

CAMPAIGNING AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN FROM THE WOMEN'S  
AND FEMINIST MOVEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
*¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* CAMPAIGN IN CHILE

By  
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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the strong women who came before me and who taught me that anything is possible: my Gran, my Abuela (Mini), and my mom.

## ABSTRACT

# CAMPAIGNING AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN FROM THE WOMEN'S AND FEMINIST MOVEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* CAMPAIGN IN CHILE

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The last decade has seen a wave of national campaigns against violence against women in Latin America, yet little research exists on the topic. Based on fieldwork and using grounded theory, this thesis offers a case study of the national, multi-year, Chilean campaign *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* (Caution! *Machismo* Kills). Designed and implemented by the Chilean Women's Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, the campaign is an effort to address *femicide*, the killing or death of a woman as a result of her gender, and to address all forms of violence against women. The case study builds upon the concept of feminist space to analyze the campaign's successes and challenges, as well as its contributions to the country's women's and feminist movement. A model for change through social movement campaigns is proposed and implications for research in the fields of both Women's and Communications Studies are discussed.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a pervasive human rights abuse experienced by women throughout the world. In fact, the United Nations (2006) estimates that approximately one-third of women globally experience violence *as a result of their gender*. This problem stems from social norms and institutions that promote women as inferior and subordinate to men, which raise significant barriers in eliminating violence against women. The problem is also complicated by other realities of domination. Women not only experience violence because they are women, but also because they are or are perceived to be a particular type of woman, where race, class, sexuality, country of origin, and other minority identities interact in unique ways to form interlocking oppressions. Although violence against women is not a recent phenomenon, widespread public treatment of the issue can be traced within the last few decades.

In Latin America, for example, violence against women has been publicly addressed since the 1980s, beginning with efforts by the women's and feminist movement<sup>1</sup> to realize women's rights generally and to politicize violence against women in particular. Consequently, the 1990s witnessed the first wave of legal commitments and reforms in the region, closely followed by a second wave of reforms in the 2000s. States and private sector alike have also made meaningful steps toward service delivery for women who have experienced gender-based violence, along with related efforts to address the issue. In spite of this progress, however, violence against women continues at an alarming rate.

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<sup>1</sup> In Chile, the feminist movement is often cited as one component of the women's movement, where every woman in the women's movement does not consider herself feminist. In order to be inclusive, and following the example set by many of the women that I met in the field, I use the term *women's and feminist movement* throughout this thesis. When the terms *feminist* and *feminism* are used independently, they are used with the understanding that women's emancipation is the primary concern of the person or the belief system being discussed.

In response to a State deficit of adequate treatment of violence against women, the women's and feminist movement has once again taken up the issue in the public eye. Much of its effort within the last decade has focused on *femicide*: the killing or death of a woman because she is a woman.<sup>2</sup> The problem was first raised in relation to Ciudad Juárez, Mexico: a city along the Mexico-United States border that is well known for its *maquila* (manufacturing) industry, which employs mainly women in sweatshop conditions. The city's geographical location, State indifference, and industry regulations, practices, and culture created a situation in which women became the target of hundreds of vicious sexual assaults and torture, ending in killings.<sup>3</sup> Perpetrators were able to act in impunity, for little official attention was assigned to investigate or to prevent further crimes.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, women in the area organized to demand justice and to draw attention to the problem. In this way, the case of Ciudad Juárez acted as a springboard for feminist action on femicide throughout Latin America.

In 2001, the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Network launched a regional, three-year campaign addressing femicide entitled *Por la vida de las mujeres: Ni una muerte +* (For women's lives: Not one more death).<sup>5</sup> Arguably, one of the most significant impacts of the campaign was on the women's and feminist movement itself. Following the campaign launch, the women's and feminist movement in several countries began to investigate

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<sup>2</sup> The most commonly referenced definition of femicide is Diana Russell's (2001), which is, most basically, "the killing of females by males because they are females" (p. 13). However, this definition is limited in scope, as it does not take into account the deaths of women that result from sexist and misogynist action and *inaction* that may not be the result of murder. As the findings in the fieldwork used to write this thesis do acknowledge such deaths as femicide, Russell's definition is not used here.

<sup>3</sup> For more on women and femicide in Ciudad Juarez see, for example, Schmidt Camacho (2005), and Wright (2001).

<sup>4</sup> The women's and feminist movement in Mexico often uses the term *feminicide* (rather than femicide) to point to the impunity in which women are killed and, thus, to implicate the State's role in these killings. The term *feminicide* is also used in other countries in Latin America. It sometimes carries the Mexican meaning, while at other times acts merely as a synonym of *femicide*. As the term *femicide* is more commonly used in Chile than its counterpart, the term *femicide* is used throughout this thesis.

<sup>5</sup> In Spanish, the symbol + means "more" when used in this way.



femicide in their particular national contexts, as well as to add to existing knowledge about violence against women more generally. This research was then used to propel national campaigns addressing various aspects of violence against women, including femicide. In general, the campaigns are marked by widespread communications and mobilizations. To date, however, very little research exists on this wave of campaigns, or on the creation, implementation, or impact of any particular campaign. This thesis contributes, therefore, to needed research on the violence against women campaigns in Latin America by examining one such campaign: the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* (Caution! *Machismo* Kills) campaign in Chile.<sup>6</sup>

Chile is located along the pacific coast of South America, bordered by Argentina to the east, Bolivia to the northeast, and Peru to the north. Considered one of the most developed countries in Latin America, Chile is unique in many ways. Geographically, Chile is extremely diverse, beginning with arid desert in the north, changing to temperate valley in the center and to glaciers in the far south, with the Andean and Coastal mountain ranges running north to south throughout. This unique geography offers significant natural resources, which have led to prosperous mining and agricultural industries. Indeed, as a result of its natural resources, and following extreme neoliberal measures implemented during the country's 17-year military regime (1973-1990), Chile has one of the most stable economies in Latin America. However, this stability comes at a price.

In particular, aggressive neoliberal policies have exacerbated economic inequality, resulting in development for the middle and upper classes and varying degrees of poverty for

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix A offers a visual sample of campaign communications, events, and activities in the style of a photo essay.

the lower class.<sup>7</sup> Problems of economic inequality are especially acute when understood in the context of Chile's recent political history. In 1970, Chile was the first country in Latin America to democratically elect a Marxist government. Marxist president Salvador Allende led this government, which was deeply committed to social equity. However, in the months leading up to the coup, internal division and powerful external political forces resulted in a national state of chaos and anxiety. On September 11, 1973 democracy in Chile was overtaken by a United States government-backed military coup, bringing General Augusto Pinochet to power and ending the Chilean Path to Socialism (*La vía Chilena al socialismo*). Chilean perspectives on the coup and military dictatorship remain deeply divided, yet its violation of human rights is undisputed. Repression immediately following the coup was severe, and included the disappearance, torture, and murder of thousands of Chileans. Not only does this history inform the diverse economic and social realities that characterize Chile today, it is also essential to an understanding of Chile's women's and feminist movement, which grew and developed during the dictatorship. Particularly relevant to this thesis, it was during this period that the women's and feminist movement began to widely and publicly address violence against women, as it drew connections between authoritarianism in the country and the home.<sup>8</sup>

In 1990, democracy returned to Chile following a 1988 plebiscite asking Chileans if they wanted Pinochet to remain in power for an additional "term." A *yes* vote would have justified Pinochet's continued rule to an increasingly critical international public. However, to Pinochet's surprise, Chileans narrowly voted for a return to democracy, and the party

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<sup>7</sup> Class inequality is focused upon here because it is integral to any discussion of Chilean culture or politics. Although other significant issues of inequality, such as Indigenous-State relations, inform the Chilean context, they remain outside of the scope of this thesis, and so are not discussed here. Intersections of race and gender are, however, discussed in Chapter Three in relation to violence against women.

<sup>8</sup> The history of Chile's women's and feminist movement is discussed at length in Chapter Three.

system was reinstated. Some of the demands of the women's and feminist movement were taken into account during the transition to democracy, including actions to address violence against women. However, following the transition, the women's and feminist movement became weakened and fractured, and public attention on violence against women decreased. As with other countries in Latin America, the problem was once again picked up following the regional campaign in 2001 against femicide in Latin America.

In 2004, the report "Femicide in Chile" was realized through the direct efforts of the country's women's and feminist movement. The objective of the report was "to contribute to the process of making femicide in Chile visible, defining it in its particularity as a fact of gender violence against women" (p. 35). To do so, the report's investigators analyzed national statistics, records, and press coverage of homicides of women in Chile during the years 2001 and 2002 and conducted interviews with key informants. The report found that the system used to track homicides made the gendered dimension of many of the homicides of women invisible. Using the data available, it was estimated that approximately half of all homicides of women during this period were femicides (directly related to the fact that the victim was a woman), with at least 84 femicides taking place nationally during the period studied (p. 46). The majority of these femicides were found to be *intimate femicides*, where the victims were or had been in an intimate-partner relationship with the man who killed her (p. 46). In addition, review of the national newspaper *La Cuarta* revealed at least 22 cases of frustrated (attempted) femicide, where women survived attacks intended to kill them (p. 46). The report also found that the press played a key role in public perceptions of femicide, framing the homicides of women as "isolated incidents, trivialized, naturalized, and de-contextualized" (p.76). Finally, the report concluded with a list of specific recommendations for the State, civil society, and the United Nations. These findings provided the necessary—

credible—substance for the Chilean Women’s Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence to design a national campaign on femicide.<sup>9</sup>

The Chilean Women’s Network is a feminist network connecting women-focused and feminist organizations and activists throughout the country on the topic of violence against women. The network was born in 1990 “out of the reflection, analysis and action that the women’s and feminist movement realized since the [1980s]” (Red Chilena, *Presentación*) on the topic of violence against women. As in any country, the problem of violence against women in Chile is difficult to quantify due to social, cultural, and structural barriers to report.<sup>10</sup> In spite of this challenge, what remains clear is that violence against women is a widespread problem affecting women from all sectors of society, and expressing itself through such diverse manifestations as psychological, sexual, physical, and institutional violence. The network’s analysis of the problem recognizes the social power inequality that has traditionally existed between women and men, and names this inequality as the root cause of violence against women, and violence against women as a violation of human rights.<sup>11</sup> The network approaches the issue on multiple levels, with objectives focused on public education and mobilization, as well as public policy, laws, and State accountability.

In line with the objectives of the Chilean Women’s Network, the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign aims to create a society in which public will exists to eliminate femicide and all forms of violence against women. As the original media release proclaims,

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<sup>9</sup> Henceforth referred to as the “Chilean Women’s Network” (*la Red Chilena Contra la Violencia Doméstica y Sexual*), references to publications by this network are cited under “Red Chilena.”

<sup>10</sup> Some estimates of violence against women in Chile include a 2001 study by Chile’s national women’s ministry (SERNAM) estimating that more than 50% of women in the capital have experienced intimate-partner violence (cited in Red Chilena, 2004, p. 24), and a national study in 1998 by Chile’s ministry of health estimating that 7% of women over the age of 18 in Chile have been raped (cited in La Morada, 2004, p. 15). Official reports of intrafamily violence against women in Chile demonstrate an increase from 60,769 reports in 2001 to 113,487 reports in 2008 (cited in Red Chilena, 2009, Documento Político, p. 2). These numbers, however, do not represent the number of incidents of intrafamily violence, let alone of all incidents of violence against women in Chile, for all incidents are not reported.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of women’s human rights in Chile, see La Morada (2004).

It is a call out to women to NOT TOLERATE any form of *machismo*, abuse and aggression against you; to all social, cultural, and political sectors to NOT BE COMPLICIT renouncing femicide and all violence against women; and to public institutions, to fairly carry out their obligations in order to guarantee all of the rights and life of women.

This approach is significant because it can be supposed that if violence against women were to be addressed at the individual level alone, then the root causes of this violence would continue to manifest in individual cases. This understanding is reflected throughout the campaign, beginning with the selection of the title and central slogan. As Paula Santana, a regional coordinator for the network, explains:

We wanted to show that this is a product of a cultural system—that we can call *machismo*, that we can call patriarchy—and that this is behind all of the violence against women. This is the cause. So, for this reason the slogan seemed very powerful because it didn't focus on the death, the murder, or the hitting, but focused on the cultural system that kills, that allows this to happen.

In this way, the campaign also focused on what is a daily experience for all women in Chile—a point made clear by one woman's spontaneous reaction to the campaign title: “If *machismo* killed in Chile, we'd all be dead!”<sup>12</sup> The graphic design of campaign materials further emphasizes the social need to focus on *machismo*. Materials are printed in yellow and black to look like traditional caution signs, and because “constructing the yellow and the black are an alert... *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* is an alert” (Anita Peña).<sup>13</sup>

As with similar campaigns in Latin America, the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign incorporates traditional communications with community-level engagement.

Traditional communications include, for example, publicly displayed posters and other print materials made available through events and at women-focused organizations. The campaign

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<sup>12</sup> This particular remark came from a Chilean woman who had no relation to the campaign, and who was spoken with outside of official fieldwork.

<sup>13</sup> Originally coined by Ángeles Álvarez, the slogan was borrowed from a 1997 Spanish campaign lobbying for an integrated law that would draw concrete connections between the different forms of violent crimes committed against women.

is launched each year with synchronized public installations in plazas across the country, memorializing the previous year's femicide victims.<sup>14</sup> Each victim is represented by a pair of shoes, accompanied by data on the victim, such as her name and age, along with the name and age of her killer. In addition to memorializing victims, the installations are used as opportunities to discuss violence against women with members of the public, and to distribute campaign communication materials. After the launch, each participating region organizes its own particular campaign activities, such as seminars, protests, and information booths. Finally, the campaign is closed with a synchronized march, inviting all women in Chile to participate and make public the demand for their rights, including lives free from violence.

Beginning in 2007, the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign was initially to span at least three years in order to have a more visible impact. In fact, the campaign has now extended this initial period, with 2011 marking its fifth year. Each year's focus is nuanced, connecting femicide to other manifestations of violence against women, thus conceptually demonstrating the *continuum* in which all violence against women exists.<sup>15</sup> The first year of the campaign focused on femicide, the second year on sexual violence, and the third year on symbolic and institutional violence. The fourth year maintained the previous focus on symbolic and institutional violence, while expanding its scope to the unique experiences of violence against women that result from interlocking oppressions.

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<sup>14</sup> The number of femicides recorded by the Chilean Women's Network each year sometimes differs from government statistics. For example, in 2010 the Chilean Women's Network recorded 56 femicides, in comparison to 49 femicides recorded by the government (SERNAM). This divergence is due in part to the State's interpretation of *femicide*, which is based on the traditional definition, whereas the Chilean Women's Network expands this definition to include, for example, women who are allowed to die as a result of their gender.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion on the continuum of violence against women, see Mooney (2000), for example.

To realize its materials and activities, the campaign relies on donor funding and volunteers. Multiple funding sources are required, which are variable and which have been decreasing over the life of the campaign.<sup>16</sup>

From the first year of the campaign until now the money that the Network has to develop the Campaign has diminished a lot. Now it is more difficult that [funders] approve the projects because they consider that the problem in Chile is not as great compared to what happens in other countries. In fact this year [2010] it was difficult for us to initiate the Campaign because we didn't have money for the basic and most important, which is the production of materials. (Paula Santana)

Even when funding has been at its highest, however, no more than two coordinator positions have received funding annually, placing the majority of the burden on volunteers.

My own introduction to the Chilean Women's Network also illustrates this scarcity of resources. I initially thought that there would need to be a fully staffed office in each region in order to achieve the campaign accomplishments I had read about from Canada. To my surprise, I arrived at the Valparaíso "office" for my first meeting to find a small room, not more than perhaps five square meters, with a few pieces of older living room furniture and a few standard, stackable, and very uncomfortable school auditorium-style chairs, which formed a small circle in the space left by the clutter of boxes and protest signs. A large window at the back of the room provided lots of light and lots of heat from the too-intense sun, reduced only slightly by a campaign poster taped along part of the window, used in place of a curtain. The women present at that first meeting were not the same women at the second or third or fourth meetings I attended. Although there was a very small group of "regulars", membership to the Chilean Women's Network in Valparaíso was fluid, women coming and going as their lives allowed and as they chose to do so. Even the two regional coordinators must work outside of their roles as coordinators that, along with the personal details of their

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<sup>16</sup> Some of the funders have included GT (International Day of Prayer, German Committee), Mamacash, UNIFEM, Global Fund For Women, and División de Organizaciones Sociales de la Secretaría General de Gobierno (a national fund).

lives, they must work around and between in order to work on the campaign. In summary, instead of the organized office I had imagined, what I found was a kind of organized chaos, resourcefully and artfully balanced by very busy women who gift their time and talents to make the campaign a reality.

The *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign is not the first campaign in Chile to address violence against women, yet its success appears unprecedented. This thesis proposes that the campaign's success is due to the network's creation of feminist spaces in which violence against women is legitimized as problematic, talked about, and acted against, which, in turn, has contributed to a repoliticization of the topic and to rejuvenation and strengthening of Chile's women's and feminist movement.

This Chapter has introduced the problem of violence against women and femicide in Latin America, introduced the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign in Chile, and provided a brief country profile. Chapter Two outlines how my methodology and field experience influenced the research process. Chapter Three provides the wider context of the particular gender climate in Chile in which the campaign was launched and in which it continues to take place. Chapter Four provides an analysis of how the campaign has effected change in Chile through its creation of feminist spaces, challenges in maintaining these spaces, and how the campaign has contributed to a strengthening and rejuvenation of the country's women's and feminist movement. Finally, Chapter Five proposes a model for change based on the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign, along with implications for future research in the fields of both Women's and Communications Studies.



## CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

### PRELIMINARY RESEARCH STRATEGY

As I began research on the violence against women campaigns in Latin America, it became clear that there was little academic information available on the specific topic. Consequently, I focused on contextual aspects of the topic, such as violence against women theory, how the women's and feminist movement has addressed violence against women globally, and the history of this movement in Latin America and more specifically in Chile. I also explored the use of campaigns by social movements. Again, however, I was unable to locate academic literature that addressed this topic in its specificity or with very much depth.<sup>17</sup>

Consequently, when I approached my research project, I did so with the understanding that I had too little information and was too far removed from the research context to create a fixed, detailed research plan. In order to address this issue, I looked to the ideas presented in Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which allow the researcher to build theory and concepts according to knowledge gained in the research process. This approach is especially well suited to feminist research because feminist research seeks to understand the world in ways that have traditionally been unexamined. More specifically, Grounded Theory was well suited to my particular research project because my research would be an independent contribution to this field, rather than a clarification of a single point of contention or curiosity identified within the existing research.

I planned to spend approximately six months in total conducting fieldwork and up to one year in Chile. As my own connections to Chile are strong (my mother was born in Chile

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<sup>17</sup> For example, although Communications Studies offers a model in public will campaign literature, this model does not fit the present case study and is therefore used as a discussion point in the final chapter, rather than as a guiding theory.

and currently lives in Chile, along with most of my family on my mother's side), this timeframe was flexible and would allow for a slow entry into the field as I experienced culture shock, adjusted to constantly speaking in Spanish, and began to collect contextual information about Chile as it related to the campaign. It was also long enough, I hoped, to make meaningful connections with some of the women who participated in the organization of the campaign.

The field site I selected from Canada was a set of neighbouring cities: Valparaíso and Viña del Mar. Historically, the area has been home to an active women's and feminist movement. For example, the *Casa de la Mujer* (Women's House) in Valparaíso operated for years as an active feminist organization that was a reference point for all women "*que fue un referente para todas*" (Ondina). Along with the presence of major universities, the region's history of strong feminist activism led me to anticipate steady campaign activity. In addition, by *not* choosing the city where the majority of my family lives, I hoped to avoid complications around, for example, trust and political association. I also chose not to conduct fieldwork in the capital, where I had spent time previously. The pollution is extremely high in Santiago and, as I am extremely sensitive to this pollution, spending such an extended period of time in Santiago was not an option. Therefore, to a great extent, my selection of Valparaíso and Viña del Mar was a consequence of what the cities *were not* as well as what the cities *were*. I also remained open to the possibility of spending time in the field elsewhere in order to gain increased perspective.

Before entering the field, I conducted some preliminary library research on the topic, and settled on three initiating questions. The intent of the initiating questions was to help me to understand the campaign in more depth before narrowing my focus further. This is significant because, while much information about the campaign is documented on the

Chilean Women's Network website, it was not possible, for example, to understand how the campaign actually translated "on the ground" or what information was potentially missing.<sup>18</sup>

The three initiating questions were:

1. What campaign activities have taken place and are taking place?
2. What have been and are the public reactions to the campaign?
3. How are women experiencing their involvement in the campaign?

The first two questions provided a starting place for my research, whether or not I was able to connect with the women organizing the campaign. The third question, focusing on the experience of women (a central concept in feminist research), is how I hoped to narrow my focus by using campaign participants' thoughts and experiences as my guide.

## FIELDWORK

As with all feminist research, feminist fieldwork is grounded in an understanding that all knowledge is situated and that there is no such thing as true objectivity or neutrality. As Sherryl Kleinman (2007) explains,

Calling oneself a feminist implies that one has a moral imperative. One is supposedly no longer a researcher looking for truth, however provisional it is and however honest one is about the self that produced the account. As non-feminist colleagues told me, doing feminist research means that the researcher 'has an agenda.' It also implies that other researchers do not. (p. 2)

Even apart from an agenda, the research process is affected by the researcher's identity or "conceptual baggage" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Therefore, the process of reflexivity (reflection and analysis) requires the researcher to self-identify both her or his intentional agenda and other conceptual baggage as much as possible at the beginning of research and throughout the research process.

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<sup>18</sup> As with other social justice organizations, women's and feminist initiatives are often under-funded and under-staffed, which together pose a significant challenge to thorough documentation.

In my own case, my identity as a feminist was part of my agenda. As someone who has participated in similar activism in Canada, I chose to conduct research not only as a Master's student, but also as a member of the wider women's and feminist movement. This choice acknowledged my shared identity with hopeful research participants and reflected a commitment to a "research *with*" scenario, rather than a "research *on*" scenario. In addition, I not only conducted research that I hoped would in some way address a gap in the literature on campaigns against femicide and violence against women, but also to document this particular work of the women's and feminist movement, *as a political act* by making visible a part of this movement. Thus, my feminist identity impacted my choice in topic, as well as my research design.

In addition, part of my "conceptual baggage" was my identity as a Canadian with Chilean heritage. My mother immigrated to Canada in the early 1970s, before and unrelated to the 1973 coup. Before conducting research, I had only visited Chile twice: in 2000 (for three weeks) and in 2005 (for six weeks). Both visits were spent with family. Thus, apart from what I had searched out on my own, my relationship with Chile was always through the lens of family, but without the intrinsic knowledge of a national, making it difficult for me to distinguish between what was innately Chilean and what was particular to my family. By engaging in a process of reflexivity—reflecting upon, questioning, and revisiting my own understandings of Chile—I hoped to make this distinction and to understand more fully the diverse viewpoints of others.

In addition to affecting my knowledge of Chile, my Canadian-Chilean identity also impacted my relationships with research participants. I cannot explain exactly how this was so, but I can provide an example: Whenever I attended events outside of structured Chilean Women's Network meetings, members frequently introduced me as "*Elianita*, a Chilean-

Canadian participating with us”. I was not just any *gringa* researcher; I was a Chilean-Canadian *gringa* researcher.<sup>19</sup>

Flexibility is crucial if a researcher is to conduct fieldwork, especially in relation to a community that is not her or his own. After all, one presumably conducts fieldwork in order to learn more about a community and, reasonably, as this learning takes place, plans can and often should change. Maureen Hays-Mitchell (2001) explains this point in relation to her own fieldwork in Peru:

Research is embedded in dynamic field sites. Logically, our goals and methods must be flexible. Plans, strategies, goals, and expectations brought along with us are only preliminary efforts. They will evolve to accommodate the reality of the field and ultimately challenge what J. K. Gibson-Graham considers “the over-determined nature of the research process” (1994, 221). (p. 314)

Therefore, I created a field plan with “breathing room”, allowing for a reasonable amount of flexibility in case my research did not unfold as anticipated, which, to a great extent, it did not and which no amount of planning could have changed. What is important is that, by committing to a flexible approach from the beginning, I was better prepared to deal with change as it happened.

I entered the field slowly, allowing myself time to adjust to the language and culture. Once in Valparaíso, I began taking Spanish lessons at a language institute while looking into women’s organizations related to violence against women in Viña del Mar and Valparaíso. At this point, I was still unclear about Chilean Women’s Network member organization involvement in the coordination of campaign activities and did not realize that there was a coordination team in Valparaíso. I contacted the Chilean Women’s Network at the end of September, heard back on October 1<sup>st</sup>, and went to my first meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> The term *gringo* (or *gringa* in the feminine) generally refers to Westerners, and can be either derogatory (i.e., unwelcome Westerner) or simply factual (i.e., not Chilean and from the West).

The time between October 1<sup>st</sup> and October 23<sup>rd</sup> seemed to pass in slow motion. Without meaningfully connecting with an organization, my fieldwork was in limbo. I continued to take Spanish lessons, to collect relevant information, and to assess my options. The following week, I met with the regional director of SERNAM (an appointment set up by a politician who knows my family) to ask about reports and statistics, and somehow left this meeting with an offer of an internship that was both flattering and uncomfortable. Following the meeting, I immediately got on a bus to Santiago to attend a weekend-long national Chilean Women's Network meeting where the "end" of the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign was discussed and evaluated, resulting in plans to continue with the campaign. During this weekend, I decided that I could not accept the internship with the government if I was to truly make the campaign—created and carried by the women's and feminist movement—my main priority. My decision made, I settled into fieldwork in Valparaíso, which took off as a whirlwind of meetings and activity leading up to the November 25 march. I also made loose plans to spend some time volunteering with the Chilean Women's Network in Santiago, where the network's office is located.

My data collection strategies during fieldwork included participant-observation, structured and semi-structured interviews, and collection of secondary sources. While in Chile, I participated in the following activities and events over a six-month period:

- 9 Chilean Women's Network meetings in Valparaíso,
- 1 two-day national Chilean Women's Network meeting in Santiago,
- 1 march for November 25 in Valparaíso, and
- 5 additional campaign-related activities.

In addition, I conducted:

- 13 short, structured interviews of November 25 march participants, and
- 7 semi-structured interviews with campaign organizers (lasting between half an hour and two hours in length).

Each data collection method is discussed in more detail as follows.

Participant-observation is an extremely valuable method as it allows for “side learning” outside of more formal and controlled circumstances. Through day-to-day laughter, frustration, and tedium, participant-observation offers insights into contextual information that a researcher may not encounter or even know to look for otherwise. Some of these insights are gained through observation only, such as how group dynamics work, while others are gained through the specific combination of observation and participation. For example, while observation may provide a description of how group dynamics work, the relationship built in the field as a participant may allow for frank conversation about these dynamics, revealing nuances that are not readily observable to an outsider, and explanations of how and why these particular dynamics exist.

Participant-observation was a valuable component of my own fieldwork. As I attended meetings, I observed not only the official meeting agenda but also the unofficial moments before, in between, and after agenda items; I observed, for example, hellos and informal introductions, conversations about daily life, memories, and reflections. As I participated, I came to know some of the regular participants and they came to know me, each by varying degrees as we shared information about common struggles, answered each other’s questions, and unearthed assumptions. It was in these “in-between” moments, rather than in formal interviews, in which I learned the most about the context in which the campaign takes place, such as the tension that exists between the Chilean Women’s Network and the State-run women’s policy machinery,<sup>20</sup> the fluidity of the network’s membership, and other related “side learning”. In this way, participant-observation proved to be an invaluable method in my research.

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<sup>20</sup> The National Chilean Women’s Service (*Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*, SERNAM), to be discussed in Chapter 3.

In addition to participant-observation, I conducted two sets of interviews. The first set of interviews took place at the November 25 march in Valparaíso. After asking if there was anything special that I could do that would be useful to members in Valparaíso, and some excited discussion that followed, the group told me that they wanted to know who came to participate in the march and why. To do so, I created a short set of questions, reviewed and revised by members of the Chilean Women's Network, which I brought with me to the march.<sup>21</sup> However, once at the march, I became busy, first with set-up, then organizational tasks, and, finally, takedown. As a result, I only conducted 13 short, structured interviews. This sample is certainly not adequate for statistical analysis; however, the information gained through these interviews provides relevant examples of campaign participation that I could not have received from the organizers.

The second set of interviews focused on the organizers. In total, I interviewed seven members of the Chilean Women's Network in Valparaíso: Angela Huentequero, Anita Peña, Carola Ibacache, Ondina Collao, Paula Santana, Priscilla Solari, and Rose Mary López. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews in order to allow for the opportunity to explore each woman's unique experiences with and of the campaign, as well as of the broader women's and feminist movement in Chile. The interview questions focused primarily on the campaign and participation in the campaign, as well as contextual information about each woman in relation to this participation.<sup>22</sup> Each interview took place in a location that was convenient to the participant, ranging from plazas to restaurants to participants' homes. Before each interview, I asked participants to read and sign an ethics waiver approved by the Saint Mary's Research and Ethics Board, which was translated into Spanish. A handheld recorder was used to create voice files of each interview. I also took notes of major points

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix C.



and of contextual information (such as if a story was recounted with joy or sorrow, or how the environment appeared to influence the interview) and, after the interview, of my own impressions and reflections.

Finally, while in Chile I collected secondary sources that are not readily available from Canada. For example, I collected campaign materials (including brochures, activity call-outs, and stickers), news clippings (specifically about femicide), organization newsletters, and Chilean books.

Exiting the field is an important consideration in fieldwork. Loose ends must be tied up, contact information gathered, and goodbyes shared—a process made easier by careful planning. Thus, in the months leading up to my departure date I created organized to-do lists, covering the materials I still needed to gather, people I needed to follow up with, clarifying questions I wanted to ask interview participants, and so on and so forth. Unfortunately, plans do not always unfold as desired and on February 27 at 3:34 am my plans were derailed as an 8.8 magnitude earthquake rocked Chile.

I clearly remember the February 27 earthquake. I was asleep on the second floor of the house of one of my aunt's in Rancagua, about three hours from the epicenter of the earthquake, which took place off of the coast of the Maule region. The familiar rumble of a tremor filled my ears as the bed shook me awake. Only, it did not stop; it got stronger. My husband and I jumped from the bed, scrambling for clothes and the safety of a doorframe, barely able to stay on our feet. The sound of walls cracking, pictures falling, and glass breaking was loud enough to overwhelm the voice of my cousin in the next bedroom. It was a very long two minutes and forty-five seconds.

The following few days in Rancagua were more than difficult. The streets were filled with rubble: pieces of people's homes, businesses, churches; filled with questions: 'Is your

family safe? Is your house standing?’ ‘Oh, we have a few less pieces of house, but we are okay.’ Or, ‘No, we lost everything. We are living in the plaza.’ My family was safe and homes relatively unaffected, but everyone seemed to know someone who had lost their home or who was unable to make contact with a loved one. My husband and I spent this time cleaning and organizing my mom’s restaurant and my grandmother’s apartment, staying close to family, and trying to cope. When the grocery stores opened again, we went with family to buy supplies for donation: water, milk, feminine hygiene products, toothbrushes, diapers, and other basic necessities. There was an air of solidarity as Chileans came together to help one another, but there was also anxiety, fear, helplessness, a sense of loss: a tumble of raw emotions.

The aftershocks did not help. There were literally hundreds of aftershocks, happening so often that after a while we could not tell what was real and what was not. At times, our bodies seemed to reverberate as though from muscle memory. A loud truck would pass and we would hold our breath. Other times, an earthquake-sized tremor would shake the house and we would laugh at the *temblorcito*, the *small* tremor.

The news was on constantly, with images of ocean-side towns that no longer or now barely exist, ships stranded inland, communities requiring immediate assistance, running lists of missing people and of people who did not survive, testimonies of people affected by the earthquake, and the latest statistics and maps showing the impact of strong aftershocks and related earthquakes. This coverage was compounded and contrasted by coverage of a national telethon “Chile helps Chile” that raised over 100 million Canadian dollars to assist the hardest hit areas.

My fieldwork was up in the air. I knew that I would not be able to carry on with research as anticipated. How could I ask anyone to continue with interviews or follow-up

interviews or anything else while people generally seemed to be just going through the motions of regular tasks or were filled with stress and worry? As the stress became overwhelming for us, my husband and I made the decision to come home early. However, I did not want to leave without some kind of closure, so when the roads were open again and were safe to travel, we made plans to go back to Viña del Mar and Valparaíso on March 10, returning March 11. I was able to attend one last meeting, and say goodbye to at least some of the women I had met. It was difficult to say goodbye under these circumstances; in some ways, I felt like I was just getting to know some of the Chilean Women's Network members after the interview process, and of course I still had so much to do. After the meeting, I went out with the two coordinators in Valparaíso and another member, enjoying a more intimate goodbye while chatting and laughing about the last several months over beer. I left with promises to keep in touch and a few big hugs.

Then, the next morning, on our way to the bus terminal, three more earthquakes (measuring 7.2, 6.9, and 6.0, respectively) hit Chile, in the region my family is from. A tsunami alert was issued along the coast, causing hysteria and a mass exodus to higher ground, directed by police. If there was a breaking point for my husband and me, this was it. There was a major miscommunication or, perhaps, misinterpretation of the alert, and thousands of people thought that a tsunami was actually on its way, rather than that the alert and evacuation were issued as precautionary measures. People around us were crying, having panic attacks, holding each other, and, more than anything else, waiting. We waited with them until the police said it was safe to descend and, with luck and prepaid bus tickets, were able to return to Rancagua, which had just been declared a disaster zone as a result of the most recent earthquakes. On March 14 my husband and I flew home, my research incomplete, but safe.

Although I remain committed to the case study approach I chose for this research project, this approach provided some frustration. Unlike research with a more deductive aim, I did not always know what I was looking for or which questions I ought to ask. It is only through the process of reflection, now outside of the field, that I am able to see that during the moments in which I felt as though I lacked focus or thought I was not doing enough, I was still learning, absorbing, and processing relevant information: information that I would likely have missed had I approached this project with more specific, deductive intentions.

In addition, my participation was sporadic to some extent. Before entering the field, I hoped to volunteer on a regular basis, such as on a Monday-Friday schedule, or at least a few days a week. However, I soon found out that the Chilean Women's Network in Valparaíso did not have a working office. All I could do was attend meetings whenever they were called and ensure that I would be available to attend. I did so, attending almost every meeting called while I was in Chile (missing only two) and maintaining contact with members. There were times, such as before the November 25 march, when we would get together a couple of times a week, but there were also times when weeks would pass between meetings. This sporadic schedule meant that I spent much less time immersed in the field than anticipated, with fewer opportunities to observe, participate, and learn.

Another challenge in my fieldwork experience was balancing family and research interests. On more than one occasion I have thought that, had I traveled alone and/or to a different country, I would have encountered a very different field experience. I imagined that I would have spent much more time volunteering, spent more time collecting secondary sources, and more generally, more time immersing myself into research. Yet, perhaps I would have been homesick or bored, causing me to have less energy with which to approach each day, or have felt less connected to the field. Certainly, I would not have had a strong

support network, the benefit of cultural interpreters constantly at my disposal, or the joys (and occasional frustrations) of family and a second home.

At the time of entering the field, my Spanish-language skill level was high or advanced. I had taken nine Spanish courses during my undergraduate degree in Communications Studies, applying what I learned as I spoke Spanish with my Chilean family (who occasionally visit Canada) and in four different trips to Latin America (where I spent time in Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Peru). I knew that I lacked vocabulary and that I would need to learn the common sayings and constantly changing *modismos* or slang that dominate Chilean Spanish. However, I was (mostly) confident that by spending time reviewing Spanish textbooks and by learning the vocabulary needed to talk about violence against women, I would not encounter any major language problems.

I was wrong. Although I did go to Chile with a technically high level of fluency, this fluency did not immediately translate into practical application. Indeed, my very first journal entry in Chile included these two telling phrases that I quickly memorized: *¡Colapso!* (I'm overwhelmed!) and *¡Estoy en shock!* (I'm in shock!). Although these sentiments also expressed culture shock, it took approximately two weeks before I was able to communicate with any semblance of fluency. This reasonably flustered and overwhelmed transition into Spanish immersion damaged my confidence significantly. Although I was able to overcome this insecurity with family, whom I knew loved me, and with my Spanish instructor, whom I expected to help me, I carried this insecurity into many of my interactions during fieldwork. The more nervous I felt, the more my language skills suffered. Additionally, this also translated into an overall change in my personality with members of the Chilean Women's Network. I became very shy and unsure: two characteristics that, although not foreign to my

personality, are certainly not adjectives that I would normally use to describe my (Canadian) self.

Another language challenge was a result of the nature of network meetings, where the women in attendance spoke as friends do, one over another, jumping back and forth between topics, and interspersed with jokes, sayings and slang, and frequently (though not always) characterized by fast-paced, task-oriented conversation. If I did not understand just a couple of key words, it was sometimes enough to make the rest of the conversation incomprehensible. For example, at a meeting leading up to the November 25 march, a conversation began around *la pegatina*—loosely translated as going out to put up posters. However, as I did not understand the word, and my dictionary told me it meant ‘sticker’, I was quickly lost to the conversation. In a one-on-one conversation, I would have just asked. However, during meetings I often thought that interrupting to clarify a couple of words would be disruptive. Sometimes I found a natural break in which to interject. Other times, one of the women in the meeting would see the lost look that must have been written on my face and stop to explain something in more detail or define a *Chilenismo* (a Chilean expression). In these moments, we would frequently laugh together at my plight. There were also many times when I understood entire conversations and knew all of the necessary vocabulary to join in, but my Spanish remained fickle. If I was tired or having a ‘bad Spanish day’ I could not keep up; by the time I had formulated what I wanted to say, the conversation had already changed topics two or three times. Thus, my Spanish-language fluency initially provided a challenge to participate in network meetings.

My language skills also limited my data collection strategies. More specifically, I had initially hoped to conduct focus groups if appropriate. I thought that this method would be particularly useful because of the very social nature of Chilean culture and because of the

social nature of the campaign, which encourages, for example, *talking* about violence against women. However, after my first meeting, I knew that this would not be a possibility.

Although the method was appropriate and would likely have been beneficial, I simply would not have been able to keep up with all of the conversation, let alone moderate or guide that conversation.

In order to improve my Spanish, I took classes, asked my family for help, and continued to study on my own. In total, I took 10 advanced Spanish classes over approximately six weeks from a language institute in Valparaíso. The classes were conducted on a one-to-one basis, as well as in groups. On more than one occasion when the classes were with other students, my instructor told new students that *Eliana es una estudiante, muy, muy avanzada* (Eliana is a very, very advanced student). This helped me to regain some of the confidence that I lost initially with my language level—a significant factor when interacting in a language that is not natively spoken. The classes also helped me to work through some grammar issues and to increase my technical vocabulary. In order to build my Chilean-specific vocabulary, I looked to my cousins for help. Together, over several conversations and with cousins of varying ages, we created a notebook full of Chilean *modismos* or ‘sayings’—a valuable language tool. Finally, each day I would try to write down any words that I did not understand (to look up later) or that I had learned (to memorize and practice). In this way, I naturally began to increase my language fluency.

Overall, although my language skills did present more of a challenge than I had anticipated, I was still able to communicate well enough to observe some of the nuances of campaign organization, to participate in campaign activities, to form strong relationships in the field, to have in-depth conversations about many topics related to my fieldwork, and to conduct one-on-one interviews without a translator. When I did encounter challenges, people

were usually gracious and it was simply a matter of taking the time to overcome these challenges. Occasionally, however, it was simply a matter of acknowledging that I did not understand everything in an interaction.

In addition to challenges presented by my own language skill level, conducting research in another language also created a challenge in translation. Specifically, if I had conducted research in English, I would have been able to share my thesis with the community I was writing it on more easily and more completely before my thesis defense. In contrast, with the cost of professional translation, this was not a reasonable option. This is a significant challenge because it does not allow for the same kind of open feedback process that would have been possible in other circumstances.

There are three areas of research that were limited or made null as a result of the earthquake and of my choice to leave Chile sooner than anticipated: interviews, fieldwork in Santiago, and secondary-source collection. First, although I completed seven interviews with participants of the organizing committee in Valparaíso, I had hoped to conduct follow-up interviews with these members, interviews of additional members, and supplementary interviews of women that members had recommended that I speak with. After the earthquake, this was not possible. It meant that I left Chile still missing information regarding the history, organization, and functioning of the campaign, as well as a deeper understanding of how the campaign fits into the wider women's and feminist movement in Chile. I tried to overcome this challenge through email correspondence to follow-up with interview participants. However, although this was successful to some extent and certainly in terms of keeping in touch, with busy lives, limited internet-access for some, and the less nuanced and more impersonal character that email can have, email correspondence alone could not fill all



of the gaps in my research. Although phone and Skype communication were attempted, this proved unsuccessful.

Second, as a result of the earthquake, I lost the opportunity to return to Santiago to volunteer, gain access to campaign materials, conduct interviews, or explore any other path this may have led me down. This was a limitation that I could not completely overcome. However, in one of several gracious acts after returning to Canada, one of the coordinators in Valparaíso collected and sent electronically some of the internal documents that I was missing.

Third, by returning to Canada early, I was not able to spend the many mornings and afternoons in Chilean libraries as I had planned. However, once settled in Canada, I was able to overcome this challenge to some extent by accessing the library services available through Saint Mary's University. Specifically, to my delight and relief, I was able to access many books published in Chile by Chilean authors through the use of the library's Interlibrary Loan Service, accessing a network of libraries across Canada and the United States.

### CHAPTER THREE: CHILEAN GENDER CLIMATE

Every country has particular historical, cultural, and structural factors that influence the situations and perceptions of women. This chapter provides an overview of the particularities that form Chile's gender climate in relation to women. More specifically, the roles of culture, the State, and the women's and feminist movement are discussed.

#### CULTURE

Culture is an essential element in understanding Chile's gender climate. Culture informs the unspoken rules that guide what is considered to be normal and acceptable behaviour within, and outside of, relationships. In Chile, the dominant cultural narratives of gender are *machismo* and *marianismo*: the male and female expressions of patriarchy, respectively, where *machismo* primarily represents dominance and *marianismo* primarily represents submission. The degree to which these narratives are adhered to and are expected to be adhered to has changed over time and varies widely based on such factors as region, class, and personal belief. Yet, exceptions aside, their tenants underlie much of Chilean culture, and must be understood in any examination of women's rights in Chile.

*Machismo* is the ideal male expression of patriarchy. In this model, men are expected to dominate and to be in control of their environments and relationships. Aggression is often considered a valid method for men to achieve domination and control, as well as a valid or natural emotional response to situations in which men do not have or lose control. In addition, men are considered autonomous actors in society, able to act freely of their own initiative, and responsible primarily for and to themselves. Men are, however, expected to provide financially and to make decisions regarding their families, but their lives take place

to a great degree outside of the home. Additionally, men are considered innately sexual, and fulfilling their desires and “needs” is considered a natural (though not necessarily acceptable) expression of masculinity even sometimes if this means violating another person’s rights. Men who adhere to the tenants of *machismo* are understood as “real” men, while men who do not are often considered to be *maricones* (faggots). Because a man’s value is directly related to his honour, men experience social pressure to protect their honour through *machista* conduct.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, *marianismo* is the ideal female expression of patriarchy.<sup>24</sup> Using the Catholic virgin mother (Mary) and its surrounding myths as a symbol for exemplary womanhood, *marianismo* positions women in relation to others. Women are the ‘mothers of’ and ‘wives of’ rather than autonomous actors. Consequently, motherhood is a central feature of femininity. As a Chilean department store advertisement proclaimed on Mother’s Day, “On Mother’s Day...to all real women” (La Polar, quoted in Santana, 2009, p. 35). “A life plan without motherhood is not in the imagination of most women. But not only this: motherhood brings with it sacrifices, resignation, delays that are assumed as something inherent in her” (Santana, 2009, p. 33). As with the virgin mother, abnegation and self-sacrifice are seen as inherent and necessary traits of femininity. In the role of wife, women are also expected to make sacrifices, fulfilling their husband’s needs and desires before their own. In addition, *marianismo* understands women as morally superior to men. Although this

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<sup>23</sup> The term *machista* roughly translates as *sexist*. Where the term *machismo* may be understood as the wider cultural expression of patriarchy, the term *machista* refers to the particular behaviours of *machismo*.

<sup>24</sup> Navarro (2002) argues against the concept of *marianismo* because its originator Evelyn Stevens presents the concept without an academically sound basis, and because, in general, Latin American scholars have not embraced *marianismo* to the degree that some Western scholars of Latin American Studies have. However, Navarro (2002) also notes: “Among the exceptions is Chilean scholar Sonia Montecino for whom *marianismo* is a foundational Latin American narrative, a foundational myth ‘that solves our problem of origin,’ in that ‘...it is a fundamental anchor of the mestizo imagination, of its culture more connected to ritual than the word’ (1991, 28)” (Navarro, 2002, p. 259). Therefore, *marianismo* is explored here. For Stevens’ original work on *marianismo*, please refer to Stevens (1973).

appears contradictory, it actually results in a type of self-regulation of subordination in which women sacrifice their own desires and aspirations for 'the family good' because it is 'the right thing to do.' The majority of women's activity takes place within the home, where they fulfil their responsibility to family. Unlike men, 'good women' are sexually passive, as well as passive more generally: patient and forgiving, rather than aggressive. Women who adhere to the tenants of *marianismo* are treated as saints: morally pure and worthy of protection. Women who do not adhere to the tenants of *marianismo* often fall into one of two categories: whores or witches. A *whore* is a sexual deviant, while a *witch* is, for example, any woman who rejects abnegation, passivity, motherhood, or some other tenant of *marianismo*. In either case, deviants are understood as morally impure and less worthy or unworthy of protection.

Both conforming to and outside of the ideals of *marianismo*, in contemporary Chilean culture there is also a hyper-sexualization and commodification of particular women who are expected to be sexy. This category includes many women in the public eye, such as in the entertainment industry, and many women of the upper class, for example. As hyper-sexualized, women may not be seen as pure or as passive as outlined in the ideals of *marianismo*; however, as objects of male desire, women may be seen as conforming to the *machismo-marianismo* power relationship in which women change themselves to suit male ideals. This cultural pressure to be sexy at all costs is seen in media coverage of women, for example.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The power of the media cannot be understated in understanding Chile's gender climate, or almost any gender climate, for the media has the power to influence social and cultural norms, as well as the public agenda. Research on the power of the media is extensive. For an example of the power of the media and women's body image, see Grabe, Ward, and Hyde's (2008) meta-analysis of the topic using 77 related studies. For information on the power of the media in public agenda setting (what topics are considered to be important), see, for example, the classic work of McCombs and Shaw (1972). For an example of the power of the media in Chile, see Richards' (2007) work on representations of Mapuche (Indigenous) women in Chilean print media.

To illustrate, one of the top popular culture stories covered by the media during fieldwork surrounded a controversy around television personality *Luli Love* (Nicole Moreno). A contestant on the popular, nationally broadcast dance program *Dance Fever* (*Fiebre de Baile*), Luli was told by the judges to lose weight. By all appearances, and dance costumes left little to the imagination, Luli was a healthy—not overweight—woman. Immediately, the media picked up on the story, and the public eye focused on Luli and her weight. *Should Luli lose weight, or was she attractive as she was? Were the judges justified, or should the judges apologize?* Luli was harassed with questions about her diet and exercise habits, her friends were interviewed about how well Luli took care of herself, and pictures surfaced of what Luli was eating. Eventually, Luli publicly underwent liposuction to conform to what the judges, and some portion of the public, thought necessary. The fact that judges focused their attention on Luli's body, rather than her dance performance and, moreover, that the media focused its attention on this debate, reflects a wider societal problem in Chile in which women's bodies are highly scrutinized, sexualized, and commodified.

A discussion of *machismo* and *marianismo* in Chile must also include reference to the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is a major social authority in Chile. This authority is due in part to the Church's role in human rights organizing against the dictatorship. In spite of suffering State violence itself, exile of Church leadership, and Church property destruction, the Church publicly opposed human rights violations, protected Chileans in danger of government oppression, participated in survival organizing, and provided Church property for political organizing against the dictatorship (Fleet & Smith, 1997). Leading up to the transition, the Church took a more neutral stance as it acted as mediator, attempting dialogue with the dictatorship and helping to unite the divided opposition while continuing to stress reconciliation (Fleet & Smith, 1997). Indeed, reconciliation became the central focus

of the well-timed 1987 visit from the Pope. All of this activity led to the Church's increased credibility and social power in democracy.

In turn, the Church has used this increased credibility to forcefully voice its opinion of women's roles. The Church presents women in terms of *marianismo*: in relation to the family (rather than as individuals), as morally superior, and as subordinate. At the same time, the Church forcefully opposes any attempt to advance women's rights that deviates from the ideals of *marianismo*. Church leadership regularly makes public statements to this end, including direction to Catholic politicians voting on women's rights' bills. Chile's conservative media then picks up the Church's views. As Franceschet (2005) has observed, "The willingness of the church to speak out so forcefully against reform on issues such as divorce, sex education, and abortion is matched by the willingness of Chile's overwhelmingly conservative media to convey the church's views to the public" (p. 106). To be sure, front-page stories describing the Church's position on women's rights' issues are not uncommon, further reinforcing its legitimacy.

In addition to *machismo* and *marianismo*, other cultural forces in Chile affect how women are perceived and how they experience violence against women, including interlocking oppressions of class, country of origin, race (i.e., indigenous vs. non-indigenous and dark-complexioned vs. light-complexioned), and sexuality. The case of Alto Hospicio provides an extreme but apt example of the role that class can play in cases of violence against women. Alto Hospicio is a poor community outside of the northern mining city of *Iquique*, and the location of the disappearance of more than a dozen teenage girls over the period of only a few years. In spite of overwhelming evidence of foul play (such as personal items found discarded, including underwear worn on the day of disappearance, and commonalities in the time and location of disappearance), the police did nothing (Leiva,

2005). Instead, the police told victims' families that the girls had likely run away with their boyfriends or crossed the border to become prostitutes. Only when one of these girls survived her rapist's attack and was left for dead in the desert in 2001, did the police begin an investigation. Before long, they were able to track down the serial rapist and killer responsible for the girls' disappearance. (Leiva, 2005) Thus, class affected the police's perception of the girls' vulnerability and need for protection: a fact that directly enabled further femicides to take place.

In addition to class, country of origin is also important to consider when addressing violence against women. In Chile, there has been a recent wave of Peruvian immigration as Peruvians come to Chile looking for employment and for improved opportunities. Many of these immigrants are women who represent part of a wider pattern of feminized migration. Many are women who come to Chile to work as domestic servants: work which may pay less as a result of their nationality, and which is often supplemented by illegal work in the informal economy. This population is particularly oppressed, therefore, because they are poor, are vulnerable to workplace abuse, have a tenuous relationship with Chilean authorities, and are national outsiders in a country that is home to strong racist currents. These factors increase the barriers that Peruvian women living in Chile face in addressing violence committed against them.

Parson's (2010) life history of Antonia illuminates this situation. Antonia is a Peruvian woman living in Santiago, Chile as a domestic worker, who also supplements her work in the informal economy. She came to Chile to provide a better life for her children. Antonia's life is marked by poverty and suffering, as well as the determination and resourcefulness to improve her life situation. She has been a victim of violence from a young age, including a forced marriage at the age of 13 to a man more than 10 years older than she

was. Throughout her life, including while in her native Peru, Antonia “was consistently trapped by the intersection of domestic violence, racism, and classism” (Parsons, 2010, p. 892). After moving to Santiago, Antonia remarried—this time by choice. However, her new husband, a Chilean man, became abusive and violent once married. Her identity as a Peruvian contributed to the problem by isolating her from social support. Antonia explains, “The truth is that here I have no friends, I didn’t have anywhere to go to complain or anyone to tell” and that,

In Peru I...had friends...On the other hand, here...it’s like they marginalize me for being Peruvian. In the block where I live...all of the women are Chilean. I’m the only Peruvian woman. They try to humiliate one for the fact of being Peruvian. For that reason, I say, “What’s the fault in being Peruvian?” (Parson, 2010, p. 893, ellipses original)

In spite of these barriers, Antonia has taken steps to address the violence committed against her in her intimate-partner relationship. She has attended State-funded group therapy sessions and has taken legal steps towards sentencing her husband to treatment. At the same time, however, Antonia’s testimony makes it clear that this action is taken *in spite of* significant barriers to assistance, which result from her social location as a poor Peruvian woman in Chile. Altogether, then, cultural forces powerfully inform Chile’s gender climate in ways that discriminate against women generally, as well as women who occupy or are perceived to occupy particular social locations.

## THE STATE

### OVERVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIONS: 1973-PRESENT

Government leadership has directly affected Chile’s gender climate. Most significantly, there was a drastic shift between the 1973-1990 period (under Pinochet and the



military dictatorship), and the present, democratic period.<sup>26</sup> Since the return to democracy, there have also been more subtle shifts and nuances. Although the 1990-2010 period saw the same centre-left coalition in power, the first two terms (1990-2000) represent a more reserved and tentative approach to women's rights, while the final two terms (2000-2010) represent relative improvement. Finally, the current centre-right government appears to represent a regression of women's rights with a return to role-based, versus rights-based, rhetoric.

Pinochet publicly articulated a view of women as a homogenous source of support, and central to his vision for a new Chile. Pinochet was able to frame women in this way because of a limited group of women from the upper class and political right who had protested Allende's government. Perhaps the most well-known and cited example of this protest took the form of throwing chicken feed at the feet of the military in an attempt to incite military action. Such protest was, therefore, laden with gendered meaning as women called for male action and labeled inaction as unmanly. Pinochet, then, built on this gendered meaning; for example, in a speech entitled, "Message to the Chilean Woman" (1974), Pinochet spoke of the Chilean woman's role in the September 11 coup, explaining that through women, "every home was a stronghold of rebellion" (p. 6) against the Allende government, and that "her voice was for us the voice of the Fatherland, that called us to save her" (p. 7). He explained further,

Woman wanted the fall of the marxist government, that symbolized slavery for her children, but she wanted, moreover, a new order: she sought the protection of a strong and severe authority that would reestablish order and public morality in our country. In her feminine instinct, she was clearly warned that what was defined in those dramatic days was not a simple game of political parties: it was the existence or the death of the Nation. And in this, her clairvoyance was much greater than that of some male politicians. (p. 7)

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<sup>26</sup> This analysis begins with the Pinochet regime, rather than the Allende administration, because this is the most common frame of reference in the Chilean women's and feminist movement. Although Allende included women in his path to Socialism, advances during his administration were most in favour of women as workers, rather than an overall advancement of women's rights.

In this way, Pinochet built on what was a limited expression of women's activism during this time to address women as a homogeneous group. Indeed, Pinochet spoke to the Chilean *woman*, rather than Chilean *women*, drawing on his understanding of her femininity to claim that it was she who was responsible for demanding that the military (the ultimate patriarchal power) take action to protect and uphold the "Fatherland"—a point drawing on traditional conceptions of *marianismo*. According to this argument, "Women, enjoying a superior morality (*marianismo*) and having greater spiritual strength, together with the armed forces, could become the architects and the pillars of the new society being so concisely built" (Dandavati, 2005, p. 29).

This assessment reinforced a power hierarchy between gender roles in which women, while considered morally superior, were frequently relegated to the role of mother-wife-housewife, caring for her family and the country before anything else. In service to their country, for example, women were now supposed to populate the borders as part of a wider defense strategy, and to raise their children according to the government's values. Women who *appeared* to favour the left were persecuted, connecting liberal (less-traditional) physical appearance with leftist politics. As Acuña Moenne (2005) remembers:

After the military coup, the authorities imposed traditional gender stereotypes on men and women. It became dangerous for men to grow long hair and beards, and for women to wear loose clothes and trousers. Many women would recall that soldiers would cut off women's trousers in the street. The military government wanted us to bring an end to the chaos it perceived as being created by the apparent similarity of roles filled by men and women, signaled by their clothes and appearances. (p. 152, translated by Matthew Webb)

In this way, physical appearance was policed as a symbolic stance against equality, and traditional gender roles reinforced.

Pinochet's specific gendered plans for women were most obviously manifest in the utilization and creation of three significant women's organizations: the National Women's Secretariat (*Secretaria Nacional de Mujeres*, SNM), the Mother's Centres (*Centros de Madre*, later CEMA-Chile) and the National Voluntary Network (roughly translated from *Voluntariado Nacional*, later the National Foundation of Community Assistance or *Fundación Nacional de Ayuda a la Comunidad*). The SNM was created approximately one month after the coup in October, 1973. Directed by Lucía Hiriart, Pinochet's wife, the organization was composed primarily of upper-class women.

The objectives of the SNM mentioned incessantly in its publications were to nourish a national consciousness in women, ensure a correct understanding of the dignity and importance of their mission and diffuse patriotic and family values. (Dandavati, 1996, p. 31)

One of the primary ways that the SNM accomplished these goals was through the organization of presentations (such as the speech by Pinochet to "the Chilean woman") that taught women how to be good mothers, wives, and housewives (Cañadell & Uggen, 1993, pp. 48-49). The SNM also worked closely with CEMA-Chile in that "the latter basically did what the former directed them to do" (Dandavati, 1996, p. 33).

Whereas the SNM worked primarily with upper-class women, CEMA-Chile directed its services at poor, *pobladora*<sup>27</sup> women.<sup>28</sup> Although CEMA-Chile offered various programs to address the economic stress experienced by *pobladora* women through improved access to social services and programs, its primary goal was to help women develop themselves in ways that would benefit the family and the authoritarian order (Dandavati, 1996); thus, it created a notorious reputation for itself of assistance with indoctrination.

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<sup>27</sup> In Chile, the term *pobladora* refers to a woman who lives in a very poor neighbourhood. It does not include, for example, *campesina* women, who are also very poor, but who live in the countryside.

<sup>28</sup> Thus, CEMA-Chile's relationship with the SNM was a reflection of Chile's stringent class-based hierarchical system.

The *Voluntariado Nacional* was composed of middle- and upper-class women, including many women married to military officers, for their participation was understood as an extension of their husbands' official (military) responsibilities (Dandavati, 1996, pp. 34-35).<sup>29</sup> Thus, the very existence of the *Voluntariado Nacional* further supported gender expectations that assigned paid (valued) work to men and unpaid (undervalued) work to women, emphasizing the so-called feminine virtue of sacrifice.

Finally, the military regime regulated gender roles through legal reform. This reform includes Article 8 of the 1980 constitution, outlawing any organizing that attacks the (patriarchal) family, as well as a 1989 change to legislation making *therapeutic abortion* illegal.<sup>30</sup> This legislation overturned a 1931 law that, previously, was not considered controversial and that was not even on the policy agenda prior to the military regime (*Aborto en Chile*).<sup>31</sup>

Upon the return to democracy in 1990, the center-left Coalition of Parties for Democracy (known simply as the *Concertación*) came to power. The coalition's political composition has greatly impacted the way in which women's rights have been approached during its 1990 to 2010 reign. With member parties ranging from the Christian Democratic Party to the Socialist Party, concessions are necessary to maintain cohesion. Consequently, "moral" issues such as divorce, sexuality, and reproductive rights have lacked prioritization and support in the name of unity: an issue that has contributed to what Ríos (2009) has

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<sup>29</sup> In addition, volunteer positions were assigned according to the military and social ranking of women's husbands: another clear example of the significance of class in Chile.

<sup>30</sup> Therapeutic abortion is abortion that takes place when a woman's life is at serious risk if she continues with a pregnancy.

<sup>31</sup> However, an extremely high maternal mortality rate due to abortion outside of this category was a concern and, more specifically, the way in which the maternal mortality rate disproportionately affected poor women. In order to address this issue, the government of Eduardo Frei set up a publicly subsidized family planning program in the 1960s to widely distribute contraceptives: making Chile the second country in Latin America to do so, preceded only by Cuba. This and other work on reproductive health rights made Chile a pioneer on such issues in Latin America, until the restrictive measures of the military government. (*Aborto en Chile*)

described as a “glacial” pace of change on more controversial gender issues following the initial post-transition period (p. 25). This trend is particularly evident in the *Concertación*’s first two terms: first, under Patricio Aylwin of the Christian Democratic Party (1990-1994), and second, under Eduardo Frei also of the Christian Democratic Party (1994-2000). The party’s significant ties to the Catholic Church translated into role-based framing of women’s rights issues. This trend began to change under Ricardo Lagos of the Socialist Party and the Party for Democracy (2000-2006), which was able to distance itself somewhat from the Church. Overall, however, all governments resisted significant advances to women’s rights following the initial transition period. This was a trend broken by the 2006 election of Michele Bachelet who brought women’s rights back into the public eye. As the Aylwin and Bachelet administrations represent the most significant changes in governance, only their administrations will be addressed below.

Aylwin was indebted to the women’s and feminist movement after coming to power on a platform that embraced several movement goals, as well as its central slogan “Democracy in the country and in the home.” However, the very tentative nature of the new democracy and powerful conservative forces opposing the expansion of women’s rights restricted the fulfillment of this debt. The creation of a national women’s policy machinery exemplifies this tension. Chile’s National Women’s Service (*Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*, SERNAM) was created by law in 1991, fulfilling one of the women’s and feminist movement’s major demands for the new government, while simultaneously fulfilling the government’s obligations under the United Nations’ Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>32</sup> This mode of creation has provided

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<sup>32</sup> Article 2, for example, requires State parties to “agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women”. SERNAM, therefore, fulfills this requirement through its primarily role as a national policy machinery.

SERNAM with longevity: the fact that SERNAM was created by *law* rather than by *presidential decree* protects it from being dismissed at political whim. Conversely, however, the president is able to direct the organization's priorities by personally appointing the director, who has ministerial status, thus leaving the organization vulnerable to political change. Additionally, the movement's original vision for SERNAM was compromised following significant pressure from the Catholic Church and from Chile's political right. As a compromise, and in order to avoid conflict, Aylwin's government provided SERNAM with a modified, restrictive, and contradictory mandate: to promote women's equality while simultaneously respecting women's natural specificity, including how this is expressed in the family unit (Ley 19.023 Art. 2, 1991). The term *natural specificity* is limiting in its indication that women have a particular (i.e., traditional) gender role that must be adhered to. Moreover, by framing women's *natural* role in terms of the family, the mandate seems to indicate that women's role in the family is more natural than women's equality. As a result, this wording has prevented SERNAM from addressing issues that could be perceived to challenge the traditional family, such as abortion or issues relating to sexuality. The example of SERNAM thus illustrates the Aylwin administration's tentative and restrictive approach to expanding women's rights.

In contrast, the Bachelet administration approached many issues of women's rights in a more direct and confident manner. Before examining the administration's term, however, it is important to examine the particular circumstances that brought Bachelet to power, which are not explicitly related to gender equality. A member of the Socialist party, Bachelet was one of two women nominated by *Concertación* parties for presidential candidacy in the 2005 elections: an unprecedented decision. An election of either candidate would also be significant because she would be elected without being a *mujer de* (related to a man in

power). In addition to being a woman, Bachelet was a worthy candidate for several reasons. First, Bachelet held two ministerial positions under Lagos: health minister and defense minister. Thus, she had significant experience in government leadership. Second, Bachelet has a long history with the Socialist party and of Socialist activism, dating back to before the military regime. Her father was an official under the Allende government who refused exile after the *coup d'état*. As a result, he was captured and tortured, leading to his death. Bachelet and her mother were also captured, tortured, and imprisoned, and later exiled. Thus, she was in a unique social position, providing her with significant credibility to many. Third, Bachelet is a pediatrician by profession, positioning her as a caregiver in a divided nation. Fourth, having spent time abroad in exile, in addition to time spent in the United States as a child, Bachelet is fluent in multiple languages, which would be a benefit in foreign relations. Therefore, Bachelet's personal and professional attributes contributed to the legitimacy of her candidacy.

However, as many scholars point out, the decision to put Bachelet forward as a presidential candidate is more reflective of political maneuvering than of an achievement of gender equality. First, in the period leading up to elections, the *Concertación* suffered in public opinion due to recent corruption scandals and a general lack of transparency. Additionally, the coalition faced the possibility of outstaying its welcome in leadership, as another successful presidential win would represent the fourth such government since the dictatorship; the *Concertación* would hold power for longer than the military regime had. Thus, confronted with distrust and stagnation, the coalition sought rejuvenation through the nomination of two women. This choice is significant because a woman president would represent a first for the *Concertación* and for Chile, but also because Chile's cultural tendency to view women as morally superior and as "above" politics would represent a new

type of *Concertación*. As Chilean feminist philosopher and activist Margarita Pisano explains, this strategy confirms that "...patriarchy looks for women and maternity as resources to replace values when its civilian system enters crisis...and we should not confuse this with civil and human advances" (Pisano, Olmue, p. 2).

Regardless of *how* Bachelet came to power, in 2006 Bachelet did come to power, as the first woman president of Chile. Holding true to campaign promises, Bachelet rejuvenated government with "fresh faces", applying gender parity to all presidential appointments. Her first year as President was marked by rights-based rhetoric. This rhetoric is exemplified in Bachelet's first annual address to congress on May 21, 2006, where she proclaimed, "I am here as a woman, representing the defeat of the exclusion to which we were subjected for so long...Today is the time to include in our development all citizens that suffer other types of exclusions" (Quoted in Ríos, 2007, p. 29). Indeed, as this quotation demonstrates, Bachelet not only focused on the rights of women, but on the rights of all Chileans. "However, the rhetorical centrality of gender and women's political leadership met with strong opposition from the mainstream media, political parties (including those in her own coalition), and public figures" (Ríos, 2009, pp. 37-38), and as the term progressed, Bachelet decreased the centrality of rights-based rhetoric. Additional advances for women during Bachelet's term include a 30% increase in SERNAM's budget, the opening of shelters for women fleeing intrafamily violence, and the provision of the morning-after pill to all women and girls over 14 years of age.

In addition to success, Bachelet's term was also marked by political upset. Indeed, her term was, in many ways, tumultuous as she dealt with political disasters and disillusionment inherited from previous *Concertación* governments, and criticism for her own failure to act quickly enough following an earthquake affecting Chile's south. Much of



the ensuing criticism was marked by misogyny, questioning Bachelet's leadership ability *as a woman*. On August 10, 2007 this tendency took centre stage in the public eye when the newspaper *Punto Final* published a front-page article entitled *Femicidio Político* (Political Femicide), using the phrase *political femicide* as a metaphor for the sexist and misogynist attacks by the political right against the president. The author of the article asserts that:

Political femicide should also be considered a horrible crime. Although it does not take a life, it attempts to annihilate a woman as a social subject, destroy her as a citizen and to erase the laws that insincerely proclaim the equality of rights.

Consequently, the media initiated a wave of questions directed at politicians about *machismo* in the government, thus situating the sexist and misogynistic discourse around the President within a feminist analysis.<sup>33</sup>

Bachelet has also met criticism from the women's and feminist movement. As with other *Concertación* administrations, it appears that the need or desire to avoid conservative opposition also affected Bachelet's gender strategy, resulting in the status quo for such issues as abortion. In addition, Bachelet's administration represented a continuation of neoliberal policy reform, which is often cited as negatively affecting women.

In spite of significant sexism and opposition, by the end of her term in 2010, surveys indicated that Bachelet exited with an 86% approval rating and a rating showing that 96% of Chileans felt warmly toward her (Globedia, March 2010).<sup>34</sup> It remains to be seen what legacy will be left by the Bachelet government's efforts toward expanding women's rights.

2010 brought centre-right National Renovation Party candidate Sebastián Piñera to power: a Chilean billionaire, businessman, and longtime presidential hopeful. His win represents a significant shift from Bachelet's government. Piñera's party forms part of a

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<sup>33</sup> This is not to say that the utilization of the term *political femicide* was wholly positive. On the contrary, its use may also be argued to represent a cooptation of the word *femicide*, negating some of the power of the word by encouraging its use outside of its very particular definition.

<sup>34</sup> *tenerle cariño a*

recently formed coalition, the Coalition for Change, which promotes neoliberalism and employs a generally conservative rhetoric. Thus far, the current administration appears to represent a regression in women's rights. The previous administration's largely rights-based approach has been replaced by a renewed focus on the family and role-based approach in women's policy work and service provision. Additionally, the administration's utilization of religious rhetoric reinforces this approach and endangers advances on women's rights.<sup>35</sup>

A strong indicator of Piñera's stance on women's rights is also evident in the women's and feminist movement's reaction to his administration. Leading up to the elections, which favoured Piñera, members feared that women's rights advances would quickly deteriorate, and began to talk about the increased necessity and urgency of feminist action and unity. Although, as a coordinator for the Chilean Women's Network points out:

This year, as [politics] is beginning to be lost to the right, the whole world feels that, okay, that now, yes we need to fight (*luchar*), now, yes we need to build opposition, so to take advantage of this greater disposition of women, of the people organizing to more profoundly debate how we can make a strong movement *po*, and not to lose the advantage of the situation to say *no*! We need to be challenging the right-wing government. Okay, and what later? When the *Concertación* returns, we're going to continue in the same [thing]. (Paula Santana)

Piñera's administration is not the first to disappoint the women's and feminist movement, although certainly the first to unite such a strong opposition.

## THE STATE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Internationally, Chile is a State party to two major accords related to violence against women. First, Chile has signed (1980) and ratified (1989) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Although not specifically on the topic of violence against women, the convention emphasizes women's human rights, and

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<sup>35</sup> Specific examples of gender treatment in Piñera's administration are discussed in the following sections, with a special focus on recent changes within SERNAMEC.

seeks to promote equality between women and men. It takes a feminist stance, illustrated, for example, in its inclusion and promotion of women's reproductive rights. The significance of the original text is largely symbolic. In monitoring States, the convention provides citizens with a legitimate source of pressure to take specific actions towards gender equality. That said, apart from the Optional Protocol adopted to the Convention in 1999, which Chile has yet to ratify, the convention does not contain any significant mechanisms of enforcement.

Second, and along with all other Latin American countries, Chile has signed (1994) and ratified (1996) the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women (known simply as the Convention of *Belém do Pará* after the Brazilian city in which it was adopted).<sup>36</sup> Unlike other international accords on the topic, the convention is unique in its feminist perspective, use of hard law, and follow-up and enforcement mechanisms within the original text. From its inception, the convention affirms that violence against women "is an offence against human dignity and a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between women and men" (Convention, 1994). Once ratified, States are legally obliged to take concrete steps towards eliminating violence against women; complaints of violations may be taken to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; and, since 2004, States are required to provide reports on their progress. Consequently, the convention has been considered "an unrivalled regional institutionalization of feminist norms" (Friedman, 2009, p. 362).

Regionally, Chile has been considered a leader in adopting policy on violence against women (Friedman, 2009, p. 351). Following the transition to democracy, legislation (Ley 19.325) was passed in 1994 that, for the first time in Chile, addressed intrafamily violence.

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<sup>36</sup> As Friedman (2010) points out, although "[t]he OAS is an unlikely candidate for human rights promotion" (p. 354), within the OAS operate "pockets of effectiveness" (p. 372) that contribute to the meaningful promotion and treatment of women's human rights in Latin America.

This law represents one of the first such laws in Latin America. However, its scope is extremely limited. First, acts of violence are considered misdemeanours, rather than crimes, downplaying the gravity of the issue, while also protecting aggressors. Second, the law is role-based, rather than rights-based (Blofield & Hass, 2005): it focuses on *intrafamily violence*, making invisible the gendered nature of this violence and ignoring the human right of *all women* to safety in *all areas of life*. As Molina explains, this role-based approach was not surprising as:

SERNAM continues to be an island and the way to legitimate oneself as SERNAM or any other organism that worries about equal opportunities for women is through victimization. That is why the law against intra-family violence came out so quickly, because “Poor little one, the beaten woman.” ... So, what legitimates it is a traditional image. To break with this, and talk about equality and a gender perspective—that is seldom achieved.<sup>37</sup> (Quoted in Richards, 2004, p. 39)

Thus, by presenting women as victims, the law reinforces traditional conceptions of gender in which women (those considered worthy) require protection based on perceived weakness and moral innocence, rather than universal rights.

In 2005, new legislation on intrafamily violence passed that “criminalized domestic violence, expanded sanctions, and made it easier to remove the abuser from the home” (Friedman, 2009, p. 366). As with the 1994 law, however, the law is limited in scope (focusing on intrafamily violence, rather than violence against women). Additionally, the qualification of violence as a crime is ambiguous, and women must go through the Family Tribunal rather than through the Public Ministry to report violence, resulting in an additional barrier to addressing violence against women as a crime (*Guía de Recursos*, p. 19).

Most recently, new legislation was passed in 2010, which modifies the 2005 law and criminal code. The 2010 *Femicide Law* differs from previous legislation in that it clearly

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<sup>37</sup> At the time of fieldwork, the term *gender* in Chile appeared to maintain its focus on women, rather than the less or non-feminist meaning that the term has often come to take on in Canada. Therefore, the use of “gender perspective” here can be assumed to signify a feminist perspective.

recognizes the gendered nature of violence against women by incorporating the term *femicidio*. At the same time, and almost paradoxically, the law maintains its gender-neutral approach by maintaining its focus on *intrafamily violence*. Apart from the inclusion of the term *femicide*, the law improves upon previous *parricide* legislation by extending the aggressor to ex-husbands and ex-live-in-partners. The law also improves upon sexual assault legislation by, for example, extending marital rape to any case of opposition, rather than requiring the victim to have physically resisted. Although the new law fails to address several significant issues raised regarding previous legislation, it does represent an improvement and, perhaps, a symbolic, if not extensive, victory.

One of the major obstacles to liberalizing legislation on women's rights in Chile is the Catholic Church. Church leaders publicly speak out on any topic that is perceived to be in conflict with Church teaching. For example, a recent statement by a Chilean bishop illustrates the Church's involvement in and attempt to influence politics, declaring that "in the same way [the Church] defended life in the dictatorship...it will also defend life in the mother's womb" (Gonzalez, 2010, December 29). The statement is part of a wider response by the Catholic Church in reaction to a proposal to decriminalize therapeutic abortion in Chile. Moreover, not only does the Church voice its opinions, but it also demands the obedience of members of the Catholic Church who hold positions in government. For example, on the topic of divorce, "Bishop Jorge Medina of Valparaíso affirmed more forcefully that 'a Catholic must not...favor any divorce law, defend it or support it.... The Catholic cannot claim autonomy regarding material that involves the doctrine of the Church'" (Medina, quoted in Blofield & Hass, 2005, p. 59).

In response to the Church and otherwise conservative opposition to liberalizing legislation, the political left has moderated its legislative demands. For example, "the

wording of the 1991 [abortion] bill indicates that the left cast it entirely in role-based terms; it assumes that the women in question are already mothers and focuses on the destructive effect on their children of losing a mother in unwanted childbirth” (Blofield and Haas, 2005, p. 52). Such framing is also seen in current violence against women legislation, which, for example, privileges the protection of *married* women. Although this framing may assist with the process of passing legislation, it does not set a precedent in which *all* women have their rights valued and respected.

Apart from legislation, the State also addresses violence against women through service provision. Open since 2001, Women’s Centres (*Centros de la Mujer*) located across the country represent SERNAM’s major service provision work. Initially, only 17 centres operated throughout the country; today, more than 90 centres are operational.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the centres have undergone significant transformation. Initially, the centres, then called Centres of Prevention and Attention for Intrafamily Violence (*Centros de Prevención y Atención a la Violencia Intrafamiliar*), provided attention to women, men, and children, without a focus on women. It was not until 2005 that the centres officially became “*Women’s Centres*.” Today, the centres work in three main capacities: (1) Education, Promotion and Prevention to third parties, (2) Capacity-building to professionals, and (3) Support to women experiencing intrafamily violence.

The focus is primarily on providing support to women suffering intrafamily violence to seek assistance. More specifically, the centres provide assistance to women at least 18 years of age, who “suffer violence inside of the family, especially if the abuser is her partner (husband, live-in boyfriend)” (SERNAM, *¿Qué son los centros de la mujer?*). Women under

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<sup>38</sup> In spite of this increase, centre waiting lists remain long. This is especially problematic given how long women often wait to seek assistance and given that many women experiencing such violence live in isolation, with few opportunities to reach out for assistance.

18 years of age or who suffer violence in a partner-relationship *outside of the family* (such as a boyfriend who does not live in the same home) do not qualify for assistance. Furthermore, a woman must seek assistance from the centre closest to her home, work, or place of study: all areas where her live-in partner may see her enter. Not only could this act as a barrier for women seeking attention—who already face major barriers in coming forward—it may also put women in unnecessary danger. Thus, the scope of the *Centros de la Mujer* is not designed to reach all women and, indeed, creates restrictive and exclusionary assistance practices.

Although the services provided by and the official language employed by the centres relate to *intrafamily violence* (as opposed to violence against women), the centres' analysis of the issue is actually quite holistic. As with other Latin American countries, violence against women is understood as more than just physical acts of aggression. Rather, violence against women is understood and presented primarily as a gendered abuse of power with an objective to “subordinate and control” and encompassing “physical abuse, intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation of a woman, negation, minimization, transference of blame, sexual abuse, manipulation through children or the use of children, male privileges, economic abuse, threats and coercion” (SERNAM, *¿Qué son los centros de la mujer?*).

For women who qualify, the services offered by the centres are commendable. Women are provided with professional legal, social, and psychological support, with a focus on the socio-cultural aspects of the problem in order to increase levels of self-esteem and autonomy, strengthen primary networks, decrease levels of violence, and decrease levels of risk and harm (SERNAM, *¿Qué son los centros de la mujer?*). Along these lines, women receive individual attention, as well as group attention. Individual attention allows women to seek advice particular to their situations from, for example, a lawyer or a social worker, while group attention intentionally attempts to break the cycle of isolation experienced by many

women who suffer intimate-partner violence. Since 2007, women whose lives are considered to be in danger may also be referred to one of SERNAM's 24 shelters for women and their children fleeing intrafamily violence.

Recently, programs for male aggressors are also available. In January 2011 the first Men's Centre for a Life without Violence (*Centro de Hombres por una Vida sin Violencia*) was inaugurated in Viña del Mar. The centre represents the first Men's Centre as part of a pilot program in six regions of the country that is focused on re-education and rehabilitation for men. Significantly, however, where Men's Centres do not exist, services for men are now made available in Women's Centres—a decision protested by the women's and feminist movement. This decision reflects the current administration's lack of respect for women's rights, in which it values the family unit over individual women's rights.

In addition to the centres and shelters, SERNAM also runs an annual campaign as a preventative measure. The campaign is promoted through multiple media, including radio, television, print, and web advertising, along with non-traditional media, such as murals. Typically, campaigns draw on traditional gender roles to inform their meaning: men are seen as actors (either aggressors or protectors) and women are seen as passive (victims). For example, a 2007 television spot shows what appears to be a husband verbally abusing his wife in a restaurant, and then physically dragging her out. Apart from two men standing up as the couple leaves, nobody does anything. The commercial closes with the statement: "Here there were 20 people, and nobody did anything. Imagine when she is alone in her house." Similarly, the 2008 campaign slogan was "Nothing justifies violence against women: Don't let excuses multiply the pain." Campaign posters show four different beaten and disparate faces of the same woman, each image paired with a different excuse. Although this type of message powerfully draws attention to the type of problematic behaviour that enables



violence against women to continue, it also problematically presents women as victims only, failing to create a public imagination in which a woman could take steps towards her own safety.

The 2009 campaign broke this pattern with campaign slogans like “I dress how I want” and “Never raise your hand at me.” This approach diverges significantly from previous campaigns by beginning with a rights-based analysis. Unfortunately, this change was short lived, and prevention measures appear to have reverted to traditional gender conceptions.

Most recently, the 2010 campaign focuses on men and masculinity. SERNAM’s current minister, Carolina Schmidt, explains:

Violence [against women] is based in the abuse of power and a poor understanding of true masculinity. Is the man who abuses, hits, or denigrates a woman more macho? The answer is clear: He who abuses a woman is less of a man.

The campaign has three well-known spokesmen (a soccer goalie, a television personality portraying a homosexual character, and a photographer and television personality who is homosexual). Each man explains how or why he has been called a *maricón* (faggot), and then asks who the “real” *maricón* is. The answer: “*Maricón*: is he who abuses a woman.” Again, the advertisements are powerful and provocative, while also clearly drawing attention to the role of traditional masculinity in perpetuating violence against women. However, the advertisements also draw problematically on Chile’s strong tendency towards homophobia, relating one perceived negative (being homosexual) with another negative (violence against women). In addition, and in line with previous campaigns, the advertisements follow a pattern in which women are secondary, almost invisible, and not presented as a part of the solution.

Overall, the consequences of the military regime’s traditional framing of women continue to manifest in State legislation and programming on violence against women.

Improvements to legislation following the initial transition period are evident, yet their approval and implementation remain a challenge. Service provision has also improved significantly, but requires further improvement in order to be more inclusive and to acknowledge women's rights in all circumstances. Finally, while prevention work puts the topic of violence against women in the public eye, it also tends to reinforce women as passive victims, denying a public imaginary in which women may realize their own rights.

### THE WOMEN'S AND FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Chile has a rich history of women's activism, beginning well before the 1970s. However, it was in the struggle against the dictatorship that some of this activism became widely focused on what may be considered a *feminist* agenda. Beginning with the 1970s, then, there are at least three significant phases of movement organizing: organization under the dictatorship (approx. 1973-1990), fragmentation and decline (approx. 1990s-2000s), and upswing (approx. 2000s-present).

### ORGANIZATION UNDER THE DICTATORSHIP

During the dictatorship, women's and feminist movement organizing took several forms, including human rights organizing, survival organizing, and feminist organizing, all of which overlapped and provided opportunities for women to realize and reflect upon their rights *as women*.

Under the dictatorship, women on the left faced particular burdens, especially poor women. Because the majority of those detained, disappeared, and killed during the dictatorship were men, many women became single heads of households, many for the first time bearing both the financial as well as caretaking burdens for their families. Interestingly,

as Pinochet's rhetoric held women up as the moral pillars of Chilean society and as the primary caregivers in the nation, his very rhetoric intended to reinforce traditional gender roles also reinforced women's protest and political organizing. In this context, women became the first human rights organizers, almost immediately following the coup. They took to the streets demanding to know where their loved ones were, with signs and photographs of the disappeared, asking simply *¿Dónde está?* (Where is he?). In addition, women created formal and informal networks to locate the disappeared, and organized to care for those in prison through visits and provisions.

Women also participated in survival organizing. The 1980s were especially trying years as the Chilean economy crashed and many were left with fewer basic needs met than had been in the chaos before the coup. Women organized outside of the home to shop collectively (*comprando juntos*) and to form community soup kitchens (*ollas comunes*). They also sought assistance and organized to work in the informal economy. Previously, many of these women had not worked outside of the home, but rampant unemployment affecting their partners or their own recently acquired positions as heads of households made this work necessary.

A clear and well-documented example of this organizing is found in the *arpillera* movement, largely facilitated by the Catholic Church. Women formed small workshops that came together to create *arpilleras*: woven tapestries usually depicting hardships experienced under the dictatorship, sold overseas to Chilean exiles and those wishing to show solidarity to Chileans. Although these groups were economically motivated, they were also spaces for political protest. As one *arpillerista* explains, "I have made my *arpilleras* because I have a double crime to denounce, the kidnapping of both my son and my brother. For that reason I joined the workshop in order to continue fighting and so that the truth can be known because

my wounds are still open” (quoted in Agosin, 1987, p. 71). As with other survival organizing, the workshops also acted as spaces for consciousness-raising as women took on new roles and engaged in collective reflection. This power was not lost on the military government. As another *arpillerista* reflects, “Women have changed so much that the military themselves made the comment that the biggest mistake they made was in leaving the family members of the disappeared alive” (quoted in Agosin, 1987, p. 76). In this way, women’s survival organizing also contributed to the development of the women’s and feminist movement.

In addition to human rights and survival organizing, women also organized for explicitly feminist purposes. According to Chuchryk (1984), the first public appearance of feminism during this period took place on August 11, 1983 when “A group of sixty women met in front of the National Library and extended a banner that read: ‘Democracy Now! Feminist Movement of Chile’” (p. 264). This act was the culmination of months of discussion about feminism in Chile, representing the collective decision to publicly proclaim feminism as a movement in Chile (Gaviola et. al., 1994, p. 131). Through their organization for democracy, feminists engaged in a new collective imagination of what this democracy could look like for women. As Chilean feminist and activist Julieta Kirkwood (1982) explains:

If, before, women did not wholly value the meaning of liberation and had accepted an inferior type of integration, now, in the face of authoritarianism, they are, to a certain extent, confronting a familiar phenomenon: authoritarianism as a culture is their daily experience. The return to democracy will not be for women the reapplication of the recognized liberating model. (As quoted in Boyle, 1993, p. 163)

This sentiment was later widely expressed in the slogan *Democracia en el país y en la casa* (Democracy in the country and in the home), used in the transition to democracy to promote women’s rights. In addition, analysis of women’s common situation was also aided by the return of exiles from abroad, who brought with them feminist analysis taking place outside of Chile. By the transition to democracy, feminists had developed a radical vision for a new

Chile in which women could be equal members of society and in which women's human rights could be respected.

As the women's and feminist movement in Chile gained strength, so did its counterparts in other Latin American nations, which together formed a wider, regional movement in Latin America. This movement is best understood through regional *encuentros* (literally *encounters*). Each *encuentro* is hosted by a different country and thus shaped by particular national contexts, with the first Latin American and Caribbean Feminist *Encuentro* taking place in Bogotá Colombia in 1981. Its organizational structure reflected a "desire to create new, nonhierarchical, more participatory ways of 'hacer política' (doing politics)" (Alvarez et. al., 2003, p. 544) among women committed to the expansion of women's rights and empowerment. Since this first gathering, the *encuentros* "have served as critical transnational sites in which local activists have refashioned and renegotiated identities, discourses, and practices distinctive of the region's feminisms" (Alvarez et. al., 2003, p. 537). In this way, the *encuentros* act as spaces for the sharing of knowledge *and* for knowledge production.<sup>39</sup>

## MOVEMENT FRAGMENTATION AND DECLINE

The period following the process of democratization in Chile is marked by decline and fragmentation of the women's and feminist movement. Indeed, by 1999 Franceschet (2003) recalls that she received "conflicting accounts of whether there even was a women's movement in Chile anymore" and Ríos (2003) has gone so far as to argue that "Now it is

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<sup>39</sup> This is not a minor point, for social movements are often viewed as only transmitting, rather than producing, knowledge. According to Casas-Cortés, Osterweil & Powell (2008), however, social movements create "spaces and processes in which knowledges are generated, modified, and mobilized by diverse actors" (p. 20) and in which social movement knowledge-practices "destabilize the boundary between activist and academic (or other expert) knowledges" (p. 23).

more accurate to speak of a field of action rather than a traditional social movement” (p. 265), explaining that:

The increased difficulty in articulating shared public strategies has become evident in the commemoration of key feminist milestones such as International Women’s Day or 28 September (Latin American day for the de-penalization of abortion). In each case there is a multiplicity of unconnected activities of a similar nature, each of which has little mobilizing strength” (p. 267).

There are at least four possible explanations for this trend. At the fall of the authoritarian government and with the new task to rebuild (and reinvent) democracy: (1) the common goal previously uniting the movement was accomplished, leading to an inevitable or natural fragmentation; (2) social mobilization outside of the system of party politics was discouraged and feared; (3) members of the women’s and feminist movement held contrasting views of how best to create a more egalitarian democracy and, more specifically, whether or not this should include work with the state; and (4) the further embracing of neoliberalism increased women’s burdens, thus decreasing their ability to participate in movement activity beyond survival activism. Likely, all four factors interacted to decrease movement action and unity.

First, once the authoritarian government fell, the various women’s groups composing the women’s and feminist movement fragmented. As Ríos (2003) explains, “Faced with a ‘common enemy’ feminists were forced to maintain cohesion. Yet once it was gone, an anti-establishment stance ceased to serve as the basis for unity” (p. 267) and women shifted their attentions from a shared primary goal—the end of the dictatorship—to the pursuit of more particular goals, such as justice for the disappeared, a more representative government, or access to basic needs. In this way, movement fragmentation represents a process of what Franceschet (2003) has called *normalization* (p. 16). It can also be inferred that after such a long struggle, some members may have simply entered a rest period of recuperation, with decreased activity toward any particular goal.

Second, the tentative and controlled nature of the transition to and consolidation of democracy led to an initial fear and discouragement of social mobilization outside of the party system. This tendency is especially evident in the period following the 1988 plebiscite, as a return to party politics led up to the elections. However, this tendency has also continued well into the present. As Ríos (2003) observes,

The *Concertación* governments have shown little programmatic coherence in fostering a relevant role for civil society in the newly established democratic system. Their policies have been particularly deficient in restoring the social fabric, promoting the development of social and non-governmental organizations and in fostering greater citizen participation. (p. 261)

Seven years later, I heard the same sentiment echoed in informal conversation with members of the women's and feminist movement.

Third, it has been argued that as the new state further embraced neoliberalism, women's burdens increased, decreasing the amount of time in which many women could partake in the movement. This argument is based on economic principles that favour, for example, the private provision of social services, which results in a greater burden for families, which, in turn, is frequently the practical responsibility of women.<sup>40</sup>

Fourth, the women's and feminist movement held contrasting views about what role the state should play in pursuit of movement goals. As a coordinator from the Chilean Women's Network explains,

Since the end of the dictatorship there have been very, very strong divisions in the feminist movement, which have not been possible to mend even now... it has to do with the fact that there are political differences between feminists that are, perhaps, irreconcilable. (Paula Santana)

On the one hand, many women chose to work as a part of or in alliance with the state, taking advantage of opportunities to address issues of equality *from the inside* at the level of policy

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<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, times of economic crisis often act as catalysts for women's organizing. Therefore, it could also be argued that any decrease in movement activity resulting from increased (neoliberal) economic pressures would be a deviation from cultural norms that stress community action.

or through other State organizing. On the other hand, some women argued that the movement must maintain autonomy from the State, and from all institutions that could compromise the movement, in order to accomplish meaningful, long-term change.

This particular conflict peaked in the mid-1990s. Division was, perhaps, first sparked in the 1993 Latin American and Caribbean Feminist *Encuentro* in Costa del Sol, El Salvador.

At Costa del Sol, those feminists who were already involved in NGOs and accustomed to dealing with foreign funders favored participating in the preparatory work that would lead to [the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women in] Beijing. Others, who were determined to maintain the independence of the feminist movement from international funders and the state, opposed all involvement in Beijing. (Alvarez, et. al., 2003, p. 552)

The division on this issue among members of the women's and feminist movement in Chile was particularly acute, for Chile already had a steadfast autonomous current among feminists.<sup>41</sup> By the time of the subsequent *Encuentro*—hosted in Cartagena, Chile—this divide had only deepened.

The 1996 *Encuentro* VII, the supposed *Encuentro del Diálogo* (Dialogue Encounter) held in Cartagena Chile, proved to be a powerful *misencounter* for the Chilean women's and feminist movement. Building upon the Beijing conflict, the question at the heart of the Cartagena *Encuentro* became this: "Should the activists now principally engaged in 'masculinist' policy arenas be viewed simply as the 'advocacy wing' of the movement, or were they 'sellouts' or, worse, 'traitors' to the feminist cause?" (Alvarez et. al., 2003, p. 547)

From May 1995 onward, Chilean activists held several national meetings to plan the regional event, only to find that the differences and the ill will between those engaged with formal institutions and those defending the absolute autonomy of the movement were increasing. Indeed, Chileans identified with the local *Movimiento Feminista Autónoma* (MFA), who ultimately dominated the local organizing committee for this

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<sup>41</sup> This may be due in part to the very controlled nature of Chile's transition to democracy, including the use of a military designed constitution, which begged the question of how democratic this transition could truly be, and of where women might fit into a marked return to party politics.



*Encuentro*, deliberately provoked the confrontation between these two tendencies or ‘logics’ in the movement.<sup>42</sup> (Alvarez et. al., 2003, p. 555)

The situation became so tense that more than 120 Chilean feminists signed an open letter urging another country to take charge of the *Encuentro*:

‘We declare that neither the conditions nor the guarantees necessary for an open and democratic *Encuentro*, as the previous *Encuentros* have been, exist in Chile. The organizers have set up a model in which each participant will be defined according to their unilateral conception of what feminism is’ (Cotidiano mujer 1996, 3). (Quoted in Alvarez et. al., 2003, p. 556)

The letter was not heeded, and the prediction realized in what became the most open display of disrespect and hostility in any such gathering. As a result, Ríos (2009) argues that “[t]his period of ideological confrontation produced a ‘feminist silence’ [in Chile] that lasted from 1997 into the new century. During this phase, few public events were organized, public mobilization remained rare, and many feminist groups disappeared” (p. 30). Taken into account with the natural fragmentation following the transition, a wider discouragement of civil society and social mobilization and, perhaps, the burdens of neoliberalism for women, the Chilean women’s and feminist movement was badly damaged.<sup>43</sup>

In addition, both before and after the Cartagena *Encuentro*, controversy within the movement surrounded SERNAM, as women originally from the movement continued to work inside of the State to improve women’s rights. Through this work, some significant advances for women were made, such as improved legislation. On the other hand, as time has passed, SERNAM also failed to accomplish or to even promote some of the movement’s

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<sup>42</sup> Specifically, the authors argue that two “logics” marked the Latin American feminist movement in the 1990s: the “policy-advocacy” logic and “identity-solidarity” logic; the MFA was a vocal advocate for the “identity-solidarity” logic, antagonistic toward members of the movement who worked as part of or in alliance with the State: a division that, in Chile, may be traced back to the transition to democracy (Alvarez, et. al., 2003).

<sup>43</sup> This does not mean, however, that the movement disappeared entirely. Rather, as Franceschet observed based on her 1999 fieldwork, “women continue[d] to be active but [were] having trouble finding expressions for their activism that would draw greater public attention” (2003, p. 14).

initial goals, exacerbated divisions in the movement based on class and race (Richards, 2004), and become distant from feminist activism (Franceschet, 2003). There is now a palpable sense of animosity towards SERNAM among some currents of the movement, mixed with feelings of betrayal and disillusionment.

Within SERNAM, women have also recognized the challenges of working for the government while maintaining strong feminist analysis and activism. Natacha Molina, formerly Assistant Director of SERNAM, explains this point:

At the beginning of the movement, there was a lot of happiness and [a sense of] legitimacy: “How great that for once a woman from the movement, feminist, well-known, gets a position [in SERNAM].” It was applauded by the women. And I always maintained open doors in terms of dialogue with the different groups of women.... But at the same time, there were criticisms too, in the sense that one begins to appropriate what you are doing. You get enthusiastic about what you are doing, and when you test those things with the movement, you realize that there is a lot of criticism. One tends to forget to be critical. So, as an anecdote, I remember that one time I went to Grupo Iniciativa [a network of women who work in feminist NGOs], to tell them about, I don’t know, some policy, a new plan.... I was very enthusiastic...so one of them, when she heard me, she said, “It’s impressive how much you’ve changed. Now, everything that SERNAM does is good. You’ve forgotten that years ago we made severe criticisms of SERNAM.” I told her, “You’re right, it’s true, because you get so into this that you lose a critical perspective.” (As quoted in Richards, 2004, pp. 58-59, parenthesis original)

In this view, cooptation by the State is inevitable and, consequently, some members of the women’s and feminist movement continue to argue that true, long-term change must come from below. The question remains to be seen of whether meaningful, long-lasting reconciliation will be possible.

#### UPSWING: REJUVENATION AND STRENGTHENING

The 2000s has marked a decade of rejuvenation and strengthening of the women’s and feminist movement, not only in Chile, but also throughout the region. Much of this rejuvenation regionally has been credited to the unifying force of violence against women

mobilization. For example, in their study of violence against women campaigns in Latin America, Cole & Phillips (2008) found that:

Every person we interviewed, at all levels—international, national government, and regional movement—identified violence against women as the focal point for bringing together women in diverse contexts and with diverse backgrounds and goals to work together. (pp. 159-160)

In Chile, this has certainly been the case, as will be discussed in the following chapters (and so will not be discussed here). In Chile specifically, a national *encuentro* in 2005 also contributed to an end to the feminist silence that followed the 1996 Latin American and Caribbean Feminist *Encuentro* (Ríos, 2009, p. 31).<sup>44</sup> Thus, it was in the context of movement upswing that the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign launched in 2007.

Each of the forces discussed in this Chapter—culture, the State, and the women’s and feminist movement—form the particular gender climate in which the campaign was designed and launched, and in which it continues to be run. Without an understanding of this gender climate, it would be difficult to situate the campaign’s successes, challenges, or broader effects.

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<sup>44</sup> Looking into the future, the regional *Encuentro* (XII) planned for 2011 will return to Bogotá under the theme “30 years of Latin American and Caribbean feminism: unraveling, stripping and renewing (*desatar, desnudar y reanudar*).”

## CHAPTER FOUR: FEMINIST SPACES

Once situated in Chile's particular gender climate, the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign may be analyzed. This analysis reveals that, through its current campaign and related work, the Chilean Women's Network has created feminist spaces throughout the country that address violence against women. These spaces are defined by three mutually supporting and overlapping elements, which allow violence against women to be (1) legitimized as problematic (2) talked about, and (3) acted against. The elements cannot truly be separated, for each overlaps with and supports the existence of the others. However, each plays a unique and necessary role in contributing to a social and political imaginary<sup>45</sup> in which women's rights may be respected.

The concept of *space* or *spatiality* lends itself well to understanding communications and mobilizations by the women's and feminist movement, for the *spaces* of patriarchy must be interrupted in order to address its faults.<sup>46</sup> This interruption can be physical, encouraging women's claiming and reclaiming of physical space; it can also be conceptual, encouraging an alternative, feminist imaginary of women's rights as human rights, thus creating conceptual space for alternative political possibilities and choices.<sup>47</sup> The interruption of patriarchal space, then, may simultaneously be understood as the creation of feminist space.

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<sup>45</sup> The term *imaginary* is used here to describe an alternative vision of what can be. For feminist work on political imaginary, see the work of Corinne Kumar (e.g., Kumar, 2005).

<sup>46</sup> Metaphors of *space* and *spatiality* are found across disciplines, as well as outside of academic literature, to describe social and cultural concepts. However, an overview of this literature is outside of the scope of this thesis (as such an overview would likely compose an entire thesis on its own). For an early example of literature on feminist space, please see Woolf (1929). For related examples, please see Koskela (1999), Remm (2010), Wilton & Cranford (2002), and Robinson (2000).

<sup>47</sup> As Jenny Robinson (2000) argues in relation to feminist theoretical imaginations, "the imaginative spatialities with which we describe processes of transformation shape our sense of political possibilities and hence our political choices" (p. 286).

This chapter explains the role that each element (talking about, legitimizing as problematic, and acting against violence against women) plays in the construction of feminist space, including the Chilean Women's Network's execution of each element. Next, the effect of these feminist spaces on the women's and feminist movement are considered. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing the network's challenges in maintaining feminist spaces.

## CONSTRUCTING FEMINIST SPACES

### LEGITIMIZING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS PROBLEMATIC

Violence against women must be legitimized as problematic because it is both naturalized and minimized in Chilean culture. One of the primary cultural forces contributing to this problem is the interaction of *machismo* and *marianismo*. Interactions of *machismo* and *marianismo* are particularly acute within intimate-partner relationships. Because Chilean culture values male honour and female sacrifice (Vandello & Cohen, 2008), women may sacrifice their own happiness and safety for what they consider to be the benefit of the family, which is directly connected to self worth. Conversely, men may react aggressively to what they consider to be an attack on their honour. This is particularly evident in cases of jealousy. Vandello et. al.'s 2009 study of Anglo-Canadian versus Chilean reactions to a husband's accounts of his violent actions towards his wife illustrates this point. The study found that when jealousy was involved:

Chileans were significantly more likely than Canadians to feel warmly toward the husband, believe that his reaction was acceptable, believe that he showed the characteristics of a good partner, and believe that he showed more companionate love toward his wife. (p. 97)

Because *machismo* understands men as dominant, a man may feel the need to control his intimate partner as one might property. Simultaneously, because *marianismo* understands

women as submissive and as morally pure, any action perceived to deviate from submission and purity could be considered an attack on a male partner's honour.<sup>48</sup>

Even outside of issues of jealousy, a woman may accept or be pressured to accept her male partner's violence. For example, Ondina notes:

When you interview a woman that has been beaten and this woman doesn't realize that this isn't right—even trying to justify it, many times, saying that in reality he was stressed, that he, that he only does it when he drinks, when he drinks, but that without a drink he is an excellent person and finally, lastly, many women have told me, in my position as a social worker, 'well, it's my husband, no one else, that beats me. He has the right'—so, when you see this, you're seeing that there is a power relationship between a man and a woman.

Similarly, in her interview of four *Chilena* survivors of long-term violence in their intimate-partner relationships, Patricia Olea Castro (2009) found that although there were many occasions when the women tenuously felt like they knew what they had to do,

The impossibility of naming what they felt, of legitimizing their feelings in front of the acts of violence they were submitted to, submission to the 'advice of others', the 'good manners' that a wife should have, forced upon them time and time again, made them give up on the act of rebellion, the human right to defend oneself and save oneself. (p. 43)

Comments from the women like, "I tried to leave before, but I didn't realize why, why I wanted to escape from him" (p. 43), "I didn't realize that I was living in violence...all of that for me was normal" (p. 45), and "to know...is to wake up, is to wake up [*sic*]" (p. 47) make it clear violence against women must be legitimated as problematic in order for women to realize their human rights.

The campaign attempts to break through cultural barriers that legitimize violence against women within intimate-partner relationships by pointing to the unnatural character of such violence and by emphasizing women's human rights. This is evident in both print

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<sup>48</sup> The converse, however, is not true. Unfaithful men are tolerated much more than unfaithful women: as though it were in a man's nature to satisfy his sexual desires at free will, while a woman's nature focused on the satisfaction of her partner's sexual desires.

communications and in messages communicated at campaign events. For example, an information pamphlet implores women:

Don't tolerate in your relationships  
Any offence to your dignity and integrity!

A poster proclaims:

Who loves you, doesn't abuse you  
Doesn't rape you, doesn't kill you

A march chant exclaims:

Hands for loving  
Not for hitting

Drawing on existing law also emphasizes women's rights and the criminal nature of acts of violence against women. For example, public communications explain:

Violence is a crime  
At home, in the street, in any place

Women abusers, rapists, and femicidists are NOT sick...  
**THEY ARE CRIMINALS**  
**REPORT THEM!!!**

Campaign materials also explain who can report violence, what can be reported, what methods of protection can be demanded, who to report to, how to report, and other important information to familiarize women with available legal resources. In this way, Chilean law—although certainly not perfect—is used as a starting point to empower women to realize their rights.

Events, such as marches, are also powerful communications tools because their messages are not anonymous. In the case of marches, for example, hundreds and even thousands of women act as a collective voice denouncing violence against women in all situations as a violation of rights. To illustrate:

I had a testimony from a woman who was out walking once and just then passed the November 25 march, and it said that if your husband beats you or if your husband makes you have sex, that this isn't normal, and in that moment this woman realized that what she was living wasn't normal, that what had been happening to her wasn't normal ...and she never tolerated it again, never validated it, and this is a great advance. (Angela)

In this way, the collective legitimization of violence against women can overcome powerful forces that normalize and minimize the issue.

Another important factor in legitimizing violence against women as problematic is the recognition that *machismo* and *marianismo* interact to create situations in which men's violence is rationalized by women's actions or by her (lack of) perceived worthiness of protection. Sexual assault is a prime example. When a woman is sexually assaulted, her moral character comes into question: *What was she doing there? What was she wearing? Does she have a reputation of promiscuity?* The answers to these questions are then used to justify the sexual assault, committed by a man who inevitably followed his "base instincts." Similarly, femicide is often framed as a tragedy produced by a man's *natural* reaction to a woman's *unnatural* actions. For example, in her study of portrayals of femicide on the popular TVN news program *24 Hours*, Naranjo (2009) observes that reporters asked questions drawing attention to the victims' moral character—"Did she cheat on you? Who did she cheat on you with? Was it someone you knew?" (p. 109)—as though the answers to these questions could justifiably explain the "loss of control" ending in femicide.

The above example also illustrates that the media plays a significant role in the naturalization and minimization of violence against women through its treatment of the subject. In addition to putting women's moral character into question, incidents are often reported as individual anomalies, rather than as part of a wider cultural pattern. As Naranjo (2009) describes:



To explain that “from there nobody can explain what happened” or “neighbours of the *La Paloma* community in *Puerto Montt* don’t understand what happened”, is to make oneself comfortable with a dominant saying and to reduce the significance of femicide to social trials that are incomprehensible. (p. 108)

Media portrayals such as those described above are deeply problematic because of the cultural power that the media possesses: To ask a question about a victim’s moral character legitimizes that question as valid; to portray incidents of violence against women as unexplainable anomalies legitimizes their interpretation as such; to pathologize aggressors as sick or psychopathic is to make invisible the culture which supports this behaviour as natural; to present women as victims only, and not as autonomous adults with their own lives and stories to tell, is to reinforce a paradigm in which women are not valued. Recognizing this power, the Chilean Women’s Network has also targeted journalists through its campaign.

The network has called the media to take responsibility for its role in reproducing violence against women and provided resources to assist journalists to produce more just and responsible coverage. For example, an information pamphlet designed for the media explains the significance of using terms that recognize the gendered nature of violence against women (e.g., violence against women, *machista* violence, etc.), rather than terms that hinder a more discerning understanding (e.g., partner violence, intrafamily violence, etc.). The same resource also explains, for example, the importance of framing aggressors as criminals (rather than sick individuals), of prioritizing informants who may shed contextual light on a particular incident (rather than informants who merely serve to sensationalize an incident), and to present women as autonomous actors who can break the cycle of violence (rather than as inevitable victims). Given the power of the media, this work is a major contribution to the legitimization of violence against women as problematic.

Another major contribution is the ongoing research produced and published by the Chilean Women's Network. Research from the women's and feminist movement is particularly important because of the cultural and political forces that minimize and naturalize violence against women. Although SERNAM is also a source of ongoing research, government framing, which in itself can be sexist and misogynist, limits SERNAM's ability to produce rights-based, women-focused research. Since the 2004 publication of *Femicidio en Chile*, the Chilean Women's Network has also published research on resources for action, perspectives on the potential legal typification of femicide in Chile, connections between sexual violence and abortion, and symbolic violence. These publications are freely available on the network's website and act as resources and points of reference for the women's and feminist movement, which can use the research to justify its demands; for the media, as sources of statistics, alternative perspectives, and knowledge; for the general public, to inform itself using an alternative paradigm that values women as citizens and women's human rights; and for the state.

## TALKING ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

It is important to talk about violence against women because the issue is often considered private, natural, otherwise unproblematic, or shameful, thus encouraging silence and inaction. By breaking this silence, the issue enters the public sphere, where its analysis and opposition may be encouraged; myths can be deconstructed, experiences of violence can be reflected upon with new perspective, and individual and collective action realized.

At the individual level, talking about the topic is significant because when violence against women is experienced in silence, a woman may feel that this violence is normal, her fault, or a burden she must continue to bear. If, however, the same woman hears alternative

messages in the public that condemn such violence, she may reassess her own experiences and, for example, gain the courage to stand up for herself, to report violence, or to leave a violent relationship. Personal testimonies, for instance, are powerful tools that provide women with social proof: *If someone else can talk about it, so can I*. Similarly, support services must be known about before they can be accessed. Thus, the (re-) transformation of violence against women from the private to the public sphere can serve to benefit victims and survivors of violence against women by demonstrating the problem as a collective experience.

More broadly, public discussion of the topic can contribute to a public will to sincerely and responsibly address violence against women. If a topic such as violence against women is not talked about, opportunity is lost for its collective analysis. The more that the topic is discussed, the more people may come to understand its gravity, as well as their own role in addressing the issue. Thus, one of the primary ways in which feminist spaces contribute to an environment in which violence against women can be talked about is by putting the issue in the public eye. As Ondina notes, “First, you have to put the topic in the public eye because if nobody wants to put the topic in the public eye, what are we going to talk about?” Campaign materials are posted and distributed nationally. For example, large posters are displayed in city streets, small posters are displayed in house and office windows, and stickers travel with their owners on agendas. In this way, members of the public are exposed to a topic that is often reserved for the private sphere, or that is simply not talked about:

I think that the campaign puts the topic [of violence against women] up for discussion and now it's no longer a topic that is behind the door of every house, you know? This is important because when you see the poster and there are phrases that say that the *señora* thought that, your neighbour thought that, the girls thought that, and there it is

written in the street and on the wall, it's like 'hey, I'm not the only person that thinks that!' (Carola)

Public messages, then, act as social proof that violence against women is a *public* issue that can be openly talked about. Similarly, campaign materials can act as a catalyst to bring the topic into the public sphere. Ondina illustrates this point when she describes reactions to campaign materials she posted in her office space:

For example, I had colleagues who would come in and to bother me they would begin to say, 'Why do you have this foolishness? They're lies. We don't treat women badly.' I don't know, in some way it allows you to bring up part of the topic in discussion.

Thus, even when reactions to campaign materials are not reactions of solidarity, opportunities are still created to engage in discussion.

Additionally, diverse campaign mobilizations and initiatives take place in the public sphere. For example, the campaign launch event takes place in what are arguably the most public of spaces in Latin America: plazas. Such events not only place the topic in the public eye, but also provide participants and bystanders with an opportunity to engage the topic.

More than the imagery, there is the conversation with the public, because it's also a space of dialogue, in the end. (Anita)

I think that the campaign has helped people to talk about the topic, to be able to freely say, 'Yes, I have been beaten'... 'Yes, I have lived in violence'. Most of all, people dare to say this when we are in the street. Women have approached us and said, 'Oh! I think what you're doing is fantastic because I really lived in violence. I know what it feels like; he was at the point of killing me.' Things like that. So, it's not one person. Lots of women say this to you. Lots. (Carola)

In this way, feminist spaces provide otherwise unlikely opportunities for solidarity.

At the same time, the fact that feminist spaces provide opportunities for discussions of difference is equally significant. For example, Anita recounts a public event in which a member of the public openly disagreed with the central focus of the campaign:

I remember a person that began to speak against the campaign, saying that we couldn't talk about femicide, we should talk about uxoricide...but we said no, because what is uxoricide? When a husband murders his wife. So, this only reduces the category to a murder when one person has a contract with the other, marriage.

This kind of dialogue presents opportunities for education and growth, adding depth to campaign communications.

The first memorial launch event was especially powerful because it was the first such event and because it commemorated the more than 300 women who died as victims of femicide between 2001 and 2007, represented by approximately 300 pairs of empty shoes.

The image of seeing those shoes on the ground with the names of the women—there were people who began to cry, or that it definitely impacted because they became emotional because, it's strange, but the majority of people thought that they were really the shoes of the dead women. (Carola)

“What's more” Ondina adds, there were “*different* shoes: sandals, colourful shoes, girls' shoes, older girls' shoes, older women's shoes, boots.” By using a diverse range of shoes, the organizers demonstrated that women from all sectors of society and of all ages are affected by violence against women—to the point of femicide.

It was powerful. There were people who stayed for a long time, walking around or stuck at one of the pairs of shoes that were there, and some people said that it had the impact of, the sensation of being in a cemetery, but of only murdered women. Well, that's what it is, and in reality when you hear a statistic on the TV or in the papers, or that a woman was murdered by her husband, the news goes by like all news goes by, but when someone shows you x number of women who absolutely existed and who were mothers or grandmothers or sisters or girls, what that produces in you is different. (Ondina)

The silent character of the event compounded this feeling of “being in a cemetery.”

Organizers stood in the plazas, offering pamphlets, small posters, information, and conversation to supplement and interpret the installation, but as Carola explains, “We didn't make noise or anything. It was *being there*, you know?” (Carola's emphasis.) Simply *being*

*there* was a political statement in itself, temporarily transforming public spaces into feminist spaces.

As a result of public events such as the memorials, the campaign has multiplied its audience through significant media coverage. A highly visual and creative design plays an important role, not to be underestimated. Together, the shoes, the posters designed as traditional caution signs, and powerful slogans provide the media with “newsworthy” stories and images: a major accomplishment in a climate that does not favour coverage of “women’s issues.”

In addition to putting the topic into the public eye, talking about violence against women also involves providing the vocabulary to do so. Remembering, for example, the four *Chilena* survivors of violence against women referred to in the previous section, it is clear that women are often unable to name their experiences as violence. Thus, providing the vocabulary to express and analyze experiences of violence is a significant step towards addressing the issue. The campaign specifically names the root causes of violence against women (*machismo* and patriarchy), as well as at least four manifestations of this violence (femicide, sexual, symbolic, and institutional violence).

The naming of *machismo* and patriarchy are at the heart of the campaign, evidenced by the campaign’s very title: *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata*. By naming the root causes of violence, the campaign provides the vocabulary to speak about the interconnected nature of all violence against women. Apart from the title, most naming of *machismo* and patriarchy takes place in conversation. When I asked one of the organizers in Valparaíso if *machismo* and patriarchy made for easy conversation in Chile, she explained:

Among women I can talk about patriarchy and *machismo*, not using the two words, but I can say, “Hey, in your house does your partner help to do the dishes?” So it’s clear, from there she will likely say, “No, no he doesn’t help me.” I [say] “*¡Uui!* He’s

*machista!*” So, I find that there are ways to say it...but in Chile, the campaign has made it clearer that *machismo* refers to this, [it] doesn’t refer to masculinity...rather to power, it is an oppression...and the word *machismo* is [now] in the language. (Anita)

Here, Anita alludes to the fact that the word *machismo* was already a part of Chilean language at the time of the campaign launch; what the campaign has done is extend the common understanding of *machismo* to include its feminist meaning, as a cultural expression of patriarchy. As a march participant explains in Valparaíso:

Every day we encounter *machismo*. It’s good that the phrase is direct and strong and that it says things like they are, because many times we don’t realize that we are constantly victims of abuse. *Machismo* can really end in killing. You don’t need to put up with it. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2009)

By talking about *machismo* as a cultural problem, the root cause of violence became exposed.<sup>49</sup> Although the campaign also names patriarchy (e.g., campaign slogan: Patriarchal culture is cultural violence), it has not received as much public acceptance as the term *machismo*. Nevertheless, the campaign creates feminist spaces in which the concept of patriarchy is talked about and its understanding deepened.

The naming of femicide—a term virtually unknown in Chile outside of the women’s and feminist movement at the time of the initial campaign launch—is also at the heart of the campaign. Campaign slogans include the term *femicidio* (e.g., “No more femicide!”); empty shoes, dresses, and life-size paper cutouts of women represent femicide victims; and the names of all femicide victims between 2001 to present are listed on the Chilean Women’s

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<sup>49</sup> Although most march participants I asked shared this sentiment about the phrase *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata*, one woman responded: “I don’t know. We try not do things wrong. There are so many things you need to be careful about so that you don’t upset the abuser” (Personal Interview, November 25, 2009). This particular participant was living in a women’s shelter after her husband had tried to kill her. She knew the reality all too well: *machismo* can kill. Likely still in survival mode, she interpreted the phrase as a warning to victims of violence to be careful, not to upset their aggressors, rather than not to tolerate the cultural system that allows violence to take place. This acts as a painful reminder of why the campaign is so very necessary.

Network's website. Soledad Rojas, a coordinator for the network, explains the importance of talking about femicide *as femicide*:

The incorporation of the term femicide—coined by feminists—into the language is relevant; it names and brings to light a reality hidden until now, the murders of women for being women, the extreme result of patriarchal, *machista* violence, socially and institutionally tolerated. (2009, p.18)

Indeed, the campaign has not only been successful in naming femicide, but also in obtaining public buy-in of the term. While conducting fieldwork, I was told time and time again that this incorporation of the term *femicidio* was a direct result of campaign efforts:

Before, people didn't know anything, or talk at all about [femicide]. So, you notice the impact a lot more when for the first time people are speaking about the topic. In addition, the topic was obviously taken up, appropriated by, the government. SERNAM appropriated it and everyone was the defender and the champion of justice in relation to femicide. So, this contributed to the publicity. It was aired on TV. Before we were never on TV. Never! We were never on TV! This was the first and only year that we had so much influence on TV... What happened with that first year is that there was a femicide *boom*, because of what I said, because there was a utilization of the discourse. (Paula)

The good thing is that now the news talks about femicide. Before it was crime of passion (*crónica roja*), before it was homicide. Now at least there is a change in the language and the way that it is written about, so to say, in the news. (Priscilla)

[The term femicide] has been picked up by the press. Really, if you think about it and you observe, sometimes, when a woman is killed, the newscasters say *femicidio*, right? It doesn't just say Juanita Perez, but that a femicide occurred in San Bernardo... In the news it's no longer a homicide. Conceptually, they say that a femicide occurred, and I think that this was effectively achieved by the Red's campaign. (Ondina)

Here, too, we talk more about femicide because the Chilean Women's Network launched the campaign... (Anita)

My own experience in Chile reflects the above statements. On my very first morning in Chile, I turned on the television and immediately watched a report on "another femicide in Chile". While speaking with family and friends about my research, I was also surprised by



the familiarity with the term *femicide*. In truth, my research topic required much less explaining in Chile than was necessary in Canada.

In spite of this success, the naming of femicide is an ongoing struggle. Naranjo's (2009) study of a prominent news program in television illustrates this point. She finds that news clips indiscriminately substitute the term femicide with the term parricide, confusing their meaning. Furthermore, Naranjo finds that even when the term femicide is used, it is not always accompanied by its feminist analysis, explaining that:

Although the incorporation of the term *femicidio* to name these crimes is an advance, in the narrative construction of these news clips, persist elements that normalize, make invisible and reproduce violence against women. (p. 105)

These findings indicate the patriarchal nature of the environment in which feminist change takes place: advances are made and patriarchy reclaims advances. Thus, although the campaign's success in naming femicide is impressive, continued work is necessary to maintain this success.

The second manifestation of violence named by the campaign is sexual violence: considered one of the most invisible forms of violence against women. Sexual violence is a pertinent topic in Chile, where "We identify and we name physical and psychological aggression, but we keep silence in the face of sexual violence, continuing to live with guilt and shame" (Vargas, 2009, p. 30). Consequently, the campaign's focus on sexual violence includes concrete explanations of what constitutes sexual violence. For example, large posters displayed in city streets exclaim:

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS:  
When your partner forces you to have sex  
When you are groped in the street  
When you are asked for sexual favours at work or at school  
DON'T LET FEAR PARALIZE YOU  
REPORT!

By naming sexual violence in the public sphere, feminist spaces provide opportunities for women to consider their own experiences of sexual violence, to understand their right to live free from sexual violence, and to talk about something that is too frequently suffered in silence.

The third manifestation of violence named by the campaign is symbolic violence, “that which nobody sees, that nobody realizes and that we allow to pass because it is so naturalized” (Carola). In this way naming symbolic violence presents a new paradigm with which to understand sexist and misogynist norms and behaviour through the lens of violence against women. Consider the following statements:

For me, it’s violence that the secretary is required to serve coffee to the boss, yeah? But if you ask the secretary ‘Is that violent for you? Because it’s violent for me’ they’ll say ‘No. I’m a secretary.’ So, it’s almost like a maid. This is symbolic violence: things that can be very natural for people, very natural. (Carola)

The imposition of maternity as the single horizon in the lives of women represents the most symbolic expression of violence against women; crude, obvious, and subtle at the same time. (Santana, 2009, p. 33)<sup>50</sup>

[It is] normal for the boss to say... “this dress fits you perfectly!” This is assault, but women put it to the side, “no, it’s that my boss found me beautiful today.” It’s because he looked at her body, he imagined her body, and he found it beautiful, to put it mildly. (Carola)

Violence is also when we as women do not have autonomy.... When we are not in control of our dreams, we are not in control of our bodies, there is someone else that decides for us, then, it’s... symbolic violence. (Anita)

In each explanation above, situations that may typically be interpreted as sexist—if noticed as anything out of the ordinary at all—are re-framed as acts of *violence* against women.

Campaign communications take up this objective by talking about body image, objectification, romantic ideals, and labels:

No diets no perfect size  
Enough of *machista* violence!

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<sup>50</sup> Paula Santana, also an interview participant.

NOT A DECORATION, NOT AN OBJECT  
I respect MY body!

Idealized love, 'romantic' and possessive  
Makes us dependent, submissive and passive  
Vulnerable and competitive among each other

Not dinner, not flowers!  
Punishment for aggressors!

Whores, saints and witches  
All women against *machista* violence!

Although the term *symbolic violence* has not received the same public buy-in as *femicide*, the campaign helps to name what women (and men) may not otherwise come to think of as *violence*. Thus, messages like the ones above help to initiate conversation and internal dialogue on some of the more subtle forms of violence against women, providing a new vocabulary to do so.

Lastly, the campaign names institutional violence against women. More specifically, the campaign focuses on the state's denial of legal and safe abortions to Chilean women and, more recently, on the state's treatment of indigenous women. The campaign takes a very direct stance on the issue, naming the denial of legal and safe abortion as institutional violence and any deaths resulting from this denial as femicides. The primary slogan addressing abortion reads:

Enough of criminalizing women!  
Legal, safe, and free abortion

This wording frames abortion as a woman's right and places the responsibility on the government, which criminalizes women for realizing this right. Similarly, formal slogans and informal protest signs draw attention to institutional violence exacted through religious rhetoric. Overall, campaign communications on the issue provide a platform for rights-based

discussion and, as with the case of symbolic violence, frame the denial of abortion *as violence*, once again providing a new vocabulary with which to discuss the issue.

## ACTING AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The very act of taking action is particularly significant for women who have experienced gender-based violence because women are often made to feel powerless in the face of violence, dissuaded and unable to take the actions necessary to protect themselves. Thus, action can be empowering, and may represent part of the transformation from *victim* to *survivor*. As one woman present at the 2009 campaign march eloquently explained her participation, “After 45 years, I dared to report my abuser and I want to be around other women like me” (Personal interview). In this way, taking part in collective, public action can be an extension of individual action, in this case, the action of reporting an abuser.

Yet, in order for action to take place, barriers to action must be addressed. Several campaign communications utilize this strategy by pairing potential barriers with specific actions. Note the following three examples:

Don't blame yourself  
Don't keep quiet  
Ask for help!

Don't let fear paralyze you!  
call 149  
Answered by Police Officers

The one to blame is the abuser  
Report him!

First, significant barriers to action (guilt, fear, shame) are recognized along with their results (silence, paralysis); second, encouragement is provided to overcome these barriers; and, lastly, specific, direct actions (ask for help, call the police, report the abuser) are offered. This

strategy takes women through the process of overcoming specific barriers to action, so that they may act against violence committed against them.

In addition to the above examples, campaign communications provide many specific actions to take when confronted with violence against women. Campaign materials urge readers to *report* violence, *react* to assault, *ask* for help, *call* the police, *demand* justice, *demand* protection and *to be in solidarity* with women who experience violence, and to *not tolerate* violence, *not tolerate* impunity of aggressors, *not remain silent*, and *not be paralyzed* by fear. This simple and straightforward composition creates actions that are easy to recall, and create the conceptual space in which such action becomes a possibility.

Action is also important more generally for any person who opposes violence against women, for if change is to be effected, action must take place. This point was illustrated in interviews with several campaign organizers who talked about the feeling of *the need* to act. For example:

Eliana: Why do you do this work?

Angela: Because I believe I have a responsibility, because I am committed, because I believe that this problem belongs to everyone.

Paula: My conviction comes from believing that a more just, egalitarian, respectful, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera society is possible and one of the fundamental things with this has to do with equality between men and women, so, with this conviction...if I believe in this, I can't stop questioning my life and constructing my life in agreement with this as much as possible.

Ondina: It's like a necessity to channel certain convictions, certain ways of seeing life, or for certain struggles that we want to give to from the little that we may be able to influence. But, it has to do with this, with a necessity to participate in this type of action as a form of doing, of protesting and of making present the injustice that women in this country still live in. That. A personal necessity inside, although many people bug you, many people laugh at you, at your feminist collective—here my friends tease me, they bug me and laugh at me...but it's part of who you are...

Beyond campaign organization and mobilization, public distribution of campaign materials also provides opportunities for women to act. In a sense, this horizontal approach to distribution allows participants to claim ownership of the campaign, which is, in itself, a type of action.

El Machismo Mata has been a 'total success' because in some ways I feel that many women have identified with the campaign. In fact, I've seen El Machismo Mata [campaign materials] in unusual places like in offices, in a window, in a lot of places, or with women you wouldn't think could partake in this type of message, but they have it, and they ask you for it... (Ondina)

Thus, the campaign creates feminist spaces for these and other women to fulfill their individual and collective needs to act.

Collective action in particular is necessary in order to effect change. Just as the women's and feminist movement was able to use its collective voice to advance women's rights (however tentatively) in the transition to democracy, so too can collective action effect change in today's political climate. The primary collective action taken by the campaign each year is the closing nocturnal march, held on the International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women, November 25. Although some men also participate, marches are primarily marketed to and designed for women to engage in collective action. For example, a 2010 campaign leaflet reads:

Woman if you're assaulted react!! :  
Protest!  
Dress how you like!  
Let's take the streets!  
Let's reclaim the night!

Women of all ages and of many walks of life participate in the event. Many participate as representatives of feminist or otherwise women-focused organizations; however, women also attend as individuals who have experienced such violence, or who are otherwise personally committed to ending violence against women. Thus, the marches represent an action in which

women *as women* are able to protest violence committed against them because of their gender. As two women at the 2009 Valparaíso march told me:

Everyone should be here to stand against violence against women and for no more impunity for violent men. It is also a re-vindication of the feminine struggle. Enough already of abuse in this country!

[The march] is necessary in order to change this patriarchal culture and to defend the rights of women. Who better than women themselves to improve their own reality?

March programs are also designed to emphasize action, apart from the obvious march aspect. This design begins with a route that symbolically links women's mobilization with political obligation. For example, participants of the 2009 march in Valparaíso gathered in front of the national congress as their starting point. During the march, participants carried protest signs that included calls to action, and waves of chants and protest songs swept the streets. For example:

We are women,  
We have dignity!  
We demand justice,  
To so much impunity!

With the abusive man,  
Not even with a condom!

It's going to end, it's going to end  
This custom of rape  
It's going to end, it's going to end  
This custom of hitting  
It's going to end, it's going to end  
This custom of killing.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, marches end with symbolic or direct action. For example, the Valparaíso march ended at a plaza where participants and onlookers gathered to listen to a musical performance and speeches. The final act was a national political declaration by the Chilean Women's

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<sup>51</sup> This protest song is sung to the tune of "*y va a caer*" (and it's going to fall), a popular protest song leading up to the end of the military regime in Chile. More specifically, it is an adaptation of a verse from this song, which reads: It's going to end, it's going to end/This custom of killing/It's going to end, it's going to end/The military dictatorship.

Network, read in turn by members who participated in the event's organization. The declaration included both an analysis of violence against women in Chile, as well as specific demands for a more just society. The declaration ended with presenters exclaiming in unison "Let's end *machista* violence!!!" (*¡¡¡A parar la violencia machista!!!*). Thus, from beginning to end, marches create feminist spaces of action and empowerment.

When considered together, it is apparent that all three elements of the feminist spaces created by the campaign (talking about, legitimizing as problematic, and acting against violence against women) are overlapping and mutually supportive. For example, talking about violence against women overlaps with the other two elements as talking may be considered an action (a decision to break the silence), as well as a legitimization of the issue as problematic (through social proof). Similarly, for example, the legitimization of violence against women through continuous research provides support to talk about and act against the problem, thus demonstrating the mutually supportive nature of the elements. Once created, the three elements work together to create a social imaginary in which women's rights may be respected and upheld.

### FEMINIST SPACES AND THE WOMEN'S AND FEMINIST MOVEMENT

In addition to contributing to a public will in which violence against women may be addressed more adequately, the feminist spaces created by the campaign also contribute to a rejuvenation and strengthening of the women's and feminist movement in Chile. Much of the campaign's unifying power comes from its central topic, which resonates with women in diverse social locations. To protest femicide is to do something that "nobody is going to be against" (Paula). To address *machismo* is to address something that is a daily experience for women in Chile.



The activism around femicide has, this is one of the evaluations that we have made as a network, the activism around femicide, around the protests, and making femicide visible is what has also propelled the most mobilized moment of the feminist movement and of the women's movement in general because it's a, it has converted into a protest (denuncia) and a problem that is felt by all [women]. So, it served to reactivate the movement here [in Valparaíso], and in all parts of Chile. (Paula)

This reactivation is reflected in increased participation in the Chilean Women's Network since the campaign was first launched in 2007. For example, the 2007 closing march drew close to 20,000 participants in 16 cities across the country and, following this first year, network membership doubled from 40 to more than 80 member organizations (Red Chilena, *Informe evaluación red 2007*).

In addition to its unifying force, the campaign topic is also feminist in nature, addressing the question:

How do we make what we do popular, but on the other hand, that it effectively contributes to the real emancipation of women and not to a sum of rights that in the end leaves women in the same position of power, for example, you know? (Paula)

By addressing both questions, the campaign's central topic is not only able to reach and unify Chilean women in general, but also has the power to unify diverse currents of the women's and feminist movement, thus drawing on what has historically been a powerful political force in Chile.

The national scope of the campaign also contributes to a unified movement. National unity is stressed throughout the campaign, including in press releases, mobilization call-outs, and interviews. This national scope is important because smaller, isolated activities do not have the same political prowess as larger, related activities that present one unified voice. A national mobilization draws more media attention than a local mobilization on its own, and media attention is positively correlated with political action. This unity also has symbolic

power for women who participate in the campaign, for they knowingly participate alongside thousands of other women across the country.

The campaign's communications strategy also symbolically emphasizes the presence of the women's and feminist movement in Chile. Recalling Carola's observation that

[W]hen you see the poster and there are phrases that say that the *señora* thought that, your neighbour thought that, the girls thought that, and there it is written in the street and on the wall, it's like 'hey, I'm not the only person that thinks that!' <sup>52</sup>

this symbolic power is obvious. Similarly, when Priscilla was asked what the most powerful moment of the campaign was for her, she explained:

The moment in which I realized that there was this network through the publicity with the posters up in the streets.... to know that there were people organizing, obviously called my attention. It also impacted me in a positive way, and I think that it is very effective visually...as a work of the Network, it seems to be the most powerful that it has done.

Thus, even apart from mobilizations—when movement presence is self-evident—the movement is able to convey its presence through widespread communications, encouraging a sense of belonging and movement unity.

The campaign also inspires feminist discovery and action more broadly. Angela's story provides a fitting illustration:

Eliana    When did you learn about the campaign?

Angela:    The truth is that I had no idea that it was a campaign. I mean, I read the posters *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* and [it] seemed to me that it was the truth, that it made a lot of sense.... With a friend, we joined a, we were out walking and we ran into the march, it said *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* and in that very moment we joined the march, and then the next day we found a women's shelter... where they address the problem of femicide, because this is what we wanted [to do], and we offered to volunteer, and from there I participated in the campaign, in quotation marks, because I had no idea that it was a campaign.

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<sup>52</sup> See pages 69-70 for the full quote and context.

This participation began a process of feminist discovery for Angela, beginning with the topic of violence against women.

The truth is when I began to participate I had the idea that not all women experienced (*vivíamos*) violence. That only some women [did]. That these few had, that they had certain characteristics, like for example they had weak characters, maybe they were more submissive. I had this concept and what I began to look into, and I realized that I had also suffered violence. I understood that I also had a commitment with this, a responsibility with this. (Angela)

Following this, Angela began to participate in movement activities such as *encuentros*, and two years later, Angela joined the campaign organizing in Valparaíso. She credits her feminist development to this participation and, in spite of prejudices that she once held about feminists, she now declares herself as feminist and participates in feminist action as a member of the women's and feminist movement.

In addition, movement unity is strengthened through an acceptance of diversity. For example, although the campaign is nationally organized, each local organizing group is able to make decisions about what to emphasize (or not emphasize) in their local communications and meeting schedules, as well as particular activities, events, and initiatives based on local circumstances and concerns. This allowance for local ownership is significant, for:

We have to present ourselves from our own body, from our own feeling and from our own problematic that we have as women...the problematic in the Maule region isn't the same as for the people who come from Arica. (Compañera 7, Asamblea Nacional)

Indeed, Chile is socially and geographically diverse, and each region and community has its own problematic. Moreover, space is also created to explore and discuss diversity across social locations and political opinions. As Priscilla commented about the organizing group in Valparaíso:

They respect ideas, because not all of us have the same lines of thinking in respects to women's rights, in respect to feminism. So, up until now the organizing has seemed really pluralist, really dynamic, and also more horizontal, so to say...<sup>53</sup>

In this way, an acceptance of diversity has allowed the campaign to reach women who may not otherwise become involved in feminist organizing, and creates an opportunity to discuss diversity and its role in both the campaign and the women's and feminist movement.

This space for discussion was particularly evident at the national assembly in October 2009. The assembly brought together members from across the country, with financial assistance to members making wider participation possible.<sup>54</sup>

When conversation among small groups began to focus on key issues in the women's and feminist movement, rather than issues particular to the campaign, the itinerary was adapted so that this conversation could continue as a larger group. The group openly discussed issues of diversity among members of the network and members of the women's and feminist movement, with a focus on how to use diversity as a strength rather than a point of contention. For example:

We have *machista* behaviours in our own relationships between each other, these hierarchical things, between the old and the young, or the fat and the skinny, well, the historical [women who struggled against the dictatorship] and the recent arrivals (*las aparecidas*). And not understanding that this diversity is part of our own power. (Soledad)

There should be a recognition from the young women to the women that have sustained this. Because in reality there may be some struggles, power struggles... that

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<sup>53</sup> This "horizontal" participatory structure is seen throughout campaign organizing. For example, leading up to the 2010 campaign, the coordinators in Valparaíso sent a message to participants in the region, asking, "Please, squeeze your neurons so that the best messages come out. Together we can do it... and it will turn out much better..." (Personal communication)

<sup>54</sup> Assembly participants were varied, coming from different regions and different social locations. Indeed, I overheard an interesting discussion between women who came from the furthest areas of the country, describing their journeys to Santiago. Some women were able to fly, while some women had to take the bus (approximately 20 hours of travel). In this conversation, there was laughter and recognition of how symbolic their journeys were of their very different life circumstances. At the same time, however, there was also a recognition that many voices were still missing from the assembly, and that all those in attendance were privileged in their ability to take the time to leave their daily lives for a weekend-long event.

can also divide us... for this reason I tell you, a recognition from the young, but also a valorising from you to our own generation. Because if new people don't come, who will continue... (*Compañera* 11)

I feel that these differences don't need to transform into inequalities, because it's true that between us there are differences of power... it's a theme that we should work on. How to construct egalitarian relations between women. (Vanessa)

This theme was present throughout the weekend, and resulted in fruitful conversation about diverse perspectives of and contributions to the women's and feminist movement.

Language was also a focal point of conversation, covering a wide variety of issues ranging from the use of the feminine mode of speaking to particular language used to define and describe the movement:

What we have been improving in the region is language. Because if we consider ourselves feminists, we also have to speak from *nosotras* and not from *nosotros*.<sup>55</sup> (*Compañera* 7, followed by applause)

Then this would be the question, what one talks about as empowerment, I personally don't like, even less when people talk about empowering women. How do we look for a language that really identifies us. I think that in this sense how do we construct ourselves (*construirnos*) or how do we strengthen our power, because yes we have power, how do we harness (*potenciarnos*) this power, how do we articulate ourselves. (Soledad)

Many may have problems with recognizing themselves as feminist, it may also appear to be of little relevance, I mean that it's not a thing of declaration...it's [more] a thing that we have feminist practices to struggle against violence against women... and in this sense whether we like it or not we are doing feminism here. So we should speak from a feminist agenda and not a women's agenda. (María Ignacia)

For me the word *recambio*, doesn't make me vulnerable or upset me. I think all people are complements to each other... and I think that we lack more integration... (*Compañera peruana* [Peruvian])

Also and especially prevalent was the topic of the movement's and the network's relationships with the State. For example:

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<sup>55</sup> The topic of speaking from *nosotras* was a recurring theme in fieldwork. To illustrate, while putting up posters for the November 25 march, organizers were confronted by a male police officer. In speaking with the organizers, the officer used the masculine form to refer to the group and, in response, was quickly corrected—to please refer to the group *as women*, for he was speaking with women.

When the 90's arrived many women from the feminist movement left to support the State for violence legislation. And many women went to the state, which we thought was extremely important, but look at the law we achieved. (Paty)

At some point we're going to see the necessity of interacting with the state, in reality with the institution, because we are all the state (*estado somos todas*). (Siomara)

To appeal to the state is important in the sense that one should demand from the state the guarantee of rights as women, as citizens. But this has to be accompanied by an empowerment of our own as [the] women's movement, of capacitating ourselves on the one hand, of how to make visible, how to make insistent (*exigibles*) our demands. (Yasmín)

If we are a social movement, I think that we want to have an impact on the social order, not in public policies. (Marly)

The significance of this dialogue should not be taken for granted. For as Ríos (2003) has explained about political division following the transition to democracy,

The impossibility of dealing with these differences in a constructive manner, as expressions of feminist diversity and plurality and not as insurmountable fractures explains, to a great extent, the inability of feminism to become a significant political force in post-transition Chile. (Ríos, 2003, p. 275)

In this way, the rich dialogue of the national assembly, and excerpts above only represent a very small portion of this dialogue, contributed to a strengthening of the movement as a political force. The issues discussed did not need to be resolved and are, perhaps, irresolvable; rather, strength is found in *the process* of agreeing and disagreeing, with the opportunity to speak, to listen, to try to communicate, and to try to understand each other in a respectful and constructive manner.

At the regional level, a more intentional and long-term project of open dialogue was initiated by the Chilean Women's Network in Valparaíso in February 2009. Although not a part of the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign, the project may be viewed as a possibility of recent strengthening and rejuvenation of the women's and feminist movement,

resulting in part from the unifying power of the campaign. The objective of this project, as stated by the invitation to the first assembly, was:

To begin an open and *sororal* dialogue between us that allows us to analyze what unites us and to know what feminists and the women's movement in our region are doing (*en que estamos*), so that we may be able to create common strategies in the face of this political, patriarchal, neoliberal stage from always and [also] new, that obligates us more than ever to be present and to proclaim ourselves as feminists

The first assembly took place on February 25, only two days before the February 27 earthquake. Each woman introduced herself in relation to the women's and feminist movement, as well as what she hoped to gain from the assembly. There was a consensus to continue to meet and to find common ground for collective action. Following the earthquake, this initial commitment was upheld, and at the time of exiting the field a second meeting was already planned for March. Such initiatives demonstrate not only a desire to unify, but also a willingness to do so in spite of the very open and painful internal conflict that divided the movement in the 1990s.

### CHALLENGES IN MAINTAINING FEMINIST SPACES

Once created, feminist spaces must also be maintained, for the patriarchal system is powerful and self-sustaining and will exact pressure to negate such spaces. Consider, for example, the campaign accomplishment of integrating the term *femicidio*—a feminist concept—into mainstream media. In order to achieve this accomplishment, a research project was first undertaken to investigate cases of femicide in Chile (legitimizing femicide as problematic). Next, the problem was publicly named through campaign communications and events (talking about femicide), cumulating in a nocturnal march that drew thousands of Chileans to the streets in protest (acting against femicide). The media widely covered the first year of the campaign and began to utilize the terminology in related news, thus revealing the

gendered nature of many of the murders taking place against Chilean women. With time, however, the term *femicidio* became disconnected from its feminist meaning, as it was used indiscriminately by the media with terms that masked the gendered nature of these murders, such as *parricide*. Although the campaign continued to produce communications and organize mobilizations around the issue after this first year, media coverage declined, to a great extent silencing campaign efforts to create an alternative social imaginary around femicide. The power of patriarchy in negating feminist spaces cannot be overemphasized.

A second, related challenge, then, is maintaining a high level of media coverage. Although a high level of media attention was achieved in the first year, this level was not maintained. There are at least two possible explanations for this decline. First, the creativity and power of campaign communications and mobilizations created a shock value that captured media attention; however, with a similar approach in the following years, the media may not have considered the campaign as newsworthy. Second, the change in focus from femicide to more subtle forms of violence against women may have resulted in a decrease in media attention. As Paula explains:

Now that we have are beginning to deal with more topics, that are more complex, like sexual violence, like that violence is everywhere, symbolic violence, that love is violence, that everything is violence, so now ‘ahhh!’ Now [not] the media, nor the government, nor anybody is interested, nor does it interest them to engage in such depth. So, [we don’t receive media attention,] not anymore, it stopped like that, extremely prompt.

Thus, it is possible that the subsequent topics did not provoke the same sense of immediacy as femicide, or provoke the same unifying power. This is significant because, without media attention, the campaign lost a wider public audience. Moreover, it lost symbolic public space, as the media often define the public legitimacy of social problems. In other words, since the campaign is no longer in the news, it must not be that important.



A third challenge in maintaining feminist spaces is seen in the scarcity of resources available with which to realize the campaign. As mentioned in Chapter One, campaign financing is difficult to attain and has declined significantly since the first year, and, consequently, the bulk of campaign organizing falls on volunteers.<sup>56</sup> This theme was prevalent throughout interviews with campaign organizers, who expressed the pressure that this creates, as well as the need for more assistance:

More people need to be called to participate. The amount of people is very small for the large amount of work that exists. (Priscilla)

Sometimes we have lacked evaluation and we go very fast, but it has to do with the fact that every one of us, the girls that coordinate as well, do other things...it's balancing time, balancing things, actions, with the daily life that one lives. (Rose Mary)

I believe that this campaign has been realized and carried out by a small group of women... We don't have money, we don't have an office, we don't have funding, it's completely voluntary...they are hours and time that you dedicate because you believe in this, because you believe, and you are convinced that what you're doing is going to achieve something, what you're interested in changing. This isn't a minor point—we participate out of will, from the desire to do so. (Ondina)

Thus, although voluntary participation in campaign organization is one of the strengths of the campaign, it can also be a point of stress and discouragement. The problem is great, while the resources are few.

This stress and discouragement is not only felt in relation to the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign in particular, but also in the context of feminist work in Chile more generally.

Sometimes, it feels like you are always in the desert. (Rose Mary)

I feel like there is still so much to do, that it's an extremely long road, so what we do right now are small steps because to eliminate violence against women or to think about decreasing it is a time because it is a cultural change, so I still don't feel impacted, because I don't see the change like 'paw!' (Anita)

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<sup>56</sup> See pages 9 and 10.

Sometimes I have so much anger and sadness, the two sentiments, because there are so many women who say 'ay! Lets not talk about your topics. No, better not to.'  
(Rose Mary)

There are many things that bother you and it's like always being against the current, always being against the current. (Carola)

The stigma attached to feminism remains strong. This was evident throughout fieldwork, in informal conversations as well as interviews. For example, three members of the Chilean Women's Network in Valparaíso expressed particularly conflicted reflections of their identity as, or as not, feminist:

I don't declare myself as a feminist 100% either. Yes, I believe in the equality of rights, I believe that the decision about your body belongs to each person, but there are certain things that still make me... There are certain feminists that hate men and that doesn't sit well with me. (Priscilla)

I also had my prejudices with respect to feminists. All based in ignorance, obviously. I had no idea what it was about and was led by, by the imaginary...that all are lesbians, that they're crazy... (Angela)

You ask me if I'm feminist. I, the truth is that I've always said that I'm not because I don't consider myself feminist...However, many tell me that yes, I am a feminist. I say, well, if you say I'm a feminist, I guess I'm a feminist. But, I don't know. What I do know is that...I'm convinced that this world is made—and historically, at least, this is demonstrated—by what is known by men. Therefore, it's a masculine world, oriented toward their objectives, and towards their necessities as well, but historically, not considering the objectives or the intentions of what we as women want, or justice, or equality, or equity either. So, if this is being feminist, I don't know, maybe I am! (Ondina)

This stigma discredits contributions of the women's and feminist movement and discourages new membership, which could help to spread out campaign responsibilities and further strengthen and rejuvenate the movement.

Together, the patriarchal propensity to reverse achievements, the difficulty in maintaining media attention, the scarcity of resources, and the stigma of feminism threaten the continued ability of the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign to create feminist spaces in which violence against women may be talked about, legitimized as problematic, and acted

against, thus threatening further related strengthening and rejuvenation of the women's and feminist movement.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE ¡CUIDADO! EL MACHISMO MATA CAMPAIGN AS A MODEL FOR CHANGE

This case study presents one of the Latin American campaigns against violence against women: the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign in Chile. As little research exists on the topic, grounded theory is used to conceptualize and analyze the campaign and its related activities. In order to situate this analysis, Chile's particular gender climate is first discussed. In particular, the campaign is located in the context of the lasting effects of Chile's military dictatorship, of powerful cultural and political forces that subordinate women, and of a strengthening women's and feminist movement. Next, this case study builds upon the concept of feminist space to analyze the campaign's work in repoliticizing violence against women. More specifically, this case study demonstrates how the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign creates feminist spaces in which violence against women is talked about, legitimized as problematic, and acted against. Challenges in maintaining feminist spaces are discussed, along with how the creation of feminist spaces have contributed to rejuvenating and strengthening of the country's women's and feminist movement—from which the campaign was born and in which it continues to develop. The lessons from this case study are significant for the women's and feminist movement, for social movements more generally, and for future studies on social movement campaigns.

This case study contributes to the women's and feminist movement by recording a part of this movement in written history. Too often, women's efforts are made invisible by omission. Not only does this minimize women's contributions to society, it can also limit the sharing of women's knowledge and, thus, limit the potential ripple effects that this knowledge may activate. By recording and analyzing the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign, this thesis proposes a model for the women's and feminist movement, as well as

for social movements more broadly, to address complex problems that require significant social and institutional change: a model which may be adapted to the particulars of diverse national contexts. As Roggeband (2004) asserts in her work on knowledge sharing in addressing sexual violence, “diffusion is not a simple process of receiving and adopting, but rather of *interpreting, translating, and adapting*” (p.162, emphasis original).<sup>57</sup>

As a first point in this model for change, this case study recognizes the wider context in which a problem takes place. When a particular problem, such as violence against women, is understood as a manifestation of a deeper root cause, such a patriarchy, then this root cause must be addressed in order to effect lasting change. The concept of *space* not only acknowledges this wider context, but also treats it as an active agent. This is significant because patriarchy is resistant to change. Using the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* example, when feminist space is created, patriarchy pushes back to close this space. Thus, although acknowledging the root problem is not a revolutionary point, the concept of *space* maintains the root problem as a focal point, emphasizing that alternative space must be created *and maintained* within the wider context.

Second, this analysis outlines a three-pronged approach to effect lasting change. In order to create the space for change, a problem must simultaneously be talked about, legitimized as problematic, and acted against. Talking about a problem primarily involves putting it in the public eye, providing the vocabulary with which to talk about it, and providing opportunities for dialogue. Legitimizing a problem as problematic primarily involves a combination of sustained research and social proof. Acting against a problem primarily involves addressing barriers to action and providing a variety of individual and

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<sup>57</sup> Roggeband’s (2004) article is aptly titled ‘*Immediately I thought we should do the same thing*’: *International inspiration and exchange in feminist action against sexual violence*—a title that could be used for the Chilean case study, where the central slogan and imagery was originally borrowed and adapted from a Spanish campaign, and since has been borrowed and adapted in other countries, such as Colombia.

collective paths or opportunities for action. Each element, therefore, plays an essential role in contributing to social change.

As the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign demonstrates, these three elements do not form a linear step-by-step process. Instead, each element is ongoing and mutually supporting, where talking about a problem can contribute to its problematization and related action, legitimizing a problem as problematic can contribute to its discussion and related action, and, finally, action can contribute to a problem's discussion and perception as problematic. In understanding this relationship, the women's and feminist movement and other social movements can design and implement campaigns that may more effectively contribute to lasting change when addressing problems of patriarchy.

Third, the case study of the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign provides a model for strengthening and unifying the women's and feminist movement. This begins with the importance of a unified and participatory platform from which to launch a campaign or other movement initiatives. In Chile and throughout Latin America, the topic of violence against women has provided opportunity to unify, for it affects women across society, in spite of their diverse social locations; the key, then, is to choose a topic that has similar potential for unification. In other words, a topic should be able to act as the *lowest common denominator* among women who might not otherwise come together. In addition to presenting a unified topic, the platform must be horizontally oriented to engage as many women as possible at the level of campaign "ownership." In the Chilean case study, this took the form of a national network with the potential to grow and to incorporate diverse perspectives. This type of platform assists in creating messages that resonate with the majority of women, while also creating openness for issues of diversity that can then be utilized to speak to more particular issues and to help maintain movement cohesion.

The Chilean case study also points to the importance of creativity in movement building. Creativity is magnetic. It can be used to capture the public's attention, including the media's attention, by powerfully illuminating problems, or by making present the reality of already known problems. This point is clear when recalling Ondina's comment about the first memorial launch event:

[I]n reality when you hear a statistic on the TV or in the papers, or that a woman was murdered by her husband, the news goes by like all news goes by, but when someone shows you x number of women who absolutely existed and who were mothers or grandmothers or sisters or girls, what that produces in you is different.<sup>58</sup>

Shoes, life-size cutouts, and dresses are only some examples of how the Chilean Women's Network used creativity to capture the public's attention by moving from general awareness to personal impact. In this way, creativity plays an important role in presenting a topic to the public and to politicians as legitimate and significant, thus further widening a movement's reach and, in turn, its capacity for movement participation.

Next, in addition to proposing a model for social movements, the case study of the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* campaign also provides implications for future research. As my own academic background is located within the fields of Women's Studies and Communications Studies, implications for both fields are discussed. Beginning with the field of Women's Studies, the concept of feminist space could be further explored and built upon. In particular, the concept of feminist space is well suited to research in Women's Studies because it conveys a central positioning of patriarchy and of women's opposition to patriarchy. Although the concept of feminist space does appear in Women's Studies literature, it is often used only briefly as a comfortable metaphor without accompanying explanations or analysis. Thus, there is potential to engage this concept further and to apply it to struggles against patriarchy.

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<sup>58</sup> See page 71 for the full quote and context.

This case study also presents an analysis of movement rejuvenation and strengthening that could be applied to Women's Studies research in Canada. Women's Studies in Canada began as an initiative from the women's and feminist movement, with research stemming from the movement's concerns for emancipation.<sup>59</sup> Today, the women's and feminist movement in Canada remains active, but lacks a unified or powerful public presence and political voice—a fact that hinders women's continued emancipation in Canada. Thus, this thesis also presents an opportunity to explore how the movement in Canada could learn from the Chilean case study. Such research could, for example, incorporate the defining of shared goals (a Canadian equivalent of *femicide*) that could similarly be used to rejuvenate and strengthen Canada's women's and feminist movement within the country's particular gender climate.

In addition, this case study provides an analytical lens with which to understand the repoliticization of violence against women in Latin America, and how this repoliticization has contributed to a strengthening and rejuvenation of the women's and feminist movement. Research on the women's and feminist movement must be a priority in Women's Studies, for movements are a legitimate and powerful source of emancipatory change for women. In this way, the field of Women's Studies is well positioned to not only share movement knowledge, but to also build upon and apply this knowledge in ways that further the expansion and respect of women's rights.

In relation to Communications Studies, this case study also has much to offer. Very little research exists in the field on social justice campaigns originating from below, let alone on the Latin American campaigns addressing violence against women. The most closely related work on the topic is found in academic and professional literature on *public will*

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<sup>59</sup> For examples of early Women's Studies in Canada, see Robbins et. al. (Eds., 2008) and Kolodny (2000).



campaigns.<sup>60</sup> Public will literature represents a sophistication of individual behaviour change literature, moving away from the individualization of social problems and toward an acknowledgment of State responsibility.<sup>61</sup> Although the public will campaign model offers insight into the complexities of campaigning against violence against women, it also falls short in significant ways.

The public will campaign model is useful primarily in its treatment of *social change*. “Social change involves the transformation of collective behaviour, culture, public policy, or social institutions over time” (Salmon, Post & Christensen, June 2003, p. 33). Thus, social change seeks to address the root causes of a social problem, rather than to focus on a problem’s symptoms. This approach is well suited to addressing violence against women, for specific instances of such violence may be understood as manifestations of a deeper cultural and institutional problem: patriarchy. In other words, if individual instances of violence against women were to be addressed, the problem would not disappear. Rather, new instances would continuously manifest according to the rules of the patriarchal system: To eliminate violence against women is to change the underlying rules that promote sexism and misogyny. Consequently, the desired change cannot take place within the short term but over an extended period of time.

Because the public will campaign model aims to address the root causes of a social problem, and root causes can be difficult to articulate, the model also offers strategies to overcome such challenges. In this context, the concept of *framing* is central. Framing is the

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<sup>60</sup> Although the terms *public will* and *public education* are sometimes used indiscriminately in campaign literature, each terminology has distinct implications. *Education* aims to disperse knowledge that creates awareness, whereas *public will* implies action based on this awareness. Therefore, the language of the *public will* campaign may be more appropriate for social justice campaigns from below, which aim to effect lasting change through both awareness and action. As the concept of public will in academic literature on campaigns is scarce, the ideas discussed here draw largely on professional Communications literature.

<sup>61</sup> For a more nuanced discussion of *individual behaviour change* versus *public will* campaigns, please see Coffman (2002, May).

process by which problems are understood, involving the application of specific terminology and parameters of problem construction (Salmon, Post & Christensen, June 2003). In the case of violence against women, framing can make the difference between understanding the problem as a private or a public matter or as a non-gendered or gendered experience, for example. Thus, strategic framing can shift the problem focus from symptoms to root cause.

Additionally, the public will campaign model is appropriate in the communications' mediums used for effecting change: utilizing not only traditional mediums of campaign communications (e.g., print media) but also community-level engagement (e.g., protest rallies). Traditional communications benefit campaigns by reaching a wide audience and by "[reinforcing] direct outreach by supporting early adopters in their commitment to champion the issue, creating a fertile environment in which others become willing and ready to discuss the issue, and providing environmental cues that provide a sense of being part of a larger movement" (Friedenwald-Fishman et. al., Feb. 2005, p. 7), while community-level engagement provides concrete opportunities to participate in this movement. This dual approach is representative of the current wave of violence against women campaigns in Latin America.

Yet, there are also ways in which the public will campaign model is not adequate for the study of violence against women campaigns in Latin America. Most significantly, the primary aim of public will campaigns—to effect policy change—oversimplifies the problem's treatment, for policy does not necessarily translate into social change. For example, the context within which violence against women policy is created often undermines efforts to include feminist perspectives on the topic, losing, therefore, valuable knowledge and insight from the women's and feminist movement. In this way, progressive policy implementation may be seen as unlikely at best without challenging significant

cultural and institutional forces. In addition, violence against women policy is ineffective if not promoted, socially accepted, and enforced. Thus, the aim of such campaigns must extend beyond policy to include cultural and institutional changes at the level of norms and values. Similarly, where public will building stresses working within cultural value systems (Friedenwald-Fishman et. al., Feb. 2005), the violence against women campaigns cannot conform—culture is part of the problem, and cultural change, while difficult, must be a final goal.

A related problem is that the public will campaign model is linear, with defined steps leading to a clear end goal. This is a problem because the Chilean case study demonstrates that once a problem is addressed, advances can be reversed. Patriarchy is powerful and resourceful in maintaining this power. Therefore, while the dismantling of patriarchy is not an immediately realistic goal, the power of patriarchy to negate advances must be considered and incorporated into campaign design and implementation.

Building on this point, the *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata* case study can also contribute to public will literature in its understanding of the relationship between social movements and social change. Because the problem of violence against women requires the pursuit of long-term goals, campaigns can be understood not only as a direct means of achieving goals, but also as a method of rejuvenating and strengthening movements that can sustain work toward such goals. In this way, communications literature could be infused with the study of social movements.

In conclusion, this case study provides valuable learning for the women's and feminist movement, and for social movements more broadly, as well as for the fields of both Women's Studies and Communications Studies. Together, scholars and activists, and scholar-activists, can create feminist spaces that deconstruct patriarchy and allow women's

concerns to be talked about, legitimized as problematic, and acted against. As Paula explains, “this is something long term because it has to do with a system, a social, political, and cultural system that is not easy to change, but if we work with long-term goals, in some moment, we might just achieve it.”

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## APPENDIX A: CAMPAIGN IMAGES<sup>62</sup>



Fig. 1: CAUTION! MACHISMO KILLS poster



Fig. 2: Example of campaign launch memorial



Fig. 3: Example of campaign launch

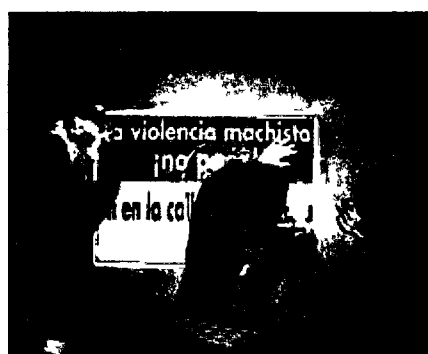


Fig. 4: Example of poster for campaign launch



Fig. 5: Example of creating life-size cutouts

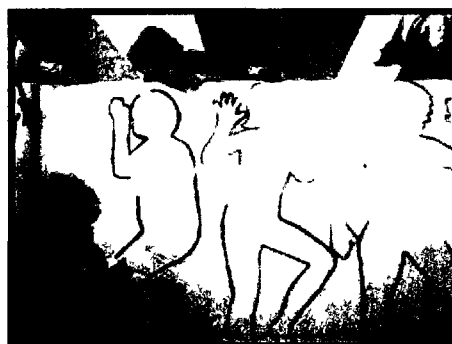


Fig. 6: Example of life-size cutouts

<sup>62</sup> The images in this Appendix include both personal photographs and photographs taken from the Chilean Women's Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence website [www.nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl](http://www.nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl), which are freely available for public use. Together, the images form a sample of key communications, installations, and mobilizations throughout the campaign.

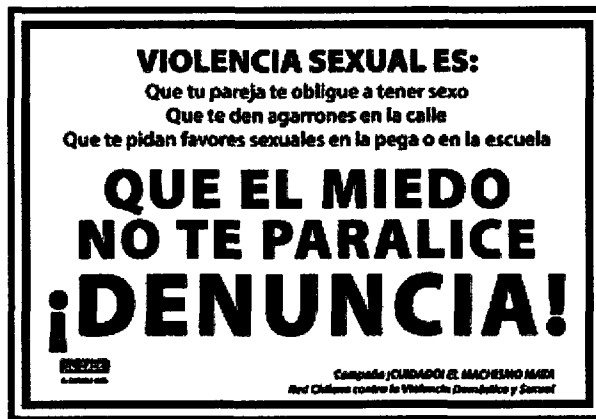


Fig. 7: Example of second year poster

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS:  
 When your partner forces you to have sex  
 When you are groped on the street  
 When you are asked for sexual favours at  
 work or at school  
 DON'T LET FEAR PARALYZE YOU  
 REPORT!



Fig. 8: Dress installation at 2009 memorial launch in Valparaíso

Fig. 9

Example of  
 2007 closing  
 march

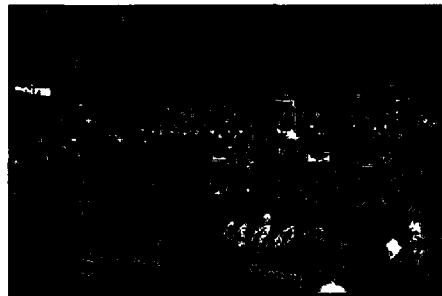


Fig. 10

Example of  
 2007 closing  
 march

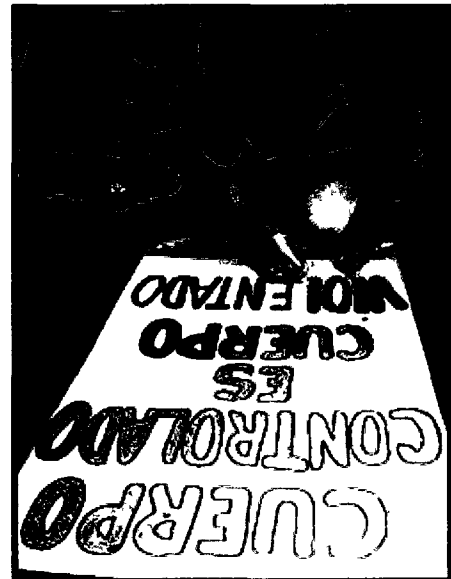


Fig. 11 Creating protest signs in Valparaíso

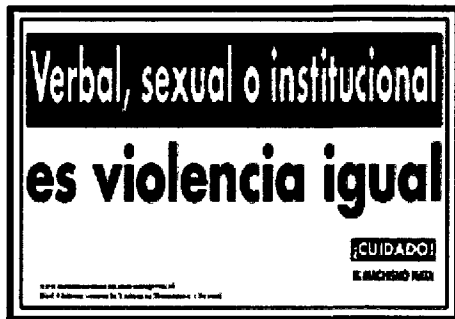


Fig. 12 Example of third year campaign poster

Verbal, sexual or institutional  
It's all violence



Fig. 13 Example of third year campaign poster

Violent and controlling  
Doesn't deserve my love



Fig. 14 Example of protest

Your flirtatious comment bothers...  
Your flirtatious comment is  
VIOLENCE  
ENOUGH of SEXUAL ASSAULT!



Fig. 15 Example of public installation

IT COULD BE YOU



Fig. 16 Example of protest

NEVER VIOLENCE AGAIN  
WE WANT TO BE HAPPY



APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS TO NOVEMBER 25, 2009 MARCH PARTICIPANTS

1. How old are you?
2. Why did you come to the march tonight?
3. How did you come to participate in the campaign?
4. Have you participated in an activity like this before that deals with women's issues?
  - a. If yes, how long have you done so?
  - b. If no, would you like to do so again?
5. What do you think when you hear the phrase, *¡Cuidado! El Machismo Mata?*
6. What for you is the definition of violence against women?
7. How do you think this situation can be changed?

## APPENDIX C: QUESTIONS USED AS OUTLINE IN ORGANIZER INTERVIEWS

### A. In relation to each woman's life I asked:

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. How old are you?
3. How did you come to participate in the women's and feminist movement?
4. Do you consider yourself a feminist? Why or why not?
5. What do you think it means to be a feminist in Chile?

### B. In relation to the campaign, I asked:

1. How and when did you come to participate in the campaign?
2. What campaign activities have you participated in?
3. Can you tell me about some/any challenges you have noted?
4. Can you tell me about some/any accomplishments you have noted?
5. Looking back on the campaign, can you think of any lessons you have noted?  
If so, what are they?
6. Do you feel impacted by the campaign? If so, how so?
7. Was there a particular campaign phrase that stood out to you as especially strong or significant?
8. If you could choose the next focus for the Chilean Women's Network, what would it be? How would it be expressed?



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