other intelligence services in the country to it. It systematised the military repression and assisted the junta in fulfilling its purpose of preventing a widespread revolt and of suppressing virtually all organisations opposed to the military rule. DINA's unsavoury activities involved gross violations of human rights. It was dissolved in August, 1977 and replaced by the National Center for Information (CNI) amidst growing international attention and concern regarding the gross violation of human rights being perpetrated by the military regime and the mounting pressure on the junta to check them. This decision was also influenced by the changes in the foreign policy of the United States that came with the election of President Jimmy Carter in 1976, when the United States government formalised its insistence that foreign aid would be linked to a country's record on human rights. The human rights violations reduced significantly after the dissolution of DINA. However, many felt that the CNI represented only a cosmetic change in Chile's security apparatus. It was viewed with much scepticism and like its predecessor; it also drew in a lot of criticism. The CNI was disbanded upon the return of civilian government in 1990 (Sigmund, 1986; Oppenheim, 1991; Baldez, 2004).

The junta furthermore shut the Congress down as a result of which it acted as the legislature during much of the 1970s by means of a series of numbered decree laws, the so-called constitutional acts. The judiciary, which continued to function, was infested with anti-left leaning judges. Also, a decree published in September, 1973 declaring Chile under a "state of siege" effectively destroyed the judiciary's power. It authorised the military tribunals to impose death penalty for violation of the Arms Control Law, summary execution for security reasons and forbade appeals on the decisions of the military courts (Sigmund, 1986; Oppenheim, 1991; Baldez, 2004).

A new labour code, *Plan Laboral*, was also instituted in 1979 which officially eradicated most of the political leverage the Chilean working class had won since the 1920s. With this *Plan Laboral* of 1979, the union members lost the right to canvass in the workplace and protection from arbitrary firings. They were also forbidden from participating in "unpatriotic" or "subversive" activities. The *Plan Laboral* made it legal for employers to hire replacements for striking workers and limited strikes to a maximum of sixty days. Also, collective bargaining could now only be conducted on the basis of the enterprise, not on the basis of the *communa* or across industrial sectors, and therefore, federations and confederations could no longer represent

workers from multiple unions. The unions also had to have a minimum of twenty five permanent workers. The new labour plan thus dealt a major blow to all unions (Oppenheim, 1991).

This new institutionalism was formally installed through the writing of the Constitution of 1980 (Oppenheim, 1991; Tinsman, 2000).

In April, 1978 Pinochet announced that the junta would enact a new constitution that would include articles to govern transition to democracy. The idea of writing a new constitution to replace the 1925 one however had been raised since the beginning of the military rule with the junta setting up the Constituent Commission in October, 1973, made up of conservative constitutional law experts, to look into this task. It was also announced that the constitution would be subject to approval in a plebiscite. Without any public discussion or a public education campaign on the new constitution, it was ratified on September 11, 1980 in a plebiscite, organised and tightly controlled by the military government. The plebiscite was deemed fraudulent by many people (Barros, 2004; Oppenheim, 1991).

The new Constitution came into effect on March 11, 1981 and it contained both transitional and permanent articles, with the former applying to the transitional period. The transitional articles delayed putting the Constitution in force in its entirety. The Constitution specified the transition from military government to a civil one. According to the new timetable Pinochet was to remain as President until 1989, when a plebiscite would be called to vote on the presidential candidate named by the junta. If the candidate won, he would rule as President until 1997 and if he lost, elections for the Presidency and the Congress (closed since 1973) were to take place the following year. Also, during the first eight years i.e. from 1981-1989, the junta would continue to be the custodian of the legislative power as there would be no elected legislature until the inauguration of the new Congress in 1990.

The permanent articles provided for a “protected or authoritarian democracy” in which the military would continue to wield real power. For example, the Constitution provided for the creation of a National Security Council (NSC) consisting of the heads of the three branches of the armed forces and the police, the presidents of the Senate and the Supreme Court, and the President of the Republic and entrusted it with the power to “represent to any authority established by the Constitution, its opinion on

any issue which in its judgement worked against the institutional basis of the regime or could compromise national security". Given the military's majority in the council, these functions enshrined military oversight of civilian actions; made them the guardians of the new political order and a watchdog over national security issues (Oppenheim, 1991).

The Constitution also prohibited the President from firing the heads of the three branches of the armed forces and the national police force without the approval of the NSC. Freedom of thought and action were restricted; Article 8, for example, proscribed all political parties which professed the doctrine of class struggle. It also contained severe penalties for individuals acting on this belief. If found guilty by a constitutional court, they would be prohibited from holding any public office, any administrative or faculty position in any educational institution, any position in the mass media, or any political party, professional, student or union post and would be denied the right to vote for ten years. The Constitution created a two house legislature. The Upper House i.e. the Senate was to include at least nine non-elected appointed Senators besides the twenty-six elected Senators. The non-elected Senators included all the former Presidents who had served for six years; two former ministers of the Supreme Court and one former Comptroller General, both elected by the Supreme Court; a former university rector and a former minister of State, both appointed by the President, and a former head from each of the branches of the armed forces and the national police force, all elected by the NSC (Barros, 2004; Oppenheim, 1991).

The Constitution strengthened the presidency; and the legislature, in general, had far less power vis-a-vis the executive. It extended the Presidential term of office from six to eight years and prohibited immediate re-election (the latter was not applicable in the transitional period). The President could call for new elections in the lower house during his term and could declare a state of emergency, under which basic civil liberties like habeas corpus would be suspended (Oppenheim, 1999).

In all, the Constitution of 1980 was a fundamentally undemocratic doctrine whose purpose was to legitimise the military regime, prolong Pinochet's rule, institutionalize military oversight over civilian policy making, increase the President's power at the expense of the Legislature, to severely restrict popular participation and permanently exclude leftist parties from participating in politics (Oppenheim, 1999).

The Economic Restructuring

The junta under the guidance of the “Chicago Boys” replaced the state directed Import-Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) model which had been the dominant model of Chile and much of Latin America since the 1930s with monetarist free market policies associated with Milton Friedman. The “Chicago Boys” were a group of thirty Chilean economists who had studied and trained under Milton Friedman in the University of Chicago from 1955-1963 where they were completely indoctrinated in the free market theory. The training was enabled by a programme “Chile Project” organised by the United States State Department and financed by the Ford Foundation, which aimed at influencing Chilean economic thinking. Thus in 1973, an economy under heavy state control, virtually closed with high tariffs and non-tariff protection and with almost total price control and an overvalued currency, was completely liberalised and integrated in the world economy.

In this revamped economy the private sector had an increasingly predominant presence. With this integration of the national economy with the world economy, the inward-looking development strategy was replaced by an outward- looking one where domestic prices were brought into line with international relative prices and the country specialised in the production of goods in which it had comparative advantage. Most of the liberalising and deregulatory measures were applied against the backdrop of a drastic counter-inflationary stabilising programme. The state and everything linked to the public sector was turned into the central cause of all the problems and the lesser it interfered in the economy, the military believed, the greater and faster would be the growth of social welfare.

This formed the background to the numerous economic reforms introduced during the military regime: privatisations and re-privatisations, reform of the state and fiscal reform, liberalisation, deregulation, opening up the economy and Central Bank autonomy. This neo-liberal economic model called for privatisation which came to be synonymous with rationalization, efficiency and equality and thus the dismantling of state ownership, elimination of state subsidies, and determination of both the internal and international prices by the free market.

Consequently, a large number of commercial and industrial enterprises under State control at the time of Allende’s rule were returned to private hands, tariffs were

reduced to ten percent in order to encourage free trade and capital gains tax was eliminated, ostensibly to stimulate private investment. To enhance the international competitiveness of the economy there was greater labour flexibility, which in practice meant a weakening of union power and the atomization of workers. The junta also terminated a decade old agrarian reform which had distributed almost half of Chile's agricultural land to the nation's *campesino* and instead stressed on privatising communal land and replacing peasant holdings with middle and large-scale producers capable of producing lucrative cash crops for exports. The programme of economic liberalisation and privatisation was imposed against a backdrop of severe political restriction and an environment of repressed human rights (Meller, 2000; Oppenheim, 1991; Power ; Tinsman, 2000).

That a dictatorship of the armed forces with a hierarchical centralisation of power should have supported an economic model based on decentralisation with minimum intervention of the state was somewhat ironical. However, the military and the "Chicago Boys", who called themselves technocrats, had the same goal, viz to 'save Chile'. The military saw itself as protectors of the Chilean nation by saving it from falling into the hands of the communists while the Chicago economists believed that they were the repository of the formula needed to develop and transform Chile into a nation from which the communist menace would be banished forever (Oppenheim, 1991).

'Re-foundation' of Family and Women

Under its 'Re-foundation' programme the military promoted the traditional family as the pillar of social stability. The military moved public rhetoric on the family and gendered responsibilities centre-stage and promoted the notion of natural, trans-historical characteristics of family life in the service of the nation (Mooney and Campbell, 2009). The woman's proper place, therefore, was considered to be at home. With motherhood being a woman's primordial task, her duty was to produce children for the *patria*, raise the next generation of patriotic citizens, solidify the idea of a family and thereby defend the nation. Pinochet, in the image of the nation's father, relied on the cooperation and self-sacrifice of patriotic mothers (Moenne and Webb, 2005).

Under Allende's government, the women had, it was told, relinquished a part of their gendered identity by transcending to the public sphere and had therefore privileged a class or a political idea instead which threatened the establishment (Moenne and Webb, 2005). Pinochet, in order to "deepen the consciousness" of women as mothers and to further strengthen the connection between patriotic values and family values, made good use of the *Centros de Madres* or mother centres and the *Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer* or National Secretariat for Women.

Under his regime, these government mother centres first created by Eduardo Frei's reformist government in the mid-sixties to empower women and their families by offering courses, workshops and producing goods for commercial sale, were reorganised and transformed into an ideological tool to disseminate images of a "good" woman which implied self-sacrificing, patriotic and apolitical. They were completely subverted to the needs of the State for the control and co-optation of poor women. These centers offered to both rural and urban women services such as training courses that focussed largely on improving their domestic role. They discouraged political participation branding them as "unfeminine", although the members were often called upon to display their loyalty to the regime by participating in rallies and other activities. CEMA, a governmental organization also created by Frei's administration to institutionalize and coordinate thousands of *Centros de Madres*, was charged with de-politicising the mother centers by the military, reflecting the belief that the *Unidad Popular* had brought in "foreign values" that destabilized the family.

The National Secretariat for Women, founded by Salvador Allende in the early seventies was taken over and put to further ideological use. The Secretariat was created by a presidential decree and was entrusted with the creation of policies that would lead to the incorporation of women into society. It was in charge of issues typically associated as women's concerns such as price control, supply of goods such as household necessities and food, women's health, education and child care. It also organised debates about issues like legalised divorce and paternity laws and provided women with information about the services and rights to which they were entitled (Richards, 2002 ; Safa, 1990). Under the military rule, the Secretariat was headed by Pinochet's wife and was entrusted with the task of propagating "national and family values to form a consciousness and a correct comprehension of the dignity of women

and their mission within the family” (Noonan, 1995) and the “conservation, reproduction, and diffusion of the patriarchal order through an organization of women” (Cleary, 1987).

However, the existing state of affairs ran contrary to the military’s stated aim of promoting and protecting domestic harmony. Curfews, censorship, arbitrary arrests, disappearances, military raids and the general absence of a democratic process that had become the order of the day were hardly conducive to the functioning of families. Although women were declared as its ally in the defence of the nation, the atrocities committed on women – torture, rape and detention proved otherwise.

The neo-liberal economic model adopted signalled the end of state subsidies to industry, the introduction of computers and Chile’s intensified insertion into the world economy, substantial changes in production such as growth of fruit and wine industries for export which provided employment to thousands of peasant women as temporary wage earners or *temporeras* who worked under deplorable conditions marred by poor wages , long working hours with few breaks , no overtime pay and sexual assaults by the employers. Such changes led to rapid decline in men’s traditional sources of employment along with the trade union movement that had defended them. Agricultural work became highly insecure as the permanent work that *campesinos* had formerly enjoyed on state managed farms and cooperatives gave way to seasonal jobs lasting only three to six months (Tinsman, 2000).

The model also entailed withdrawal of government support in important sectors such as health, education and social security .This withdrawal which resulted in thousands losing their jobs and the cost of education and health care rising, fell hard on the popular sectors that could no longer depend on the State for access to good education and decent health care (Power; Tinsman, 2000)

Although the neo liberal economic strategy adopted enjoyed great success in the initial years with Chile registering an average annual rate of economic growth of almost eight percent between 1976-1981, it was based on import boom and a boom in speculation financed through foreign borrowing which dried up with the debt crisis of the 1980s, bringing the “miracle” to an abrupt end.

The programme of economic liberalisation and privatisation was imposed against a backdrop of severe political restriction and an environment of repressed human rights. With the onset of the debt crisis numerous companies went bankrupt, the Chilean banking system failed with almost all the banks declaring bankruptcy by the beginning of 1983 and it prompted a recession in which the GDP fell and unemployment in both the rural and the urban areas rose dramatically, at one point soaring to 34.6 percent (Meller, 2000; Oppenheim 1999). Chile was hit harder than any other Latin American country.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) offered loans to help Chile out of its desperate situation, but on strict conditions. Chile had to guarantee her entire foreign debt — an astounding sum of US\$7.7 billion. The total bailout would cost 3 percent of Chile's GNP for each of three years. The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), were therefore adopted to address the debt crisis. The SAPs resulted in increased unemployment and underemployment, a decline in real wages coupled with accelerated inflation, elimination of government subsidies for basic food stuff as well as cuts in government expenditures for social services such as health and education which had a devastating effect on women and children (Safa, 1990).

One of the consequences of this economic model was a growing concentration of wealth with a small number of large conglomerates taking over many of the former state enterprises and in the period leading up to the economic crisis they wielded enormous political clout. The economic and political models of the Pinochet regime had created a society in which the gap between the rich and the poor had grown to frightening levels and the number of poor had increased (Meller, 2000; Oppenheim 1999). The ultimate consequence of the introduction of the neo-liberal economic model coupled with the economic downturn and social persecution wherein men were imprisoned, murdered or simply disappeared, compelled women to step out of the house and seek jobs to run their families (Mooney and Campbell, 2009; Noonan, 1995; Schild, 1994).

While the military regime's patriarchal discourse defined women as dependent mothers, its economic policies forced them to take on new roles as wage labourers (Baldez, 2004).

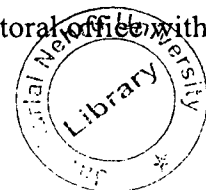
These contradictions inherent in the regime's policies fostered the development of new sections of women's resistance to the existing state of affairs, aided by the assistance extended by the international community and the support received from the Catholic Church under the leadership of Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez.

(i) The international community propelled the growth of the resistance in many ways. Foreign governments accepted thousands of exiles who fled Chile to escape political persecution and economic recession. These exiles formed an international solidarity movement against the regime. Responding to domestic pressure, these governments pressured the military regime to reduce repression and address human rights concerns. International Organisations provided a forum for the opposition and funded Chilean organisations that supported a return to democracy (Baldez, 2004).

(ii) Although the Roman Catholic Church desisted from a public condemnation of the coup, its head, Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez quickly raised his voice in support of human rights (Oppenheim, 1999). His service as Archbishop of Santiago from 1961-1983 and as Cardinal from 1962, was marked by his unfailing courage in fighting for human rights, becoming the main defender of those persecuted under the military dictatorship.

Within less than a month of the coup the Cardinal, enlisting the support of various other Churches and the Jewish community, established the Cooperative Committee for Peace (COPACHI). COPACHI, a human rights organisation, was established on October 9, 1973 in order to help out the victims of the military repression and their relatives. The organisation started by providing legal and material aid to those who asked for it and later it started providing legal advice and information on cases of Chileans who had been arrested, tortured, killed or had disappeared. By 1974 COPACHI had established a large network with hundred and three staff members in Santiago and twenty-four different offices throughout Chile (Aguilar, 2003). The military, after learning that the organisation had provided assistance to people the regime considered to be terrorists namely the members of leftist parties, put severe pressure on the organisation to dissolve. COPACHI was thus closed down in December, 1975. Thereafter, the Cardinal established the *Vicariate of Solidarity* on 1 January, 1976 to assist those suffering under the military repression. The *Vicariate* became part of the Archdiocese of Santiago and thus became a pastoral office within a

TH-20441



church that was legally separated from the Chilean State. Consequently, the military government did not have the power to close the *Vicariate* down (Aguilar, 2003). Throughout the dictatorship, the *Vicariate* was the primary source of refuge and help for victims of human rights abuses. It, despite the harassment faced amassed thousands of files of human rights abuse cases, organised private think tanks and schools and provided a protective cover to numerous grassroots organisations (Baldez, 2004; Noonan, 1995; Mooney and Campbell, 2009).

The *Vicariate* organized crafts workshops for women to make *arpilleras*, tapestries embroidered with scraps of recycled cloth. The *arpilleras* depicted the political struggles of human-rights activists, protests, and stories of the disappeared, as well as scenes from everyday life. The workshops provided therapy and a source of income for the relatives of the victims and for the *Vicariate*. The *arpilleras* empowered women in other ways as well. Many women experienced cognitive liberation through their work in these workshops, and became involved in other protests against Pinochet's regime. They also began to confront *machismo* in their homes and in society in general by claiming a wider role for women (Gelderen, 2008; Baldez, 2004).

Besides the *arpilleras*, the Church also sponsored workshops on gardening and animal husbandry. It also organised *comedores populares* or popular dining halls and *olla communes* or common pots, where poor families were fed. In *comedores populares* families ate meals that others had prepared for them whereas in the *olla communes* families paid a small amount of fee each month, gathered wood for the cooking fires and took turns cooking in order to eat. These were deliberately organised in public places where they were a spectacle to symbolically denounce the failure of the military regime to provide adequate levels of subsistence (Tinsman, 2000).

The Roman Catholic Church headed by Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, one of the few institutions which were able to withstand the military onslaught, thus provided an institutional umbrella that sheltered the opposition from repression and lent moral and material support to the victims of the regime and their family members, most of whom were women. The Church's anti-poverty programmes tended to build on and reinforce women's family based roles (Baldez, 2004). The *Vicaria* was granted the

Human Rights Prize by the United Nations Organisation (UNO) on 11 December, 1978.

Women organised themselves around the issues of human rights, economic survival and feminism (Baldez, 2004).

Women began to mobilise in defence of human rights immediately after the coup. The *Agrupacion de Mujeres Democraticas* (Association of Democratic Women), for example, was formed less than three weeks after the coup to do solidarity work with political prisoners and their families (Chuchryk, 1994). The members also belonged to the *arpilleristas*, inspiring the birth of thirty two such workshops within a period of twelve years. Another group, the *Agrupacion de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos* (The Chilean Association of The Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared) was formed in July 1975 by a group of relatives of the murdered MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement) members and it went on to become one of the principal human rights organisations in Chile. These groups provided assistance to the victims and their families, petitioned international organisations for help, organised informal networks of support for male relatives being held in prisons and in detention centres around Santiago and visited the prisons on a daily basis to distribute food, clothing and to gather information, inspiring the organisation of various other groups. However, at times, they did organise protest marches, hunger strikes and mourning of the dead in public view for which they faced imprisonment. Since much of the work had to be done clandestinely and women were off the military's radar, they were better suited to carry out these activities (Mooney and Campbell, 2009; Baldez, 2004; Krause, 2004).

The women used their traditional roles as the linchpin of the protests which made it harder for the military government that supposedly elevated motherhood to persecute women who argued that they were only fulfilling their maternal roles by searching for their missing children (Franceschet, 2004). These groups received massive support from the Church which played a dominant role throughout the dictatorship (Mooney and Campbell, 2009; Baldez, 2004; Krause, 2004).

The mobilisation of women was most dramatic in the shantytowns. During the military repression thousands of men had lost their source of livelihood because of such reasons as being thrown in prison, detention, being fired for having affiliations

with the Left and the added consequences of failure of the economic model and the economic recession. The women therefore had to find alternative ways of providing for their families. This resulted in the proliferation of neighbourhood organisations or *poblaciones*. Women, therefore, networked in popular economic organisations, subsistence organisations and community groups such as shopping collectives, soup kitchens, workshops, self-help groups, groups providing legal assistance etc., to overcome their material poverty, feelings of fear, to make ends meet and to hold their family together. Groups such as the Women of Chile (MUDECHI) and the Movement of Shantytown Women (MOMUPO) dedicated themselves to the cause of the *poblicanoes* (Schild, 1994; Noonan, 1995, Baldez 2004).

MUDECHI was started in 1982 by four women affiliated with the Communist Party. Its membership eventually grew to 8,000 women in 60 groups nationwide. MUDECHI's initial focus was on social and political problems but it soon turned towards income generating activities. As a result, they addressed the problems faced by poor women from the perspective of their position as a subordinated class (Schild, 1994; Noonan, 1995, Baldez 2004).

MOMUPO, on the other hand, formed independently from the political parties. In 1980, eight women founded MOMUPO to mobilize working-class women from shantytowns in the north of Santiago. Being working-class women, they brought "strong sense of class identity" to women's issues. They shared religious, political, and work-related connections. It helped its members understand that in order to keep their families together they had to engage the public sphere and that their personal problems resulted not from individual failings but from the larger political system (Schild, 1994; Noonan, 1995, Baldez 2004).

Women thus assumed a triple role – caretaker of the home and children, economic provider for the family and caretaker of the community (Schild, 1994; Noonan, 1995, Baldez 2004).

Women began to redefine the traditional connection between home and motherhood in the process of finding new voices as mothers. The realisation that dawned on them that there was no difference in the position of women under the military regime and her position within the family, which was patriarchal in nature, led to the re-emergence of feminist movement in the early 1980s. The movement was spearheaded

by the middle-class women who formed a series of small informally organised discussion groups to talk about social and political situation under the military regime. These groups provided an intimate forum in which women could reflect on their experiences living under the dictatorship. The Chilean feminists focussed attention on the military government's restrictive notions of gender distinction and challenged the explicitly gendered vision of the individual disseminated by the military regime. They also held the view that the struggle for democracy necessitated a fight against *machismo* and discrimination against women. These perceived links between authoritarianism and patriarchy within the family became the basis for the slogan "democracy in the streets and at home" (Mooney and Campbell, 2009; Baldez, 2003 2004, Power).

The feminists also argued that democracy had never really existed for women in Chile because being relegated to the private sphere and subjected to the undisputed authority of male heads of households, the Chilean women never got to experience the Chilean democracy's proclaimed values of equality, non-discrimination and liberty (Safa, 1990).

Many Chilean women learned about feminism while abroad, especially those exiled in Europe and North America, and upon their return to Chile brought back these feminist ideas. Also Chile's insertion into the world market had exposed a formerly insular country to an influx of ideas and images about women and men that directly challenged the conservative discourse of the Pinochet regime (Oppenheim, 1991; Baldez, 2004). The neoliberal focus on the individual and consumerism encouraged women to work in order to have money to buy products for themselves, as opposed to being the self-sacrificing wife or mother who submerges her own needs into those of her family.¹

The Chilean feminists were influenced by difference feminism. Difference feminism is distinct from equality feminism in the sense that while the goal of equal feminism is to do away with essentialized categories of difference between men and women, which they argue are imposed upon them within a sexist system, the difference

¹ Power, Margaret, "Gender and Chile's Split Culture: Continuing Contradictions in Women's Lives", URL:<http://www.drclas.harvard.edu/revista/articles/view/697>

feminism makes claims not just for equal rights but also for “the right to a differentiated treatment and to the social recognition of women’s uniqueness”.²

According to Maxine Molyneux (2000) women’s movements in Latin America have made gains based on a gender discourse that appropriates aspects of binary gender ideology and focuses on essentialist differences between women and men. They have rooted their activism in notions of domestic and maternal virtues, and have demanded recognition as full citizens on the basis of contributions they have made to the nation their roles as wives and mothers.

Although the Church extended support to the various women’s organisations, its programmes reinforced women’s family based roles. It was critical of and eventually fell out with the feminist organisations over the issues of abortion, divorce, sexuality and their outspoken positions on women’s rights.

According to Maxine Molyneux (1986), the participation of women in social movements arises out of “practical gender interests” and “strategic gender interests” The “practical gender interests” represent women’s immediate needs and concerns related to their roles as wives and mothers and they do not challenge gender subordination directly. The “strategic gender interests” on the other hand question and challenge women’s subordination.

The Chilean women therefore organised around both “practical” and “strategic” gender interests.

Although Molyneux (1986) makes a distinction between the two, she argues that with the collectivisation and politicisation of the “practical gender interests” a greater consciousness of gender subordination may arise which results in the transformation of the “practical gender interests” into “strategic gender interests” (Safa, 1990).

Rise of Civil Society and Coalescing of the Women’s Movement

The varied women’s groups however failed to come together as a united front , with each attending to its own area of work- the women in human rights groups focussed on obtaining information or their disappeared relatives; the feminists sought to

² Elisabeth Jelin(1987) *Citizenship and identity :Women and Latin American social movements*. Geneva :UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development).Quoted in Helen Safa (1990), “Women’s Movements in Latin America”, *Gender and Society*, 4(3) :354-369.

articulate a gendered perspective on the crisis and the women in shantytowns organised to provide basic human needs (Baldez, 2004).

Events unfolded which further threatened the already vulnerable position of the women and finally led to the coalescing of the women's movement in 1983. In that crucial year, the Chilean copper miners union called for a Day of National Protest. Responding to this call for protest, Chileans opposed to the regime organised mass demonstrations in the capital Santiago where people from all walks of life –labour, students, the poor, white collar professionals, human rights groups, etc., took part to denounce the regime, triggering off a series of protests, often referred to as 'Days of Protests', for the next three years till 1986. The economic crisis of 1982 had prompted these demonstrations by bringing with it a fundamental questioning of the 'Chicago Boys' economic strategy and the military project in general and was thus a major chink in Pinochet's armour, which until then seemed invincible (Oppenheim, 1991 ; Baldez, 2004).

According to Alex Jilberto and Anibal Yanez (1991), the social protests of 1983 and 1984 created conditions favourable to the achievement of a precarious political space and the progressive broadening of this space placed the problem of the transition to democracy at the centre of public debate.

The opposition political parties who had remained dormant due to the ban on the political activities by the junta now took this opportunity to become active, and strove to support and promote popular mobilisation to unseat the military regime. The opposition political parties thus re-emerged on the national political scene for the first time since 1973. However deep long-standing divisions divided the parties of the Left and the Center. This resulted in the opposition political parties forming two separate alliances. Both sought to control the protests but disagreed vehemently on the other points of strategy.

(i) The centrist Christian Democratic Party joined moderate forces of the Socialist Party and other leftist parties to form the *Alianza Democrática* or Democratic Alliance (AD) in August 1983. The foremost on their agenda were acceptance of democratic institutions, rejection of violent techniques and support for capitalism. The Democratic Alliance negotiated terms of transition with the Pinochet government but Pinochet had no intention of giving control back to the civilians.

(ii) In response to this failure the radical leftist parties formed the *Movimiento Democrático Popular* or Popular Democratic Alliance (MDP) in September of the same year which favoured armed confrontation with the regime over a negotiated return to democratic rule.

Conflicts over strategy between these two coalitions galvanised women's movement in the opposition. In November 1983 a group called *Mujeres Por la Vida* or Women for Life (MPLV) was formed which unified women across party lines. The sixteen women who had formed the group represented the full spectrum of political parties within the opposition. Even though they were party leaders, they framed their actions in terms of women's status as political outsiders in order to highlight their exclusion from the decision making process. It also saw the task of inspiring unity within the opposition (Noonan, 1991; Mooney and Campbell, 2009; Baldez, 2004; Oppenheim, 1991).

According to Lisa Baldez (2004) and Georgina Waylen (1993), what prompted women's groups to coalesce was the exclusion from the process of realignment, the point at which actors within the democratic opposition formed new alliances with one another. The exclusion of women and women's concerns from the agendas articulated by primarily male opposition leaders heightened the political salience of gender relative to other cleavages and triggered the formation of a united front among women's organisations. The women's movement coalesced when women framed their mobilisation in terms of their status outside the political arena.

One event which propelled the women's movement to the fore resulted from the Constitution of 1980, initiated by the military junta, wherein a provision for plebiscite was provided. The provision stated that should Pinochet win, he would hold office till 1997. However, in the event that he lost, elections would be called (Barros, 2004; Oppenheim, 1991, 1999). Pinochet, despite the protests, stuck tenaciously to the timetable of the plebiscite provided by the Constitution of 1980 and by the end of 1986 the popular mobilisation waned while, on the other hand, Pinochet seemed unmovable. The political parties thereafter concentrated their efforts on defeating Pinochet at the ballot box which brought together most of the fragmented political opposition into a unified *Concertación de Partidos por el No* (Coalition of Parties for

the 'No'). The plebiscite resulted in a defeat for Pinochet despite subjecting its opponents to threats, intimidation and arrests.

However intrinsic in the plebiscite was the fact that the difference in percentage between the men and women voters who voted for Pinochet was seven per cent. This number gave an indication of the influence women could wield in the hustings. The leverage that became obvious was now to be exploited by both the parties and by the women's movement itself, enabling them to pressure the opposition parties to incorporate women's demands on their agendas. The period between the plebiscite and the election in 1989 thus marked an important phase for the women's movement (Baldez, 2004).

During this period, women already active within the opposition parties, the *políticas*, were joined by *feministas* who now believed that the way forward could not lie simply in maintaining autonomous feminist movement as these alone were enough in the changed circumstances, thus giving rise to "double militancy". Double militancy has been defined by Karen Beckwith (2002) as "the location of activist women in two political venues, with participatory, collective identity and ideological commitments to both". The old antagonism often reported between '*feministas*' and '*políticas*' was reduced in this period with the distinction between the two becoming increasingly blurred as *políticas* became increasingly sympathetic to ideas associated with feminism. This resulted in overtly feminist organisations being set up in some political parties which tried to raise feminist questions in both parties and national politics generally (Waylen, 1993). This "double militancy" was key to placing their demands on the agenda of the transition (Franceschet, 2004).

In December 1988 forty opposition women created the *Concertación de Mujeres por la Democracia* or the Coalition of Women for Democracy (CMD) which formulated a women's policy agenda for the opposition and sought to ensure that opposition leaders took women's rights into account in the upcoming elections. The impetus for its creation came from the perception of many feminists of the lack of influence of women on political processes in the run-up to the plebiscite and the selection of few women candidates. The CMD had three aims - to raise women's issues on the national political scene, formulate a programme on women for the future democratic government and to work in the presidential and parliamentary campaigns (Waylen,

1993). It was successful in persuading the Patricio Aylwin of *Concertación* campaign to incorporate its demands of a cabinet level ministry for women, programmes for poor women, positive discrimination measures to increase women's political representation and legislation on equal pay and employment opportunities, on its platform (Baldez, 2004).

The military government, to win over the women voters, promised more equality for women and signed the United Nations Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an international declaration of women's human rights, just days before the election. "Women's true vocation does not have to be restricted to the family sphere, especially when she becomes aware of her immense capabilities and responsibility for contributing to the development of the nation" was the rationale Pinochet gave for signing the CEDAW, representing a radical departure from his earlier views and stand on the status of women (Baldez, 2004).

However, conflicts within the opposition coalition forced social movements to take sides. Cracks appeared in the women's movement too with conflicts arising between the women from the feminist organisations and those from political parties (the *feministas* and the *politicas* respectively) with the former fearing co-optation and the loss of autonomy, and as the election of 1989 drew near these conflicts increased (Waylen, 2003). The decision to take part in the 1988 plebiscite split the *Mujeres por La Vida* (Women for Life) with party leaders leaving to join the party coalition leaving it in control of a small group of women, sympathetic to the radical left, who focussed solely on human rights issues. The Coalition of Women for Democracy (CMD) too met with a similar fate with many leaving to campaign on behalf of the *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia* (Coalition of Parties for Democracy), others held on, choosing to stay outside the party system. Nonetheless, the women's movement had united a large constituency of women across party lines and negotiated a series of concrete demands onto the agenda of the soon to be elected democratic government.

Summary and Conclusion

The political system and the economy of Chile underwent massive restructuring under the military regime as a part of its larger goal of transforming the Chilean nation. The military junta attempted to establish a new exclusionary political and social order while it neutralised or destroyed political and social institutions that had been formed over the years. This new order was formally installed through the writing of the Constitution of 1980. The junta replaced the ISI model which had been Chile's dominant economic model since the 1930s with neo-liberal economic policies associated with Milton Friedman, under the guidance of the 'Chicago Boys'.

The military regime laid emphasis on the importance of the family, proclaiming it as the basic unit of society and a pillar of social stability. It adopted and enforced a patriarchal doctrine according to which a woman's place was at home with motherhood being her foremost duty. Women were thus entrusted with the task of producing and raising patriotic children for the *patria*. While the women were declared as the junta's ally in defending the nation, the atrocities committed against women proved otherwise. Also, many of the regime's policies adversely affected families. In an environment marred by arbitrary arrests, mass murders, detentions, disappearances, curfews and military raids, families could hardly function.

Added to this, the economic restructuring which had opened up new employment avenues for women and the eventual downturn triggered by the debt crisis in the early eighties created conditions which forced women to step out of their homes and seek jobs. Therefore, while the military regime's patriarchal discourse defined women as dependent mothers, its economic policies forced them to take on new roles as wage labourers.

In the process of finding their voices as mothers, women realised that there was no difference in the position of women under the military regime and within her family. They therefore began to redefine the traditional connection between home and motherhood believing that the struggle for democracy necessitated a fight against *machismo* and discrimination against women. Women mobilised around issues of human rights, economic survival and gendered repression. The women therefore organised around both "practical" and "strategic" interests.

They received support from the Church led by Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez and from the international community, and this support contributed immensely towards the mobilisation of women.

However it was only in 1983 that the women's movement galvanised. The rise of the civil society and the opening of the political space with the re-emergence of the opposition parties (clamped down since 1973), triggered off by the economic downturn, created conditions that enabled the various women's organisations to coalesce which till now had failed to come together as a united front. The conflicts among the opposition over strategies to deal with the dictatorship and the exclusion of women from the process of re-alignment and their concerns from the agenda of the opposition galvanised the women's movement.

However, the conflict within the opposition spilled over on the women's movement with disagreements arising between the *políticas* and the *feministas*. Despite the cracks, the movement had managed to negotiate some concrete demands on the agenda of the *Concertación de partidos por la Democracia* (Coalition of Parties for Democracy) including the demand for a government agency dedicated to women's issues and concerns, which the *Concertación* followed through when it came to power in 1990 by establishing the *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (SERNAM).

By restricting the place of formal politics, the military junta unintentionally provided the necessary space for alternative forms of political expressions to grow, including activism around women's rights (Richards, 2002). The contradictions within the military's own policies had fostered the rise of women's movement in Chile. The interactions between the feminists and popular sector women's organisations had laid the groundwork for a multi-class women's movement.

The women's movement, post transition to democracy, will be discussed in the next chapter within a new institutional context set up by the establishment of a National Women's Service.

CHAPTER THREE

Servicio Nacional de la Mujer and the Women's Movement

Post transition to democracy, the women's movement is said to have suffered from demobilisation. In the first election held (in 1989) since the military coup in 1973, the *Concertación* won the Presidency and majority of the seats in the Congress. The *Concertación* after coming to power quickly moved to honour the campaign promise made to the women of Chile by establishing a National Women's Service – SERNAM which has been blamed for contributing to the dissolution of the women's movement.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In Section I, *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*, the inception, organisational set-up and organisational limitations of SERNAM are discussed. Section II, *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer and the Women's Movement*, discusses the impact of democratisation on the women's movement – focussing on both the period leading up to the formal establishment of democracy and after. The women's movement within the new institutional context established by SERNAM is analysed. Section III follows with the summary and conclusion.

Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (SERNAM)

The activists in the women's movement had long envisioned a government agency dedicated to carrying out their goals. The desire to create an agency for women was influenced by the 1975 World Women's Conference held in Mexico which suggested "the establishment of an inter-disciplinary and multi-sectoral machinery within the government, such as national commissions, women's offices and other bodies, with adequate staff and resources, could be an effective transitional measure for accelerating the achievement of equal opportunities for women and their total integration in national life" (Richards, 2002). It also stemmed from the experiences of other countries that had recently restored democracy – especially Argentina, Brazil, and Spain and reflected the concerns spelled out in the United Nations Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Valenzuela 1998).

The Coalition of Women for Democracy (CMD), a group of forty opposition women which was established in 1988 to influence the agenda of the opposition coalition in the run up to the decisive election of 1989, was successful in persuading the

Concertación campaign to incorporate its demands of a cabinet level ministry for women besides programmes for poor women, positive discrimination measures to increase women's political representation and legislation on equal pay and employment opportunities, on its agenda. CPD's agenda made it a priority to fully enforce women's rights taking into consideration the new role of women in society and overcoming any form of discrimination (Baldez, 2004).

The electoral rules for the 1989 presidential and congressional elections were rigged in favour of the Right. The military junta introduced a binomial electoral system or two-member districts for both the houses of the Congress. According to this electoral system, in order for an electoral slate to win both seats it needed to obtain more than two-thirds of the vote in the district. Thus, in a two slate race, the Right could gain half of the seats in the Legislature with only a little more than a third of the votes cast. The Right, however, divided and fielded five separate congressional slates, thereby helping the *Concertación*. In the presidential race, the *Concertación* candidate, Patricio Aylwin, faced two candidates namely; Hernan Büchi and Francisco Javier Errazuriz. The former had served as Augusto Pinochet's finance minister from 1980 up to early 1989 and was supported by the military junta and the latter, although a millionaire ran a populist campaign (Oppenheim, 1999).

In the elections held in 1989 for the presidency and for the Congress (for the first time since the military coup in 1973), the *Concertación* won the Presidency and majority of the seats in the Congress. Patricio Aylwin, the *Concertación* candidate, obtained an absolute majority of the popular vote securing fifty-five percent of the total votes with Hernan Büchi and Francisco Javier Errazuriz garnering twenty-nine percent and fifteen percent respectively. In the Congress, the *Concertación* candidates won seventy-two out of hundred and twenty seats in the Chamber of Deputies and twenty out of thirty-eight seats in the Senate. On March 11, 1990 Patricio Aylwin of the *Concertación* was sworn in as the first civilian President of Chile since the swearing in of Salvador Allende twenty years earlier, thus ending seventeen years of dictatorship (Oppenheim, 1999).

Post electoral victory, President Aylwin moved quickly to honour his campaign promise to create such an agency. Two months after taking office, in May 1990, he

signed the National Women's Service or *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (SERNAM) into being, with a stipulation that it be approved by the Congress.

SERNAM however immediately became a fulcrum of controversy and the bill proposing the creation of the agency met with substantial opposition, unleashing widespread controversy and increased tension between the Center-Left *Concertación* and the political Right. The latter was opposed to the creation of the agency, viewing it as a vehicle for the dissemination of anti-family policy and radical feminist propaganda (Valenzuela, 1998; Baldez, 2004). The Catholic Church, harbouring similar fears, was vocal in its opposition as well (Baldez, 2004).

The Patricio Aylwin government wanted to promote women's interests on one hand and on the other it was also bound by the pressure to assure a peaceful transition to democracy. Moreover, throughout the early years of democracy there was constant fear of the possibility of another coup, a fear which was intensified because the military still enjoyed significant autonomy from the state and Pinochet was sitting as a Senator for Life, a provision he had worked into the Constitution of 1980 and also they did not wish to upset the conservatives among the Christian Democrats, the largest party of the *Concertación* nor the Catholic Church (Richards, 2002; Franceschet, 2001).

Consequently, to allay the fears of instability and conflicts, SERNAM's initial mandate was watered down and emphasis was placed on importance of women's role in the family and the acknowledgment of essential differences between men and women, as reflected in Article Two of the law which established SERNAM (Richards, 2002). The Article states that:

The National Women's Service is the organism charged with collaborating with the executive branch in the study and proposition of general plan and measures that will lead to women enjoying equal rights and opportunities with respect to men, in the process of the political, social, economic, and cultural development of the country, respecting the nature and specificity of the woman, which emanates from the natural diversity of the sexes, including adequate concern for family relations.³

The ability of the agency to execute its own programmes was struck down. It was not given a ministerial status and was instead placed under the auspices of Chile's planning ministry which was an attempt to diminish the political content of women's

³ As mentioned in the official website of SERNAM www.sernam.cl

demands (Baldez, 2001). Its budget was also reduced (Waylen, 2000). Also a provision which would have legally created a “space for listening to the community” i.e. women’s NGOs and organisations was taken out of the bill (Richards, 2002). An advisory council was also created, entrusted with the power to audit all SERNAM’s programmes with international funding (Baldez, 2001).

Apprehensions came from other quarters as well. Women in shantytown organizations expressed concerns that the new agency would be an elitist institution dominated by educated, middle-class professional women and doubted if it would embrace their concerns, and their scepticism was further fuelled by the absence of human rights in the agency’s agenda. Some feminist activists resented the predominance of Christian Democratic leaders and perspectives within SERNAM. Also, the fact that Soledad Alvear who had not participated in the women’s movement was appointed as the first Director of SERNAM by President Aylwin’s government did not go down well with many women activists (Franceschet, 2003). SERNAM was established on the third of January, 1991 by Law No 19,028 with the approval of the Congress. After pressure from women activists it was established in law rather than by presidential decree to make it more difficult to remove the agency and to reduce its role should rightists come to power (Richards, 2002), by making the agency a permanent part of the state structure in Chile (Franceschet, 2003).

(i) Mandate

SERNAM was established with the aim to improve the condition of women in society by addressing immediate gender needs such as access to employment, housing, education or credit and with a long-term objective to improve the position of women in society compared to men by addressing structural gender inequalities, which involves eliminating institutional forms of discrimination, alleviating women's responsibility for the home and childcare, and ending the sexual division of labour (Matear, 1997).

SERNAM's mandate entails it to collaborate with the executive in the design and coordination of public policies that will put an end to the discrimination that affects women in the family, social, economic and cultural spheres".⁴

It's mandate is achieved through inter-sectoral coordination, legal reforms, training public servants in a gendered perspective on public policy , designing social policy , increasing women's social and political participation , international cooperation , research aimed at producing knowledge and statistics that reveal women's situations and strengthening equal opportunities at the community level.⁵ Most of SERNAMs programmes involve cross ministerial coordination often through the creation of inter-ministerial committees

(ii) Objectives

The objectives of SERNAM are as follows:

- To incorporate a gender perspective in policies and programmes in the public sector through inter-sectoral coordination, technical assistance and training to public officials.
- To promote equal rights and opportunities between women and men, through the development and promotion of bills or other regulatory changes.
- Reduce the main discrimination affecting women, through the design, implementation, validation and comprehensive transfer programme models.
- To promote a culture of equality through the implementation of communication campaigns aimed at visible priority gender issues and promote positive images of women in the media.
- Promote the position of the government of Chile, through the dissemination of international gender agenda and the implementation and monitoring of horizontal cooperation agreements, bilateral and multilateral.

⁴ As mentioned on the official website of SERNAM www.sernam.cl
URL:<http://portal.sernam.cl/?m=institucion>

⁵ As mentioned on the official website of SERNAM www.sernam.cl
URL:<http://portal.sernam.cl/?m=institucion>

- Provide the definition of public policies for gender equity, through the generation and dissemination of knowledge about discrimination affecting women and gender gaps.⁶

SERNAM's operations are structured along three lines:

- (i) The elimination of legal and socio-cultural barriers which impede equal rights for women and their equal participation in society
- (ii) The integration of women into the labour market and to contribute to improving the quality of life for them and their families
- (iii) Actions to support and strengthen the family unit.

These lines of action involved both sectoral and inter-sectoral coordination and planning, combined with and supported by programmes to target actions at specific groups within the female population (Matear, 1997).

(iii) Organisational Set-up

SERNAM is not a ministry in its own right, being established with non-ministerial status. It is placed within the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (MIDEPLAN) which is responsible for majority of Chile's social programmes. The MIDEPLAN itself was created post transition to democracy and embodies the post transition government's approach to addressing poverty and social exclusion in Chile. The agencies within it are those dealing with Chile's socially marginalised groups like women, indigenous population, youth and the poor, both urban and rural. These agencies are not intended to execute policy. Their duty is to design and fund projects which are then executed by other state ministries and agencies or by private entities like NGOs or social organisations (Franceschet, 2003).

One of the consequences of SERNAM not being its own ministry is that it is prohibited by law from implementing its own programmes. It is instead charged with proposing and creating public policies for other ministries or agencies which implement it.

⁶ As mentioned on the official website of SERNAM [www.sernam.cl](http://portal.sernam.cl/?m=institucion) URL :<http://portal.sernam.cl/?m=institucion>.

They did not want to create a ghetto. They wanted SERNAM to cross various ministries, in order to enable it to act in each of them which would lead to the integration of women in to the development process. The “imagers” of SERNAM were also concerned that the agency not become a “women’s ghetto” within the state. They thus proposed an agency that would co-ordinate the efforts of other state ministries and agencies to integrate a gendered perspective and promote women’s rights. This has the advantage of allowing SERNAM to present the big picture of the diverse structural factors which discriminate against women in an integrated, multi-sectoral manner enabling it to attack simultaneously on all fronts (Matear, 1997).

The only projects SERNAM can directly carry out are pilot projects, which, once proven effective, are turned over to the relevant ministry or agency for future implementation (Franceschet, 2003).

The pilot projects focus on specific groups of women including victims of domestic violence, young pregnant women, women who work on a seasonal basis in the agriculture industry or *temporeras*, single mother heads of households or *jefas de hogar*, information centers about women’s rights or CIDEMS. With the exception of CIDEMS, these programmes involve cross-ministerial coordination which is facilitated by the creation of inter-ministerial committees such as the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Prevention of Family Violence and the Coordinating Committee for the Women’s Heads of Households (Richards, 2002). The stated advantage of this institutional design is that SERNAM is supposed to be able to co-ordinate gender policy planning and promote a gender perspective throughout the state (Franceschet, 2003).

SERNAM has a decentralised organisational structure. It has a National Directorate in Santiago and regional directorates in each of Chile’s thirteen regional administrations. As part of a state project of decentralization, SERNAM has also been transferring more aspects of its programmes to the municipal level. At the municipal level, SERNAM relies on local governments and NGOs to carry out its mandate. Most municipal governments currently have an *Oficina de la Mujer* (Women's Office) which, although technically dependent on the municipal government, maintains some links with SERNAM. These offices are financed and staffed entirely by the municipality and receives no funds from SERNAM (Richards, 2002; Matear, 1995).

The upper level technical and administrative direction of SERNAM is charged to the Director of the national service. Although SERNAM does not have a ministerial status, its Director has the ranking of the Minister of State and can participate in the meetings of the cabinet (Matear, 1995). The Director is appointed by the President and is assisted by a Deputy Director and the Regional Directors who are appointed by the President as well (Alvear, 1990). The agency's staffs participate in regional coordinating bodies to insert gendered perspectives into regional development policy planning. Despite having a decentralised organisational structure, SERNAM's decision making and budgeting are still highly centralised (Richards, 2006).

(iv) Organisational Limitations

SERNAM's potential to promote gender equality and programmes aimed at promoting gender equality has been weakened by it not being a ministry on its own accord and rather being housed within another ministry, namely the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (MIDEPLAN). One of the consequences of SERNAM not being its own ministry is that it is prohibited by law from implementing its own programmes as only ministries are allowed to implement their own programmes. It is instead entrusted with the task of proposing and creating public policies which are implemented by other ministries or agencies, which often times have their own interests to pursue and may be less interested in devoting their energies to programmes that originate elsewhere in the state. SERNAM's mandate entails it to propose and create policy, not to work directly with women which conflicts with the earlier expectations of the women's movement, which were that SERNAM would work more directly with women's organizations.

Although SERNAM's pilot projects, the only projects it can directly carry out, have increased the knowledge about SERNAM and awareness of issues among the general public, they have also been criticised for drawing much needed staff and resources away from inter-sectoral coordination which is SERNAM's intended purpose (Matear, 1995).

Inter-sectoral coordination, one of the ways through which SERNAM'S mandate is carried out, has also been found to be problematic with many public servants complaining that the task of maintaining contact and a working relationship with so many other departments-for example, health, labour, and education- to be too time

consuming. The area of inter-sectoral coordination with other parts of the state has been problematic as SERNAM lacks oversight powers and many of its contacts with other ministries operate on an informal rather than an institutional basis (Waylen, 2000).

Another weakness is the relatively limited resources at SERNAM's disposal to fund the activities undertaken by the agency. SERNAM has only an administrative budget (Matear, 1997). The portion of SERNAM's budget that is designated by the state, not counting the international funds, is less than 0.1% of the total government budget (Baldez, 2001). One-third of its budget is pre-assigned to specific programmes, another third goes in salaries and only one-third is the money that SERNAM is free to determine how to spend (Richards, 2002). Since it has little funding of its own, it is therefore expected to generate support and funding among the other ministries which implement the policies and programmes designed by it (Matear, 1997). Due to the insufficient monetary resources coming from the government, SERNAM has to seek ancillary funds from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other international organizations.

At the municipal level, SERNAM relies on local governments and NGOs to carry out its mandate, which has proven to be highly problematic. The effectiveness of programmes at the local level depends greatly on the level of commitment exhibited by the mayor and other high-ranking local officials. Without strong support, the resources budgeted to programmes are easily diverted to other "emergency" areas, and municipal officials do not feel compelled to give adequate attention to programme implementation or monitoring. Also SERNAM'S focus on horizontal coordination (inter-disciplinary, inter-departmental, and of an integral character) is the exact opposite of the traditional functioning of the municipal governments which are sectoral, vertical, and self-referential (Franceschet, 2003)

The *Oficina de la Mujer* (Women's Office) being dependent on the municipalities for funds, maintain closer ties with the municipalities than with SERNAM. They are therefore dependent largely on the goodwill of the political orientation of the Mayor which means that poor and/or right-wing municipalities are less likely to help them operate properly (Pereira, 2006). Also, the qualities of these offices varies according to the resources available in a given municipality. The poorer municipalities are able

to designate fewer resources to women's services even though there may be a greater need than in the wealthier area (Richards, 2002).

The Director of SERNAM is appointed by the President and so are the Deputy Director and the Regional Directors. A trend has been observed wherein SERNAM leadership has consistently been appointed from the same party as the elected President.

The first SERNAM director, Soledad Alvear, was from the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), the same party as the first post-authoritarian administration, that of President Aylwin; President's Aylwin's successor President Frei, belonging to the PDC as well, nominated Josefina Bilbao as Minister in 1994, also a member of the PDC ; in 2000 Ricardo Lagos of the Socialist Party (PS) appointed Adriana Puelma, who was not only a member of the PS, but had worked extensively on Lagos' presidential campaign. This trend was broken when in 2006 Michelle Bachelet of the Socialist Party (PS) appointed Laura Albornoz Pollman of the PDC as SERNAM Director. However, it must be taken into consideration that PDC is more conservative than PS, thus supporting the contention that party affiliation contribute to the conservative nature of SERNAM's programmes and policy suggestions .⁷

Consequently, there is a tendency among the leaders of SERNAM to represent the interests of the political party in power and prevents it from displaying any autonomy such as influencing the priorities of the political agenda (Pereira, 2006). For example, the early gender equality measures reveal the relatively conservative nature of SERNAM's policy proposals which appear to be more in conjunction with the centrist policies of the Christian Democratic Party than the Socialists. Due to strong protests from the right concerning the creation of SERNAM, the first *Concertación* government, under Christian Democratic leadership, had restricted the organization's policy areas to "low key" arenas such as female headship and strengthening the woman's role within the family, while effectively steering the organization away from such archly political topics as abortion and divorce (Franceschet, 2003, 2005; Matear ,

⁷ Andrea Arango, COHA's Women's Studies Series: SERNAM and the Underrepresentation of Women in Chile <http://octavioislas.wordpress.com/2008/05/12/1009-coha-report-women%E2%80%99s-studies-series-sernam-and-the-underrepresentation-of-women-in-chile/>

1995) .SERNAM continues to avoid addressing potentially controversial issues such as birth control, instead sticking to low-volatility issues.

Also there is no formal mechanism by which SERNAM can oversee and evaluate the work of other ministries or enforce the programmes (Waylen, 1996). Consequently, it must depend on the goodwill of the individual assigned at contact points in other ministries. Problems arise if the person assigned to work with SERNAM in a given ministry lacks decision making power, or is socially conservative and resistant to feminist values. Moreover the high turnover of personnel in some ministries makes developing relationships difficult (Richards, 2002).

Studies have found that public servants who are supposed to coordinate gender policy across agencies complain that maintaining contact and a working relationship with so many other departments for example, health, labour, and education is far too time consuming given their already hectic schedules (Franceschet, 2003).

While SERNAM's designation as a Service in part reflects the desire to integrate a gender perspective throughout the state, it poses a major limit when combined with widespread resistance to SERNAM with the State (Richards, 2002, 2006).

Also, SERNAM lacks legitimacy among other state actors. It has a low status within the bureaucracy. This is a major limitation for achieving the representation of women's interest (Richards, 2006).

Servicio Nacional de la Mujer and the Women's Movement

As the process of transition towards democratisation started to unfold in Chile, the reconstitution and recreation of the conventional political arena occurred. Political institutions and political parties began to reform. The focus therefore shifted away from the social movements in general and back to a more conventional form of institutional politics. The social movements then faced the choice of whether or not to start working with the newly re-constituted political institutions and political parties. The women's movement therefore faced the "autonomy versus integration" dilemma - should women's movements work with the new institutions and risk being co-opted and losing autonomy, or should they remain outside, preserving their independence but risking marginalisation and loss of influence as power shifts towards the political

parties. The various women's organisations therefore had to take this strategic decision about whether to focus their participation in political or civil society.

This dilemma led to cracks in the women's movement during the transition process itself between the women from the feminist organisations and those from political parties (the *feministas* and the *politicas* respectively) with the former fearing cooptation and the loss of autonomy. These cracks became more severe as the democratisation process moved forward. This dilemma drove a wedge amongst the feminists as well, with some advocating an autonomous women's movement while others believing, that an engagement with political parties and the state was essential to advancing women's rights, thereby giving rise to "double militancy".

After the transition to democracy many grassroots organisations and feminist organisations converted themselves to NGOs. This happened because international funding which they had received directly during the dictatorship, now started coming through the government. They thus owed their survival to the research and policy implementation they carried out for the government. Many of the NGOs most closely linked to the *poblaciones* have disappeared altogether, due to lack of funding. After the return to democracy, women's NGOs went on to specialize in a multitude of areas, dispersing the focus of the movement and making articulation difficult among the various groups. This NGO-isation has led to the narrowing down of the visions of women's groups.

By drawing activists from the civil society to the state, SERNAM has been blamed for weakening women's movement by depriving women's organizations of crucial leadership (Schild, 1998; Matear, 1997).

It has also been blamed for 'beheading' the feminist movement through the absorption of feminists into its ranks.⁸

SERNAM, it is argued, affects the women's movement by shaping power relations among different segments, contributing to divisions between those on the inside and outside of the emerging gender policy networks (Waylen, 2000 ; Alvarez, 1999). The links between women inside and outside of SERNAM remain weak. While SERNAM

⁸Schild, Veronica (1998), "New subjects of Rights? Women's Movements and the Construction of Citizenship in New Democracies" in Sonia Alvarez, Arturo Escobar and Evelina Dagnino (eds.) *Politics of Culture/ Politics of Politics*, Boulder. Quoted in Georgina Waylen (2000), "Gender and Democratic Politics: A Comparative Analysis of Consolidation in Argentina and Chile", *Latin American Studies*, 32, 765-793.

is extending policy access to one aspect of the movement-women activists in the NGO community- little access is being created for grassroots organizations. The links between SERNAM and the NGO community are the most solid, with a number of women moving between the two realms. Seventy percent of SERNAM's links to non-state actors are to NGOs or educational institutions, while less than ten percent are to grass-roots women's organizations (Guzman, Hola, and Rios 1999).⁹

Many of its personnel are ex-activists drawn from NGOs or academics rather than civil servants (Waylen, 2000). SERNAM therefore has a stronger relationship rather a clientelist relationship with activists in the NGO community.

SERNAM it is argued failed to forge links with the grassroots women's movements, thereby creating resentment among them such as those representing the *Pobladoras* and the *Mapuche*. Class differences have become increasingly salient as *pobladoras* sense that middle class feminist women who work in NGOs and the state have abandoned them. Poor, rural, and indigenous women claim that their interests are seldom represented and that they are rarely invited to participate in decision-making on issues that impact them. All of these issues have contributed to the fragmentation of what was once a vibrant women's movement in Chile (Richards, 2002, 2003, 2006). In addition, the absence of a central, unifying cause has left room for underlying tensions between women to emerge (more accurately, perhaps, to re-emerge) on several levels

The focus of SERNAM's gender discourse is on the equality of opportunities between men and women. SERNAM has sought to promote this discourse through its two Equal Opportunities Plans. The Equal Opportunities Plans are not laws, but they lay out lines of action governmental agencies need to pursue in support of equal opportunities for women (Richards, 2002).

Through these Plans, SERNAM has set forth medium to long term goals and strategies to achieve greater gender equity and has helped to place gender as a priority on the public administration agenda (Fort, Abraham, Orlando and Piras, 2007).

⁹ Guzman, Virginia, Hola, Eugenia and Rios, Marcela (1999) "*Interlocución estado y sociedad en la implementación del Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las mujeres.*" Santiago :CEM. Quoted in Susan Franceschet(2003), " "State Feminism" and Women's Movements : The Impact of Chile's Servicio Nacional de la Mujer on Women's Activism", *Latin American Research Review*, 38(1):9-40.

SERNAM's First Equal Opportunities Plan 1994-1999 was the fundamental tool for fulfilling the accords that Chile accepted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

The implementation of this First Equal Opportunities Plan placed the emphasis on changes in country's legal framework and introduced policies and initiatives for the advancement of women, dealing particularly with acute problems of discrimination such as family violence , teenage pregnancy, and the status of female heads of households. These policies resulted in various legislative initiatives and programmes intended to address the problems of gender inequality through state action.¹⁰

The Second Equal Opportunities Plan 2000-2010 consolidates gender policies in public institutions initiatives was sparked by the recognition that while there had been significant progress in social policies targeted at the most vulnerable women, the key challenge now was to move the state towards full integration of policies with a gender focus.

The Second Plan identifies six broad, horizontal issues for attention, with their respective objectives, and guidelines for concrete activities to be pursued during the decade. Those issues are the following: guaranteeing a culture of equality of opportunities between men and women ; promoting women's rights and their full enjoyment; women's participation in power structures and in the decision making process; economic independence for women and reducing poverty, improving day to day well-being and quality of life for women and introducing gender focus in public policies.¹¹

The *pobladoras* activists present an important challenge to the gender discourse promoted by Chile's SERNAM. SERNAM's gender discourse focuses on equality of opportunities between men and women whereas the definition of gender interests of the *pobladoras* is shaped by their class interests.

The *pobladoras* do not consider SERNAM's focus as irrelevant, but that their particular identities and needs as women whose daily lives are shaped by being poor

¹⁰ www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/CHILE-English.pdf

¹¹ www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/CHILE-English.pdf

and working class are not prioritised by the agency. The demands of the *pobladoras* are thus linked to their socio-economic marginalisation (Richards, 2002, 2006).

The *pobladoras* activists argue that they find it difficult to talk about SERNAM's Equal Opportunities discourse without referring to Chile's extreme socio-economic inequality because of their class based analysis of gender issues. The *pobladoras* activists hold that while it is not possible for SERNAM to resolve all their problems pertaining to health, education, etc., yet their problems and concerns have to be given importance and priorities by SERNAM before it is possible to talk of equal opportunities.

The *pobladoras* place emphasis on both social class and gender in their evaluation of what generating equal opportunities would actually entail and they, therefore, argue that the class inequality effectively means that all women do not always share concerns or interests. The *pobladoras* assert that in order to talk about equal opportunities, the socio-economic conditions that prevent some women from being able to take advantage of those opportunities also have to be addressed (Richards, 2002, 2006).

According to Patricia Richards (2002, 2004) the *pobladoras* activists feel excluded from the work of SERNAM and that they associate this exclusion with class. The *pobladoras* activists feel discriminated against because of their lack formal education.

Education, Richards(2004, 2006) argues, is an important source of differentiation among women and the differentiation seems to be felt more strongly by the *pobladoras* under democracy, when women with more education have greater opportunities to not only be paid for working on women's issues but also have their opinions taken into account. The middle-class women with better access to formal education are more likely to have access to positions of power and decision making in state decisions related to women. The *pobladoras* activists assert that they have little access to information about the policies and programmes of the state that pertain to women because the information is either non-existent or written in a manner that is inaccessible to women with little formal education.

These “power differences” Richards (2002, 2004) argues are further compounded by the *pobladoras* failure to launch a successful post dictatorship. She states that with the end of the dictatorship much of the international funding that had been available to Chilean NGOs was eliminated at the end of the dictatorship, as funders decided to focus their efforts on “needier” countries.

Consequently, many NGOs were forced to shut down or had to greatly reduce the scope of their activities. Moreover, many religious volunteers who worked in support of *pobladora* organizations also moved on to other countries or went home when the dictatorship ended. As their activities were greatly depended on the financial and organizational support of Chilean or international NGOs and religious organizations, the end of the dictatorship led to a major withdrawal of resources for *pobladoras*, which they still continue to feel.

Therefore, Richards (2002, 2004) argues that one of the main needs cited by *pobladoras* is financial resources to carry out their activities. She cites that the *pobladoras* organisations organizations today function mostly on the basis of small project grants from state agencies and municipalities, some private connections with international sources, minor support from a few remaining NGOs, and money from their own pockets.

The dwindling numbers of the *pobladoras* organisations and their lack of coherent agenda have made it easy for the women working in SERNAM to not take their demands for participation seriously (Richards, 2006).

Almost all disagreements between *pobladora* activists and SERNAM argues Patricia Richards (2004) are linked to different interpretations of the concept of “participation.”

The *pobladora* activists, she argues, talk about participation in two senses:

The first refers to participation in civil society, as members of organizations that perform important roles in their communities and make demands of the state. This type of participation, she states, is rooted in activism against the dictatorship and is not totally oppositional to the state, though, as a common *pobladora* appeal to the state since the return to democracy is for financial resources for their organizations.

The second sense in which they talk about participation refers to participation *in* the state. This type of participation, she states, would consist of consultation in programme design and the establishment of institutional priorities, as well as the delivery of services. This conceptualization of participation is linked to the idea that particular groups are excluded from positions of power and need to have a direct voice in order to be adequately represented.

She further argues that although SERNAM approaches participation in two main ways which are however distinct from those of the *pobladoras* activists:

The first involves finding ways to institutionalize women's participation in decision-making in the public sphere: increasing the number of women politicians at the local and national levels, judges, ministers, and other public figures.

The second sense involves finding ways to strengthen women's participation within civil society, so that women are aware of their rights and can complement the work of SERNAM in their social movements and organizations.

Richards (2002, 2004) cites the example of SERNAM's "Woman Citizen. Woman with Rights" campaign that aimed to inform women about their rights; the creation of a Civil Society Fund for NGOs and *pobladora* organizations to receive small grants for projects that are related to the Equal Opportunities Plan; and encouraging the evaluation of services and attention received in the CIDEMS (Women's Rights Information Centers), which are located in SERNAM's regional offices.

She argues that both the ways that SERNAM approaches participation focus on increasing the presence of women in the public sphere, a goal that is not completely out of touch with *pobladora* understandings of the concept but neither involves creating opportunities for *pobladoras* to exert influence in SERNAM.

While the women in SERNAM argue that participation and proposals for change need to come from civil society itself that the state's role in creating opportunities for participation is and should be limited, the *pobladoras* activists, on the other hand, maintain that space for true participation, in terms of having their demands heard and acted upon by the state, is virtually non-existent – they don't have access to the way that participation is defined by the state.

The *pobladora* activists demand to be consulted as “experts” about the concerns of *pobladoras* in the creation of policies and programmes because they feel that middle-class professional women have not lived the experience of *pobladoras*, hence cannot adequately represent them. They also demand greater communication with, and recognition for the contributions they make to the women’s movement and to their communities. Their demands therefore involve a desire for inclusion, integration, redistribution and an end to the socio-economic inequality that is the source of their difference with other women. They seek inclusion and recognition on the basis of their unique contributions and special perspective they have provided for the poor and working class who are activist around “women’s issues” in the *poblaciones* (Richards, 2002, 2004, 2006).

The *Mapuche* women too present an important challenge to the gender discourse promoted by SERNAM. While SERNAM’s gender discourse focuses on equality of opportunities between men and women, the *Mapuche* women’s demands are linked to cultural differences and inequality among women (Richards, 2003).

The *Mapuche* women argue that the women who work at SERNAM are educated, belong to the urban middle-class and are non-indigenous. SERNAM therefore defines women and their interests in a way that centralizes and normalizes non-indigenous women, thereby marginalising them. They also hold that SERNAM’s Equal Opportunities Plans represent the interests of the urban middle-class women who are educated, non-indigenous women (Richards, 2003).

The *Mapuche* women argue that their struggles, interests and demands are distinct and they emphasize on these differences in their demands vis-a-vis SERNAM or in their relationships with other organised women (Richards, 2003). According to Patricia Richards (2003) they assert their difference along three main lines:

First, the discrimination experienced by the *Mapuche* women is different from that experienced by other women. According to the *Mapuche* women, they often face discrimination in the hands of other women which indicates that *Mapuche* women are not treated as equals of other women and also implies that not all women have the same interests.

Second, because of cultural differences, gender relations in *Mapuche* society and the dominant Chilean society are not the same.

The argument that gender relations work differently among the *Mapuche* has two aspects - duality and complementarity states Patricia Richards (2003). While the state policies compartmentalized them (as women, youth, aged and so forth), the *Mapuche* culture was more integrative and equilibrium oriented. Furthermore, the complementary gender roles among the *Mapuche* did not necessarily signal inequalities between the *Mapuche* men and women.

Third, gender issues are not usually the prime focus of *Mapuche* women's activism says Patricia Richards (2003). The principal reason for being organised is to bring about justice for the *Mapuche* as a whole. The *Mapuche* women believe that if they can be on a better footing, more valued, more recognized, it will be a benefit not only for them – the women, but for the *Mapuche* people as a whole. The principle difference therefore lies in the fact that the *Mapuche* women struggle as a people –for the *vision de pueblo* of the *Mapuche* people.

Understanding this *vision de pueblo*, which incorporates elements of non-fairness and non-sameness is essential to understanding *Mapuche* women activists, their goals, and their frustration with SERNAM's ethnocentric portrayal of gender interests.

The *Mapuche* women therefore speak of double, and often triple discrimination: as women, as indigenous, and as the poor. They, therefore, argue that they are not the same and the Equal Opportunities Plans do not take their difference into account and will therefore not result in justice for them (Richards, 2003, 2006).

Patricia Richards(2003) cites the example of how in the First Equal Opportunities Plan, rural and indigenous women were nowhere mentioned and they had in response successfully petitioned SERNAM to form a committee in 1995 to create an Equal Opportunities Plan for Rural Women. The resulting document was published however not as plan but as proposals for equal opportunities policies for rural women and these proposals were not adopted as part of the Presidential platform. Additionally, the specific issues faced by urban indigenous women (more than half the indigenous women in the country) were not addressed in either document. In response to criticisms expressed by rural and indigenous women, SERNAM invited groups of

women representing diverse sectors of society to participate in evaluating the First Plan prior to the creation of the Second Plan. Indigenous women are mentioned in various places in the Second Equal Opportunities Plan but almost exclusively in terms of their being a “marginal group”. Being indigenous is conceptualized as an additional barrier to access to resources and services. While this is indeed one aspect of *Mapuche* women’s claims, SERNAM has made no effort to create lines of action that start from the perspective of *Mapuche* women and therefore their more substantial claims of difference remain unaddressed (Richards, 2002, 2003).

The Second Plan asserts while including some references to ethnicity and indigenous women, continues to posit that there is an experience of oppression universally shared by all Chileans women - something the *Mapuche* women assert is untrue. By not moving the experience of indigenous women from the margin to the center, the Second Plan perpetuates SERNAM’s exclusionary gender discourse argues Patricia Richards. While it talks of ethnicity at key points, it fails to incorporate it as a basic social division and structure of power that result in inequalities and differences among women. Gender equity is presented as fundamental to more democratic society, but the ways in which non-indigenous women are complicit in the oppression of *Mapuche* women are not considered to one of the inequalities that should be addressed nor does the plan acknowledge that *Mapuche* women do not wish to be equal in the sense of being the same as non-indigenous Chilean women. Nowhere in the plan does SERNAM assume the responsibility of ensuring that the policies it advocates are free of ethnic bias or for that matter that all other ministries consider the impact of their policies not just on women but on indigenous women in particular (Richards, 2003, 2006).

Patricia Richards (2003) also cites how in Santiago *Mapuche* women from the commission of urban indigenous peoples requested that national office of SERNAM to create a working group with urban *Mapuche* women. SERNAM agreed and 4 meetings were held, starting May 24, 2000. However, she argues that, SERNAM’s documents on the working group demonstrates an inconsistent understanding of the importance of improving their representation of *Mapuche* women.

While SERNAM acknowledges that it has a mandate to eradicate all forms of discrimination against, it also notes the state’s recognition that “true democracy is possible only to the extent that each group and person feels part of and represented by the diverse public policies that the state incorporates into its management”. The

document sets short, medium, long term challenges for SERNAM'S WORK WITH *Mapuche* women, among them to "incorporate them as a group of beneficiaries in the corresponding regions" and to "visualise them within the management services that the programmes offer to the community at the regional level"(Richards, 2003).

This second challenge seems to be getting at what is necessary - to conduct the priorities and perspectives of *Mapuche* women. The document goes on, however, to mention a presidential mandate that all sectors of the government "design a programme agenda that integrates the wisdom and knowledge unique to the ancestral cultures". The mandate is presented as a positive step for SERNAM and other state agencies, but by the focusing on integration and implying that indigenous peoples are the past of what is now Chile it indicates the limits to "true democracy" and de-emphasizes the rights that recognizing their status as peoples might entail argues Patricia Richards (2003).

She argues that SERNAM'S discourse and actions can only be understood in the context of the state as a whole. The Chilean state has been selective in addressing *Mapuche* demands. She also states that the *Mapuche*'s struggle has not been framed not as historically based claims but as socio economic problems that can be easily eradicated by development-oriented solutions such as land subsidy programs, education, and training.

This approach, she argues, does respond to some demands, but it avoids directly addressing the demands for recognition and autonomy that challenge the state's interconnected goals in the economic(strengthening Chile's position in the global market) and ideological (maintaining a unitary Chilean national identity) spheres. The states' current response to the *Mapuche* thus seems to be an effort to contain *Mapuche* demands in order to protect these goals she argues. She further argues it is not historical injustice or cultural difference that the state recognizes when it incorporates the demands of the *Mapuche*. Instead the policies are directed at them are linked to poverty alleviation and vulnerability. She argues that SERNAM'S response to the *Mapuche* therefore fits well into the State's strategy.

Contrary to the view that SERNAM has weakened the women's movement lies another view which argues that SERNAM instead of weakening the women's movement actually provides it with important resources and a discourse of women's rights and a set of objectives around which to mobilise (Franceschet, 2003).

Susan Franceschet (2003) argues that the cross-class unity and the high levels of public visibility displayed by the women's movement under the dictatorship were linked to particular circumstances posed by it. The unity was forged when the women (differently situated) had a common enemy – the dictatorship and a common goal – democracy. The lack of cross-class unity, fragmentation and less public visibility post transition are thus reflective of normal state of affairs as differently situated women in a democratic context have different interests and different ways to pursue them. Susan Franceschet (2003) therefore argues that the dictatorship era movement should not be held up as the “norm” and instead, the movements in other democracies where they are seldom unified and conflict among segments of the movement over strategy and ideology is common should be taken as the “norm” - the fragmentation is thus an expression of “normalisation” of movement politics.

Contrary to what many scholars believe, Susan Franceschet (2003) argues that collective action has not declined but has become less visible because since the return of democracy, attention has shifted to the "formal" political arena and away from the "informal" arena of civil society and that women continue to be active but are having trouble finding expressions for their activism that would draw greater public attention.

Susan Franceschet(2003) therefore argues that the movement is beginning to adapt to the opportunities that grow out of SERNAM's existence and cites the examples of network organizations such as *Red de Mujeres de Organizaciones Sociales* (REMOS), *Asociacion Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indigenas* (ANAMURI) and the *Grupo Iniciativa Mujeres* which she argues are slowly overcoming the fragmentation of the movement that initially resulted from the transition to democracy and are employing the state's own gender discourses to pressure governments to fulfil their commitments to women.

(i) REMOS

The *Red de Mujeres de Organizaciones Sociales* (REMOS) was created in 1996 because a number of organized women were concerned that while popular sector women remained active, they did so in small, isolated groups with little awareness of each others' activities. Thus, there was little capacity for large-scale mobilizations that could bring government and societal attention to their problems, most notably, lack of

adequate housing, and decent employment opportunities, and poor access to health care.

It emerged out of the interaction between the NGO, *Solidaridad, libertad y orden* (SOL) and popular women's organizations. SOL has worked since 1989 to support grass-roots organizations and to foster coordination among them, being concerned with the lack of linkages among popular sector women's groups. SOL received funding from SERNAM's Civil Society Fund which it used to offer leadership training and citizen control strategies to leaders of popular sector women's groups.

The aim of REMOS is to "serve as a channel for interlocution with public and private institutions" and "promoting popular sector women's participation in public spaces ". It feels the need to pressurize the state into fulfilling its commitments (Franceschet, 2003 ; Pereira, 2006).

Susan Franceschet (2003) therefore argues that this means that members of REMOS are aware of and making good use of the institutional and discursive transformations that have occurred since the transition to democracy - the existence of SERNAM and the discourse of "citizen control" that it has initiated, and while the emergence of REMOS is linked to the desire to overcome the fragmentation of the popular sector women's movement, its strategies are clearly linked to the context provided by SERNAM .

To carry this out, REMOS holds monthly or bimonthly meetings where the member groups select issues relevant to their communities (such as health, education, or other municipal services). The constituent groups then pursue these issues by monitoring their municipalities' compliance with aspects of the Equal Opportunities Plans or other programmes that relate to these issues which are implemented at the municipal level. In this way, members generate increased awareness of the state's gender policy and the extent to which it is being implemented effectively. This means that the equality goals established by SERNAM become priorities for REMOS. This contributes significantly to the movement's re-mobilization around a clearer set of purposes (Franceschet, 2003). She cites two additional reasons why REMOS is significant.

First, the mere process of linking up dispersed organizations is crucial to the reconstitution of the women's movement as a collective actor with a sense of purpose. The network is recapturing a strong sense of their collective identity as popular sector women and their critical role in the nation's democratic political project.

Second, the network also insists that "women" are not a homogenous group and that women have different interests depending upon their social location and, therefore, priority must be given to both class and gender issues. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, economic recovery, the return to democracy, and the focus on SERNAM as the agency for dealing with gender equality issues all shifted attention away from the needs of Chile's poor. REMOS is significant for its efforts to draw attention back to the very real problems of poverty, unemployment, and continued social marginalization, and to insist that gender policy address these problems.

(ii) *Asociacion Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indigenas (ANAMURI)*

ANAMURI was formed in June 1998, initially representing fifty base organizations and regional networks of rural or indigenous women. It is firmly rooted in both the *campesino* movement and the women's movement. ANAMURI emerged due to concerns over the lack of linkages among organized women and a frustration that even though the state employed a discourse of women's equality, it was paying little attention to the particular needs of rural and indigenous women.

The objectives of ANAMURI are incorporate gender issues into the world of rural organizing and ensure that the particularities of rural and indigenous women are addressed when discussing women's issues, especially in state institutions. Like REMOS, ANAMURI prizes its independence, yet sees interaction with the state as crucial to realizing its aims. While ANAMURI is critical of the extent to which the specific needs of rural and indigenous women have been ignored by SERNAM (as evident in their complete absence in the first Equal Opportunities Plan) , it however recognize the advantage of having an agency such as SERNAM.

Like REMOS, ANAMURI employs the discourse of "citizen control" and pressures the state to fulfil its commitments to women's equality. Like REMOS, ANAMURI has attracted a great deal of attention recently because of its aim to re-mobilize a segment of the women's movement that was both highly visible and highly mobilized

during the dictatorship. Both networks formed out of a sense of frustration that SERNAM was giving insufficient attention to issues relevant to particular sectors of women, while also admitting that SERNAM's existence was crucial to the overall struggle for women's equality in Chile.

Susan Franceschet(2003) argue that while SERNAM provides these groups with a discourse of women's rights and equality around which to mobilize, both groups are motivated by a sense that a discourse of women's rights is insufficient if it ignores the variety of sources of marginalization that women experience ; both networks expressly view SERNAM, and other state agencies, as a target for pressure from civil society to ensure that commitments are fulfilled, hence their strategies are inextricably linked to the new institutional context that SERNAM provides. Both networks represent societal responses to state-level changes that provide opportunities for movements to mobilize while also affecting power relations among segments of the movement that privilege some while excluding others. Leaders of REMOS and ANAMURI feel that the relationship between the NGO sector and SERNAM privileges the concerns of middle-class women while weakening policy goals that take into account the needs of poor, working-class, rural and indigenous women. At the same time, the responses of REMOS and ANAMURI to focus attention on the multiplicity of sources of women's inequality restore the class and indigenous issues that had been central to the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

(iii) Grupo Iniciativa Mujeres

Grupo Iniciativa Mujeres (GIM) was established in 1993 as a link between SERNAM and groups that were essentially feminist associations. GIM is an umbrella organization composed of eleven NGOs, most of which are feminist NGOs and is perhaps the first women's lobby group that has emerged in Chile since the transition to democracy.

Its objective is to bring together and strengthen women's organisations by drawing up a national document dealing with their demands. The main strategy of the GIM is to monitor state actions and to lobby the state to fulfil commitments to women that are embodied in international agreements such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Chile's

Equal Opportunities Plans as well. Being aware of the privileged access to state they enjoy, they see their role as gathering the demands of women within civil society and presenting them to the state. The NGOs of this network believe in the adoption of a multi-faceted strategy by the Chilean women's movement for pursuing gender equality in which women's organizations in civil society play a much bigger role.

The GIM has also developed a tool for carrying out "citizen control" called the *Indice de Compromiso Cumplido* (Index of Fulfilled Commitments), which includes a system of indicators through which they can measure the state's compliance with various international agreements and SERNAM's Equal Opportunities Plan. This index has made the evaluations of government initiatives more objective than previous evaluations which relied on subjective indicators such as interviews with programme beneficiaries and opinion polls of citizens (Franceschet, 2003). The GIM employs this tool to apply pressure on and negotiate with the policy makers (Pereira, 2006).

The GIM articulates the demands of the women's movement as a whole, using public spaces such as the media and it came up with the *Nueva Agenda* (New Agenda) of the women's movement "hoping to contribute to the strengthening of civil society's role in the construction of democracy" (Franceschet, 2003). Susan Franceschet (2003) cites two reasons why the document is important. First, because it emanates from civil society, the demands for women's equality are more radical than those made from within the state, either in the Equal Opportunities Plan or embodied in legislation proposed by SERNAM or women parliamentarians. The *Nueva Agenda* therefore could and did raise the issue that women's sexual and reproductive rights are key to women's equality. They also highlight the growing inequality among women produced by the state's neoliberal policies, and strongly denounce the massive inequality suffered by indigenous, rural, and popular sector women.

A second reason for the document's significance, argues Franceschet(2003) lies in the process by which it was designed. The GIM, composed of NGOs staffed by professional women, enjoys greater success at obtaining international financing than grassroots women's organizations. International financing allowed it to organize meetings throughout the length of the country in which the needs and demands of differently situated women could be gathered and later organized into a coherent set

of priorities. In writing the *Nueva Agenda*, each NGO in the organization worked on a particular section, dealing with a specific topic, such as women's health, environmental concerns, or women's access to decision-making spheres. The final document was sent to organized women's groups, including REMOS and ANAMURI. Once the GIM had gathered and incorporated the suggestions of women outside of the NGOs into the document, they presented the *Nueva Agenda* as the set of demands emanating from the Chilean women's movement as a whole. This process of interchange and goal identification is critical to a movement seeking to recover its sense of purpose and find ways to express its demands.

Thus Susan Franceschet(2003) argues that REMOS, ANAMURI and GIM are indicators of the movement's reconstitution and that their existences, along with the strategies they employ, indicate that the argument that the institutionalization of gender politics in the state weakens women's movements is no longer accurate in the case of Chile. She argues that isolation of smaller women's groups is slowly being overcome, and network organizations are employing SERNAM's own discourses to mobilize women and to pressure the state to fulfil its commitments to women.

SERNAM's Civil Society Fund, although under resourced, with its explicit goal to strengthen women's collective activity in civil society, provides important resources to grassroots women's organisations.

Through its Women's Rights Information Centers or CIDEM Programme, SERNAM is organising public awareness campaigns and numerous workshops to increase women's awareness of their rights and how to claim them. CIDEMs deliver information to both individually and en masse by way of awareness campaigns using television, radio and the print media.

Summary and Conclusion

In the first elections held in Chile since the military coup in 1973, the *Concertacion* won the presidency and a majority of the seats in the Congress. Patricio Aylwin, the *Concertacion* candidate, was sworn in as the first civilian President since the election of Salvador Allende twenty years earlier. Post electoral victory, the Patricio Aylwin government followed through with its promise, made during its campaign to the women's movement, by establishing a National Women's Service - *the Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (SERNAM).

However from the very start, even before it was formally established, SERNAM became a fulcrum of controversy. Apprehensions towards the agency came from all sides – the Right and the Church feared it would propagate anti-family policies and radical feminism (Valenzuela, 1998; Baldez, 2004); the women in the shantytowns were concerned that the women's service would be dominated by educated middle-class women and therefore doubted if it would embrace their concerns; the feminists resented the predominance of Christian Democratic perspective in it (Franceschet, 2003).

Moreover, the fear of another military coup loomed large during the early years of democracy. So to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy, SERNAM's initial mandate was watered down and emphasis was placed on importance of women's role in the family and the acknowledgment of essential differences between men and women. Its budget was reduced. It was given a non-ministerial status, hence was denied the power to execute its own programmes (Richards, 2002).

SERNAM's mandate entails it to improve the condition of women in society by addressing immediate gender needs and to improve the position of women in society to men in the long term.

It has several organisational limitations as well. For instance, SERNAM has instead been entrusted with the task of proposing and creating public policies which are implemented by other ministries, thereby making it dependent on them. It has limited budget which is one of its most pressing problems. Moreover, it has a low status within the bureaucracy. Inter-sectoral coordination, one of the ways through which its mandate is achieved, is cumbersome because maintaining contacts with different

organisations becomes problematic. It also has no formal mechanism by which it can oversee the work of other ministries (Waylen, 2000)

Post the transition to democracy, the women's movement is said to have suffered from demobilisation and the SERNAM is said to contribute to this. Scholars argue that SERNAM affects the women's movement by shaping power relations among different segments, contributing to divisions between those on the inside and outside of the emerging gender policy networks. It has been accused of extending policy access to one aspect of the movement- women activists in the NGOs – while creating very little for grassroots organisations, thereby marginalising them (Waylen, 2000; Alvarez, 1999). The *pobladoras* activists and the *Mapuche* women argue that their respective interests and concerns have not been encompassed by SERNAM's gender discourse. By drawing activists away from the movements it has been accused of depriving them of crucial leadership. It has 'beheaded' the feminist movement (Richards, 2003).

To the contrary there is another view which argues that SERNAM instead of weakening the women's movement actually provides it with important resources and a discourse of women's rights and a set of objectives around which to mobilise.

Networks such as REMOS, ANAMURI and GIM have emerged who are responding to the new institutional context and are using SERNAM's own discourse to pressure the state to fulfill its commitment to women and to ensure that their concerns such as ethnicity and class are also addressed in addition to gender (Franceschet, 2003).

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The military in Chile had come to power by staging a violent coup d'état against the democratically elected, left-of-centre coalition government of Salvador Allende in 1973. What followed the coup was a massive restructuring of the Chilean political and social systems and its economy as well, entailed by the military's 'Re-foundation' programme. The programme, introduced by the military once it came to power, aimed at transforming the Chilean nation. Its objective was to create the nation anew (Moenne and Webb, 2005).

The junta promoted traditional family as the pillar of social stability and the building block of the Chilean nation and moved the rhetoric on gendered responsibilities center-stage. A woman's primordial task was therefore motherhood. Women were entrusted with the task of solidifying the idea of a family, producing children for the *patria* and raising the next generation of patriotic citizens. They were therefore declared as the junta's ally in defending the nation (Mooney and Campbell, 2009). However, the brutal dictatorship, under which any resistance to it was crushed and men were killed, incarcerated or simply disappeared, destroyed the fundamental fabric of what constituted a family by leaving it without its breadwinner. In an environment marred by censorship, violence, curfews, raids and detention, families could hardly function. The loss of the breadwinner forced women to step out of their homes to work to provide for the family. The loss and disappearances of their husbands and children made them raise their voice and mobilise against the human rights abuses perpetrated by the military (Baldez, 2004).

Under the guidance of the "Chicago Boys" economists, the junta dismantled what had been Chile's dominant economic model since the 1930s, Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI), and replaced it with monetarist free market policies associated with Milton Friedman. The neo-liberal model adopted led to rapid decline in men's traditional sources of employment along with the trade union movement that had defended them, while it opened up new employment avenues for women in the fruit and wine industries. Therefore while the junta's patriarchal discourse defined women as dependent mothers, its economic policies forced women to take on new roles as

wage labourers. In the early eighties, Chile experienced an economic downturn, triggered by the debt crisis, which brought forth a lot of hardships for women with the cost of living sky-rocketing and the unemployment rising. In order to deal with these hardships, women started mobilising around basic consumption issues. This period therefore witnessed a proliferation of *poblaciones* such as shopping collectives, soup kitchens, etc. (Tinsman, 2002; Meller, 2000; Mooney and Campbell, 2009; Noonan, 1995; Schild, 1994).

In the process of finding their voices as mothers, women began to redefine the connection between home and motherhood. Also Chile's insertion into the world market had exposed a formerly insular country to an influx of ideas and images about women and men that directly challenged the conservative discourse of the Pinochet regime. The women realised that there was no difference in the position they occupied under the military regime and her position within the family. This realisation led to the emergence of a feminist movement which was spearheaded by middle-class women. They challenged military's restrictive notions of gender identity and also believed that the struggle for democracy necessitated not only a fight against the military but a fight against *machismo* and discrimination against women as well, became the basis for their slogan "democracy in the streets and at home" (Mooney and Campbell, 2009; Baldez, 2003 2004, Power).

Women therefore mobilised around both "practical" gender issues as well as "strategic" gender issues. The growth of women's resistance was aided by the support extended by the Catholic Church and the international community. Also, the repression of the conventional political activity in the public sphere had led to the diminution of the conventional political arena and had thereby shifted the focus of political activity from institutional to community based activities where women had greater opportunities to participate and gave their activities greater prominence and significance. Their mobilisation was also facilitated by the fact that the women's activities were not perceived as political or dangerous enough to warrant repression. It did not view women as adversaries (Richards, 2002; Waylen, 1994).

The women's movement however galvanised only with the unfolding of the democratisation process. The rise of the civil society and the opening of the political space with the re-emergence of the opposition parties (clamped down since

1973), triggered off by the economic downturn, created conditions that enabled the various women's organisations to coalesce which till then had failed to come together as a united front. The conflicts among the opposition over strategies to deal with the dictatorship and the exclusion of women from the process of re-alignment and their concerns from the agenda of the opposition cemented the women's movement (Waylen, 1993; Baldez, 2004).

In the first elections held since the military coup in 1973 in 1989, the *Concertacion* won the presidency as well as the majority of seats in the Congress. Patricio Aylwin was sworn in as Chile's first civilian president since the election of Salvador Allende twenty years earlier. Once in power his administration quickly moved to honour the promise made to the Chilean women during its election campaign by establishing the National Women's Service- *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (SERNAM), with a mandate to improve the condition of women in society by addressing immediate gender needs and a long term objective to improve the position of women in society to men.

SERNAM immediately became a fulcrum of controversy with apprehensions pouring in from all directions, even before it was formally established. The Right and the Church viewed it as a vehicle for dissemination of anti-family policy and radical feminist propaganda; the women in the shantytown were concerned that it would be an elitist institution dominated by educated middle-class feminists and therefore doubted if it would represent their interests; the feminists resented the pre-dominance of Christian Democratic (which was the largest party in the *Concertacion*) leaders and perspectives within SERNAM. Moreover, during the early years of democracy, the threat of another coup loomed large and the priority was thus to ensure a smooth transition and to avoid political conflicts. Consequently, SERNAM mandate got watered down. It's was not given a ministerial status which struck off its power to implement its own programmes. SERNAM has instead since been entrusted with the task of proposing and creating public policies which are implemented by other ministries, thereby making it dependent on them. It has limited budget which is one of its most pressing problems. Moreover, it has a low status within the bureaucracy. Inter-sectoral coordination, one of the ways through which its mandate is achieved, is cumbersome because maintaining contacts with different organisations becomes

problematic. It also has no formal mechanism by which it can oversee the work of other ministries (Baldez, 2001 ;Matear, 1995; Waylen, 1996;Richards, 2000)

SERNAM has a decentralised organisational structure with a National Directorate in Santiago and regional directorates in each of Chile's thirteen regional administrations. It is headed by a Director who is assisted by a Deputy Director and thirteen Regional Directors. All are appointed by the President. The Director enjoys the ranking of a cabinet minister.

Post transition to democracy the women's movement is argued to have suffered from demobilisation. The cracks in the movement, they argue, had already appeared during the transition to democracy (Oxhorn, 1994; Waylen, 1996, 2000 ; Haas, 2005)

With the beginning of the process of transition towards democratisation, the reconstitution and recreation of the conventional political arena occurred. The political parties and political institutions, clamped down when the military took charge, therefore started to re-form. The social movements, including the women's movement, then faced a choice of whether or not to start working with the newly re-constituted political parties and institutions. This is referred to as the "autonomy versus integration" dilemma – should they remain outside this newly re-constructed political arena, thereby preserving their independence but risking marginalisation and loss of influence as power shifts towards the political parties or should they work with it and risk getting co-opted and losing their autonomy. The various women's organisations therefore had to take this strategic decision about whether to focus their participation in political or civil society (Waylen 1996, Bladez, 2003 2004).

This dilemma led to cracks in the women's movement during the transition process between the *feministas* and the *politicistas*. This dilemma also drove a wedge amongst the feminists with some advocating the need to engage with the political parties and the state to advance women's rights and others advocating an autonomous feminist movement. The cracks deepened as the democratisation process moved forward (Baldez, 2004 ; Richards, 2002).

Scholars argue that post transition to democracy the women's movement has demobilised. Most scholars have placed the blame for the de-mobilisation on the re-constitution of the conventional political arena and the resurgence and re-assertion of

political parties as the most important institution responsible for interest articulation, which leads to the “autonomy versus integration” dilemma.

It is also argued that the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies has contributed to the de-mobilisation. Neoliberalism, argues Nikki Craske (1998) involves the withdrawal of the state from the provision of social services, the removal of food and transportation subsidies, and fostering export competitiveness based on low-wage (often female) labour. When taken together, these policies raise greater obstacles to women's activism because they increase women's burdens and leave them even less time for political activism.

Some scholars have argued that post transition to democracy; the “autonomy versus integration” debate has become more about the relationship between the women’s movement and the state rather than between the women’s movement and the political parties (Franceschet, 2003).

Post transition to democracy, many women’s groups converted themselves to NGOs. This was largely because of the shift in the nature of international funding. During the military dictatorship, the women’s groups received funds from international donors directly to carry out their activities. However, after the transition to democracy, these international funds started coming through the state. These groups being dependent on these funds for their survival which in turn makes their survival dependent on the work they carry out for the government such as research, project implementation, thereby converting themselves to NGOs in the process.

When SERNAM was formally established, the leaders of many women’s organisations left their organisations and joined SERNAM. It has therefore been blamed for depriving them of crucial leadership. This co-optation happened mostly to the feminist NGOs. SERNAM has therefore been accused of ‘be-heading’ the feminist movement (Waylen 1996, 2000 ; Richards, 2002)

SERNAM, it is argued, affects the women’s movement by shaping power relations among different segments, contributing to divisions between those on the inside and outside of the emerging gender policy networks .The links between women inside and outside of SERNAM remain weak. SERNAM, it is argued, extends policy access to one aspect of the movement - women activists in the NGO community - and creates

little access for grassroots organizations. The links between SERNAM and the NGO community are the most solid, with a large number of women moving between the two realms. SERNAM has a strong, rather, a clientelist relationship with the activists in the NGOs and the educational institutions. It has failed to forge links with the grassroots women's organisations thereby marginalising them (Waylen, 2000; Alvarez, 1999).

For instance the *pobladoras* activists and the *Mapuche* assert that they have been ignored and are not recognized in the state's gender discourse, which focuses on the equality of opportunities between men and women. The two Equal Opportunities Plans through which SERNAM sought to promote its gender discourse set forth medium to long term goals and strategies to achieve greater gender equity and helped placed gender as a priority on the public administration agenda (Richards, 2003, 2006).

The *pobladoras* activists present an important challenge to the gender discourse promoted by SERNAM. SERNAM's gender discourse focuses on equality of opportunities between men and women whereas the demands of the *pobladoras* are linked to socio-economic marginalisation. The definition of the *pobladoras* gender interests is thus shaped by their class interests. The *pobladoras* do not consider SERNAM's focus as irrelevant, but they hold that their particular identities and needs as women whose daily lives are shaped by being poor and working class are not prioritised by the agency. The *pobladoras* therefore argue that in order to talk about equal opportunities, the socio-economic conditions that prevent some women from being able to take advantage of those opportunities also have to be addressed. They argue that SERNAM represents the interests of the educated middle class women who because of their social positions i.e middle-class and educated, have easier access to power and therefore decision making. They therefore feel they are discriminated against because of their lack of formal education. They argue that they have very limited access to information about policies and programmes of the state that pertain to women because they are very little information on them or are written in a manner that is inaccessible to women with little formal education. They argue that since non-poor middle-class women have not lived the experience of the poor women, they will therefore not be able to understand their concerns and therefore will not be in a position to adequately represent their interests (Richards, 2002, 2004).

The *Mapuche* women too present an important challenge to the gender discourse promoted by SERNAM. While SERNAM's gender discourse focuses on equality of opportunities between men and women, the *Mapuche* women's demands are linked to cultural differences and inequality among women (Richards, 2003). The *Mapuche* women argue that their struggles, interests and demands are distinct and they emphasize on these differences in their demands vis-a-vis SERNAM or in their relationships with other organised women

The *Mapuche* women argue that the women who work at SERNAM are educated, belong to the urban middle-class and are non-indigenous and therefore SERNAM defines women and their interests in a way that centralizes and normalizes non-indigenous women, thereby marginalising them. They also hold that SERNAM's Equal Opportunities Plans represent the interests of the urban middle-class women who are educated, non-indigenous women (Richards, 2003). They assert that not all women are the same and not all are subject to the same discrimination. They therefore argue that they are different and they assert their difference along three main lines - the discrimination experienced by the *Mapuche* women is different from that experienced by other women and they often discrimination against them is often perpetrated by other women which is an indication that *Mapuche* women are not treated as equals of other women and implies that not all women have the same interests; because of cultural differences, gender relations in *Mapuche* society and the dominant Chilean society are not the same; gender issues are not usually the prime focus of *Mapuche* women's activism. The principal reason for being organised was to bring about justice for the *Mapuche* as a whole. The *Mapuche* women therefore speak of double, and often triple discrimination: as women, as indigenous, and as the poor. They, therefore, argue that they are not the same and the Equal Opportunities Plans do not take their difference into account and will therefore not result in justice for them (Richards, 2003).

In the first Equal Opportunity Plan the *Mapuche* were not mentioned anywhere. In the Second Plan although references were made to ethnicity and indigenous women, SERNAM held on to its view that there is an experience of oppression universally shared by all Chilean women, which the *Mapuche* women assert as something untrue and therefore problematic. They argue that unless ethnic difference is seen as a principal vector by which power is distribute in the society rather than an additional

barrier by some women, SERNAM's approach will continue to marginalize the *Mapuche* women (Richards, 2003).

However, some argue that the cross-class unity and the high levels of public visibility displayed by the women's movement under the dictatorship were linked to particular circumstances posed by it - the unity was forged when the women (differently situated) had a common enemy - the dictatorship and a common goal - democracy. The lack of cross-class unity, fragmentation and less public visibility post transition are thus reflective of normal state of affairs as differently situated women in a democratic context have different interests and different ways to pursue them and therefore the dictatorship era movement should not be held up as the "norm" and instead, the movements in other democracies where they are seldom unified and conflict among segments of the movement over strategy and ideology is common should be taken as the "norm" - the fragmentation is thus an expression of "normalisation" of movement politics. Also, collective action has not declined but has become less visible since the return of democracy because attention has shifted to the "formal" political arena and away from the "informal" arena of civil society and that women continue to be active but are having trouble finding expressions for their activism that would draw greater public attention (Franceschet, 2003).

Contrary to the view that SERNAM has weakened the women's movement lies another view which argues that SERNAM instead of weakening the women's movement actually provides it with important resources and a discourse of women's rights and a set of objectives around which to mobilise. According to this view, that the movement is beginning to adapt to the opportunities that grow out of SERNAM's existence and cites the examples of network organizations such as *Red de Mujeres de Organizaciones Sociales* (REMOS), *Asociacion Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indigenas* (ANAMURI) and the *Grupo Iniciativa Mujeres* which, it is argued, are slowly overcoming the fragmentation of the movement that initially resulted from the transition to democracy and are employing the state's own gender discourses to pressure governments to fulfil their commitments to women (Franceschet, 2003).

The women's movement in Chile did suffer from demobilisation after transition to democracy. The cracks had appeared during the transition period before the formal establishment of democracy. Although many reasons have been cited, such as the

“autonomy versus integration” dilemma, the embrace of neo-liberalism, ‘normalisation’ of politics, SERNAM has also made a contribution towards the demobilisation. Its co-optation of the leaders and activists of many women’s groups which led to their ‘beheading’ and break-up; the NGOisation, wherein many groups converted themselves to NGOs as the funds started getting channelled through the state post transition and therefore making them dependent on the state for their survival; the close clientelist relationship it established with the NGO community on the one hand and the side-lining of the grassroots organisations on the other, the dominance of the middle-class educated non-poor women and their perspectives within SERNAM; the exclusion of the *pobladoras* and the *Mapuche* and their concerns and interests in its gender discourse and their lack of representation have been SERNAM’s contribution towards the de-mobilisation of women’s movement post transition to democracy.

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