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**GENDER, CITIZENSHIP AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN THE  
*POBLACIONES* OF SOUTHERN SANTIAGO, CHILE**

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology,  
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THIS THESIS is a study of the relationship between gender, citizenship and reproductive rights in the *poblaciones* of Santiago, both in relation to the Chilean State and in terms of the categories of international human rights law. At a time in which there has been a great deal of debate about women's international rights and new areas of rights directed at women have begun to be defined, this study seeks to draw attention to the need to consider how such rights operate in specific cultural contexts. In particular, it considers how dominant cultural discourses of gender are constructed and reproduced in the context of marginal urban communities in Santiago, Chile, and the constraints they may place on the conception and exercise of women's citizenship. The thesis sets out to show the ways in which these discourses are embedded in state institutions and reproduced in its practices. It describes the ways in which the law operates in a discursive way to allow or disallow interpretations of events and thereby conditions and delimits women's citizenship. Rather than depicting these dominant discourses as totalizing, the thesis aims to present a more complex picture in which women may on the one hand be seen to be complicit in their own subordination, but on the other to adopt alternative discourses, for example the new feminist discourse on human rights and the discourses emanating from NGOs which focus on concepts of freedom and autonomy. Women may be seen to reinterpret these discourses in the course of applying them to their own situations, accepting, rejecting and transforming them in the process. It draws on interviews with 89 women living in marginal urban communities, which investigate the exercise of citizenship and the variables affecting women's capacity to operationalise their rights. The data aims to show how rights discourses, including human rights can play a transformative role in the content and practice of citizenship. The extension of the concept of citizen to incorporate new areas of rights such as reproductive and sexual rights, creates the potential for women to use these conceptual tools to challenge traditional gender discourse that discriminate against them and inhibit the exercise of their citizenship. The thesis lays out the theoretical debates in relation to gender and citizenship, the state, the universalist-relativist debate in anthropology and the feminist discourse on human rights and argues in favour of a perspective that incorporates a gendered analysis of the cultural factors influencing the operation of laws.

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### *Note on Translation and Use of Names*

All translations from Spanish are mine, unless otherwise stated. Spanish terms and quotations will appear in Italics.

All longer quotations and some of the ethnographic descriptions will appear single-spaced. Square brackets [] are used to indicate my additions to quotations. The original Spanish of longer quotations will be found in the footnotes or, in two cases, in Appendix IV.

All names of persons have been changed in order to preserve the anonymity of informants.



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## Chapter 1

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### Introduction

#### 1.1 The aim of the study

This thesis is a study of the relationship between gender and citizenship in the *poblaciones*<sup>1</sup> of Santiago, both in relation to the Chilean State and in terms of the categories of international human rights law. It is an anthropological study which investigates the exercise of citizenship and the variables affecting women's capacity to operationalise their rights, with the aim of contributing to theoretical understandings of rights and citizenship and the importance of comprehending these concepts in the context of gender relations. At a time in which there has been a great deal of debate about women's international rights and new areas of rights directed at women have begun to be defined, this study seeks to draw attention to the need to consider how such rights operate in specific cultural contexts. In particular, it considers how dominant cultural discourses of gender are constructed and reproduced in the context of marginal urban communities in Santiago, Chile, and the constraints they may place on the conception and exercise of women's citizenship. The thesis sets out to show the ways in which these discourses are embedded in state institutions and reproduced in their practices. It describes the ways in which the law operates in a discursive way to allow or disallow interpretations of events and thereby conditions and delimits women's citizenship. Rather than depicting these dominant discourses as totalizing, the thesis aims to present a more complex picture in which women may on the one hand be seen to be complicit in their own subordination but on the other to adopt alternative discourses, for example the new feminist discourse on human rights and the discourses emanating from NGOs which focus on concepts of freedom and autonomy. Women may be seen to reinterpret these discourses in the course of applying them to their own situations, accepting, rejecting and transforming them in the process. The thesis is an original exercise in drawing together political theory, feminist legal theory and feminist anthropological theory and practice for the purposes of comprehending the articulation between international, national and local level processes.

## 1.2 Fieldwork and the collection of ethnographic data

### *A note on ethics and methodology*

The acquisition of knowledge of non-western cultures in a reflexive mode can help generate perspectives on human kind which are more balanced and humanitarian and which can overcome generalisations which border on racism.

(Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993:249)

Given the salience of the ongoing debate in anthropology about the ethics of ethnographic research, I felt it important to draw together the strands of thought on this subject which informed the methodological approach I adopted in the field and in the process of writing up the research.

Whatever claims the new ethnography might make about giving a participatory voice to informants, the relationship between researcher and researched generally remains unequal; anthropology inevitably 'uses' informants' lives and statements to produce texts (Strathern 1987; Stacey 1988). The way in which anthropology has sought to ameliorate the reality of the hierarchical relationship between researcher and researched has been to develop a reflexive, dialogic approach to ethnographic research (Bakhtin 1981; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Rosaldo 1989; Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993).<sup>2</sup> As a result, whatever the criticisms, it is possible to say now that anthropology is less concerned with 'show-casing' ethnography and more concerned with the development of the discipline as a form of 'political writing' which can allow more participation from the researched (Karim 1993:249). This enables ethnography to be a product of human interaction and negotiation, whilst not denying that the writer's 'voice' pervades and situates the analysis (Clifford and Marcus 1986:12). The aim being to create a relation with the Other, as in the search for a medium of expression that will offer mutual interpretation, visualised perhaps as a common text, or a dialogue (Strathern 1987:289); anthropologists and their reactions are part of the data, rather than being mysterious hidden hands. An objective, distancing rhetoric is therefore renounced

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<sup>1</sup> Marginal urban communities. See also *Mujeres pobladoras* in § 1.2 below.

<sup>2</sup> This approach identifies that cultures are not 'objects'; culture, and our views of 'it', are produced historically, and are actively contested (Clifford and Marcus 1986:18).

(Oakley 1981; R. Rosaldo 1984 and 1985; Clifford and Marcus 1986:12).<sup>3</sup> Clifford develops the concept of discourse to evoke the structure of a dialogue that retains the distinct multiple voices of its authors yet yields a product that they all to some extent share. For him, the pretensions of the old anthropology elided over the multiple authorship of fieldwork data and did not acknowledge the input either of the informant or of the anthropologist's particular experience (Clifford 1986). Nor did it interrogate issues of class and race, which influence both the relationships between the anthropologist and her informants and the interpretation of data (see, for instance, Reay 1996). My whiteness was interpreted in different ways in the field.<sup>4</sup> For some radical NGO members it registered at some level as a symbol of an imperialism which they resented and which was reflected in the use of the term *gringa* to address me. At the other extreme it meant that some women automatically perceived me as having a status which warranted respect, whiteness being identified by many as a marker of beauty and class. Over time interpretations of my whiteness changed. For some it proved a source of confusion because my whiteness was not perceived to be the same kind of whiteness as that of middle-class Chileans but neither was it considered to be the kind of foreign whiteness they associated with North Americans or Europeans. In the latter part of my research I was rarely referred to as *gringa*, or, if I was, then it was used in such a way as to indicate some degree of belonging: - the *gringa* of San Joaquín. For women that knew me well, my colour had become an irrelevance; indeed they considered it offensive or odd that anyone should refer to me as *gringa*. To some degree this has to do with being situated by what Gibson-Graham identifies as 'one of the most powerful and pervasive discourses in social life (that of the binary hierarchy of gender) in a shared subject position with others who are identified, or identify themselves, as women' (1994: 219). This identification is of course all the more powerful in the context of the feminist women's organisations that formed part of the subject matter of this study and which facilitated a collaborative approach. In this sense I was enabled as a woman to reflect with other women about shared interests, with a mutual respect for differences in

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<sup>3</sup> Several researchers have demonstrated that the research process can and should be interactive, collaborative, and co-operative (DuBois 1983; Duelli-Klein 1983; Cook 1983).

<sup>4</sup> As Ruth Frankenberg cogently argues, race is never an unmarked category and this applies as much to whiteness as to blackness. Racial naming is in part an effect of communities' own collective struggles to claim or rearticulate identity (Frankenberg 1993:12). Whiteness may therefore be seen as a relational category that varies temporally and spatially, one that is coconstructed with a range of other racial and cultural categories, with class and with gender. But, as Frankenberg highlights, 'whiteness' signals the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage (Ibid.: 237).

experience related to race and class but speaking in the same language: that of patriarchy.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, however much multiple authorship is acknowledged, using people's experiences to make statements about matters of anthropological interest in the end subordinates them to the uses of the discipline. But that does not mean it is a worthless exercise and that it can never be of any benefit to those researched. My own position is not as extreme as Strathern's, for instance, who asserts that in the process of conducting ethnographic research the social worlds of anthropologist and informant are so different that they have no interests in common to be served by this 'purportedly common product' (Strathern 1987:290). This was a view I struggled with constantly during the course of researching and writing this thesis. In my experience, the possibilities for collaboration vary during the different stages of the research. The process of conducting research may be split into four stages. The first involves elaborating a research proposal that is situated in the relevant academic literature. The second concerns undertaking the proposed field research. The third stage involves the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained in the field in the form of a written thesis and the fourth stage concerns what is then done with the written product of the research. The first and third stages are undertaken far from the field location and from the input of the informants we might want to see as participants. Stages two and four, however, depending upon how they are approached, do allow some scope to ameliorate this situation. In my own case, the women I worked with were involved in the planning and execution of the research, changing to some degree the contents of my original proposal, or requiring the investigation of additional matters alongside my own specific research interests. It was clear in this process that we did have social interests in common, but also differences stemming from the fact that our aims, whilst being related, were distinct. Stage three is perhaps the most complex in ethical terms. The process of interpretation in the course of writing is fraught with difficulty. MacKinnon (1983) points out that it is not so easy to claim authority either for the researcher or the

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<sup>5</sup> This term is used by participants and leaders in women's organisations to refer to what they describe as *relaciones de dominio*, relations of domination, of men over women, of women over children, of humankind over nature. The main source of theoretical understandings about patriarchy amongst women in the region I worked stem from the works of the feminist writer and activist Margarita Pisano, who taught the course on Patriarchy at the School for Women Leaders discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 and whose ideas lie behind the discourses of several radical NGOs, such as *Tierra Nuestra* (Our Earth). See for example Pisano 1996. My own view is that each culture has its own particular form of patriarchy, although I agree with Kandiyoti that the term is overused and undertheorized (Kandiyoti 1994: 104).

researched. What happens when there are differences of interpretation, or where there would be such differences if the informant were able to give voice to a different interpretation? This dilemma is evident for feminists who interpret women's lives as oppressive when women do not experience their lives in that way (Acker *et al.*, 1983; Duelli-Klein 1983; MacKinnon 1983). To resolve the dilemma, feminists often either dismiss some women's views as delusion or 'false consciousness' or accept any version women offer as reality. MacKinnon suggests that neither solution is sufficient. The first approach denies and devalues women's experience and the second approach slides into extreme relativism. The approach adopted in this thesis attempts to tackle this problem by locating women's views and the way in which they talk about their experiences in a contextualised process and presenting, as far as possible, the contradictions and inconsistencies within and between them.

Throughout the period of fieldwork I took the need to be non-interventionist and respectful extremely seriously and at the same time sought to balance this against a fear of being patronising by not saying what I thought or felt, as I would do with a friend at home. In the end, I usually respectfully expressed my views, on the basis that this is the way that one treats one's equals. As a result, interviews were more in the nature of conversations. I approached the task of interviewing with the experience of Ann Oakley in mind. For her, the use of prescribed interviewing practice is morally indefensible and, in most cases, the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical (to the extent that this is possible) and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship (Oakley 1981:41).<sup>6</sup> The aim being to translate the experiences of the researched into more abstract terms while still preserving their subjectivity (Acker *et al.*, 1983), whilst recognising that:

When talking about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused, and get things wrong. Yet they are revealing truths.

(Personal Narratives Group 1989)

The use of life histories seemed particularly important given the nature of the subject matter of the research, which interrogates the universality of women's rights. Life histories and testimonial data serve to counteract the hypodermic approach of some

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<sup>6</sup> In *Culture and Truth* (1989) R. Rosaldo similarly stresses the importance of insights which can emerge from bringing in more of the fieldworker's personal experience.

state-related theories and research, by emphasising the experiences and requirements of the individual: how the person copes with society rather than the other way around (Mandelbaum 1973:177; Bourdieu 1977; Ellen 1984; Geiger 1986:336). In addition, it avoids oppressive objectification of research participants. As Geiger notes, 'The personal contextualization of women's lives found in life histories makes them invaluable for deepening cross-cultural comparisons, preventing facile generalisations, and evaluating theories about women's experience or women's oppression,' (ibid: 338).<sup>7</sup>

Scheper-Hughes also emphasises that our accountability and answerability to the Other must never be compromised (Scheper-Hughes 1992:24). This applies not just to the stages of proposing, undertaking and writing up research, but also in relation to stage four: what happens to the text that results. This presents ongoing dilemmas partially alleviated by Scheper-Hughes' suggested pragmatic compromise to postmodernist critiques by calling for the practice of a 'good enough' ethnography – 'the anthropologist is an instrument of cultural translation that is necessarily flawed and biased,' but the answer is not to retreat from ethnography; rather, the answer is to produce an ethnography that is open-ended and that allows for multiple readings and alternative conclusions (Scheper-Hughes 1992:30). In this way our interpretations and conclusions should always be open to criticism and challenge (Holland & Ramazanoglu 1994:146).

### *Fieldwork*

A number of factors drew me towards Chile as the country in which to undertake this piece of research. Chile presents itself as the *jaguar*<sup>8</sup> of South American countries. It prides itself on its economic success and positions itself as one of the most modern powers in Latin America. In relation to women, it would boast that it has a national agency, SERNAM, which deals with women's issues ensuring that women's needs are taken care of in the transition to democracy. The reality of women's lives in Chile,

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<sup>7</sup> Nb. Stacey (1988) wonders 'whether the appearance of greater respect for and equality with research subjects in the ethnographic approach masks a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation' (1988:22). She believes that research relationships founded on intimacy and mutuality are fraught with problems of intervention and exploitation. For her, both research process and product can be unwitting interventions; the relationship between researcher and researched is inherently unequal, and we should acknowledge our predicaments even if we cannot ameliorate them.



however, bears little resemblance to this image. In terms of women's rights, Chile is extremely backward and, culturally, certain pervasive ideas about women's proper role continue to severely limit women's ability to exercise their citizenship. Two particular features of Chilean society lie behind this reality. The first is the strength of the Catholic Church, which in Chile occupies a particularly dominant cultural position. This is partly to do with the fact that the Church gained credibility during the dictatorship by setting up the *vicaria*.<sup>9</sup> The second is the strength of the state in Chile. From the time of Diego Portales,<sup>10</sup> onwards the state in Chile has been very powerful and efficient (Góngora 1986).<sup>11</sup> Governments have come and gone, but the state has never broken down. The close relationship between the Catholic Church and the state<sup>12</sup> means that between them they wield a great deal of influence, both politically and ideologically. This has a great impact on women's lives, particularly in the areas of reproduction and sexuality. At the same time, due to its experience of a violent and repressive dictatorship, the discourses of citizenship and rights have a lengthy history in Chile. The combination of these factors made Chile an interesting context in which to consider cultural questions relating to gender, citizenship and rights.

I arrived in Santiago in January 1995 and spent two years living there. My fieldwork proper commenced in July 1995 when I was first introduced to the women in the *Coordinación de la Mujer Pobladora 'Lilith' de San Joaquín* ('the Co-ordination') by one of the members of the NGO *Tierra Nuestra* (Our Earth). From that day on I began to participate in the activities of the Co-ordination and its four *talleres*, or groups: *Nehuen Domo*, *Millaray*, *Centro Cultural de la Mujer Maria Figueroa* and *Amankay*. I also attended the 1995-96 School for Women Leaders, run by *Tierra Nuestra*, which

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<sup>8</sup> The term jaguar is used in Latin America as a self-conscious translation of the Asian phenomenon of 'tiger' economies in the late eighties and early nineties denoting the rapid economic growth of countries like Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea during that period.

<sup>9</sup> A bureau to monitor and protest against human rights abuses.

<sup>10</sup> Diego Portales was the dominant figure in Chilean politics in the 1830s and one of the most influential figures in the founding of the Chilean state. He ended the civil wars and inspired the constitution of 1833, which with minor changes lasted until 1925.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Argentina and Venezuela, where the state has sometimes almost disappeared. The historical literature suggests that this strength and stability has only been achieved by a pattern of state-sponsored violence and coercion (see, for example, Joceyln-Holt Letelier 1997).

<sup>12</sup> There was a history of Church-state conflict until 1925, when a constitution was passed separating the Church from the state, which in fact enabled a closer relationship between the two. Prior to this politics has been defined by whether you were anti-clerical, and hence liberal or radical, or pro-church and hence a conservative. See Collier & Sater 1996 for a more detailed discussion of the history of the relationship between the Church and the state.

took place every Friday. I moved into the house of the *comadre*<sup>13</sup> of one of the women in the Co-ordination, where I lived with her and her 15-yr. old son until April 1996, when I moved into a small flat in the *comuna* (district) of Ñuñoa, adjacent to San Joaquín.

The research involved conducting an ethnographic study of women's groups in the *poblaciones* (marginal urban communities) of southern Santiago, including a study of the work of non-governmental organisations working in this locality, in order to understand what the issues outlined in §1.1 above mean for these women. The bulk of my data concerns the popular women's movement in southern Santiago, mainly in the district of San Joaquín. The four *talleres* of which the Co-ordination is comprised each number between twenty and thirty-five women, who meet up once a week, either in one of the women's houses or in the *junta de vecinos* (neighbourhood centre). Each group, or *taller*, sends representatives to meetings of the Co-ordination which take place about once a fortnight. The Co-ordination in San Joaquín is one of five Co-ordinations, which between them span the *comunas* (districts) of the southern sector of Santiago: San Joaquín, San Miguel, P.A. Cerda, Lo Espéjo, La Cisterna, San Ramón, La Granja, El Bosque and La Pintana (see Map 1). These five Co-ordinations were all connected with the NGO *Tierra Nuestra*, which provided support in the form of training at the School for Women Leaders, assistance as a resource of ideas and information at Co-ordination level meetings, as well as providing funding for activities and meetings.

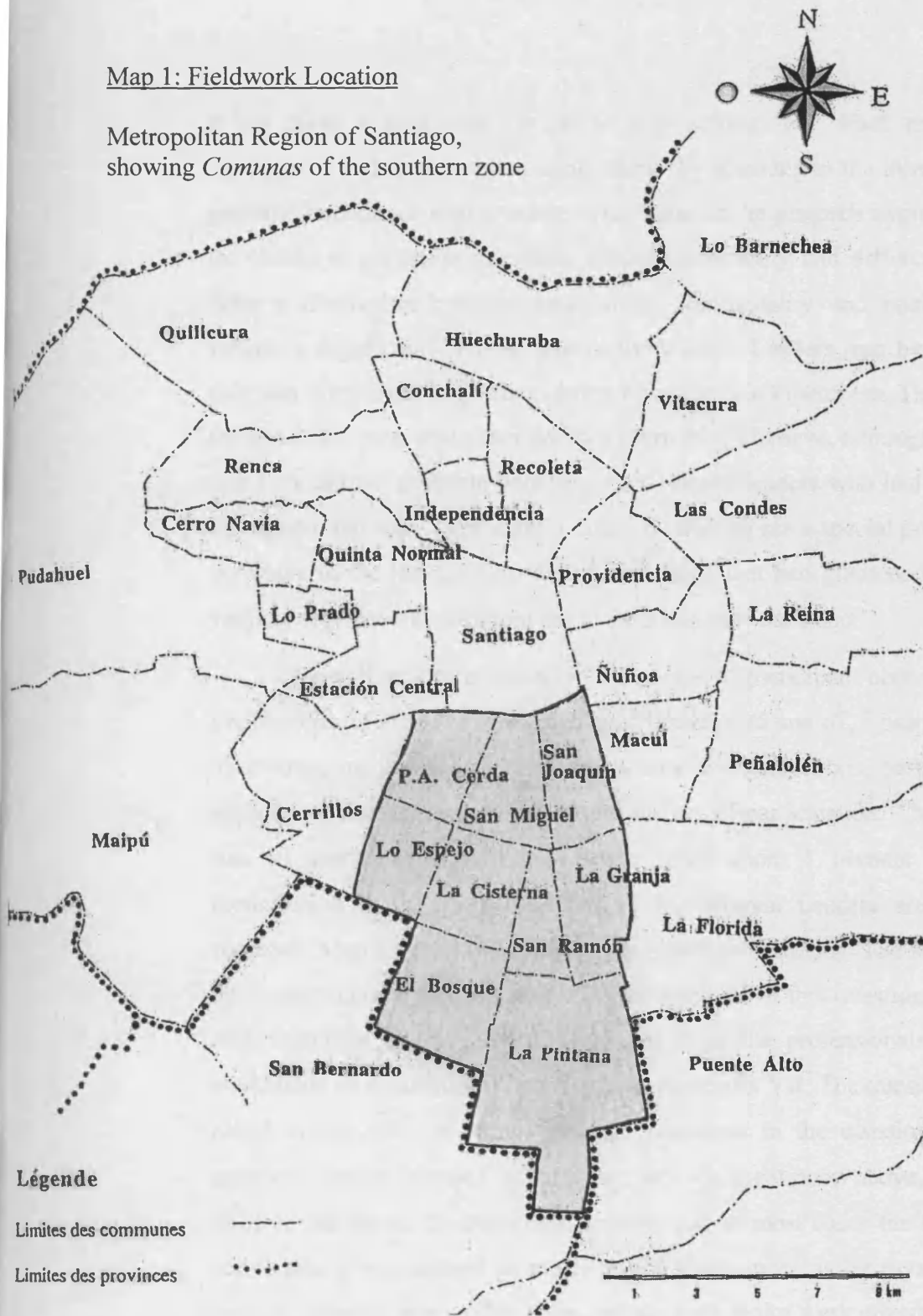
I attended meetings and activities at the level of the Co-ordination in San Joaquín and also took part in the meetings and activities of the *talleres* forming part of the Co-ordination, as an additional participant. I did not set out to become a Chilean *pobladora*, being of the view that such extreme anthropological ambitions are somewhat pretentious. In my own mind I was a white English woman, albeit with a relatively permeable identity. I was nonetheless surprised by the degree to which I was assimilated and the degree to which I felt myself identified with the women that I participated with, ate my meals with, socialised with, laughed with and interchanged thoughts and experiences with and now continue to share a friendship with.

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<sup>13</sup> Literally 'co-mother' the term refers to the person chosen to be godmother of a particular child. It is also used as a term of affection and solidarity between women. *Compadre* is used in a similar way amongst men.

Map 1: Fieldwork Location

Metropolitan Region of Santiago,  
showing *Comunas* of the southern zone



From: Territoire, Reproduction Sociale et Globalisation:  
Partitions territoriales et frontieres intra-urbaines a Santiago du Chili  
Masters Thesis. Geneva University, 324 P, Rodrigo Vidal Rojas (1977)

It has taken a long time for me to stop writing 'we' when referring to women's experiences and instead, other-ising 'them' by speaking in the third person plural. This personal experience also connects with some of the research hypotheses considered in the thesis, in particular questions around universality and difference and the need to draw a distinction between establishing commonality and positing universality in women's experiences. At the School for Women Leaders, run by *Tierra Nueva*, my role was questioned in political terms by some NGO members. This came to a head at the end of the year when they decided (correctly, I believe, although painful at the time) that I should not graduate with the other women leaders who had attended the School throughout the year. They compromised by making me a special presentation and I took my place in the line up with the other women that had graduated. I was perceived to varying degrees to be different but at the same time the same.

As well as data collected in the course of participant observation, I constructed life histories of eighty-nine women aged between 15 and 67,<sup>14</sup> based on semi-structured interviews, including leaders in the women's organisations, participants in women's groups and women who do not have a history of participation.<sup>15</sup> Most of these women live in San Joaquín, although some with whom I became acquainted through participation in the 1995-1996 School for Women Leaders are from neighbouring *comunas*. Map 2 shows the approximate interview locations. The interviews were based on a questionnaire (see Appendix I). The contents of this questionnaire were discussed with members of the Co-ordination and with the professionals who presented the workshops on sexuality in Case Study II, Appendix VII. The questions were not always asked in the order in which they are contained in the questionnaire, nor were the questions always phrased in the same way. As mentioned above, the interviews were more in the nature of long conversations, and in most cases the subject matter of the conversation was steered as much by the interviewee as by myself. Nevertheless, as well as covering many other areas, certain core topics were covered in sufficient detail in each of these conversations to enable some statistical analysis. My research assistant, Viviana Mallea, a *pobladora*, leader, and resident of San Joaquín was present at many of the interviews, also contributing to their conversational quality.

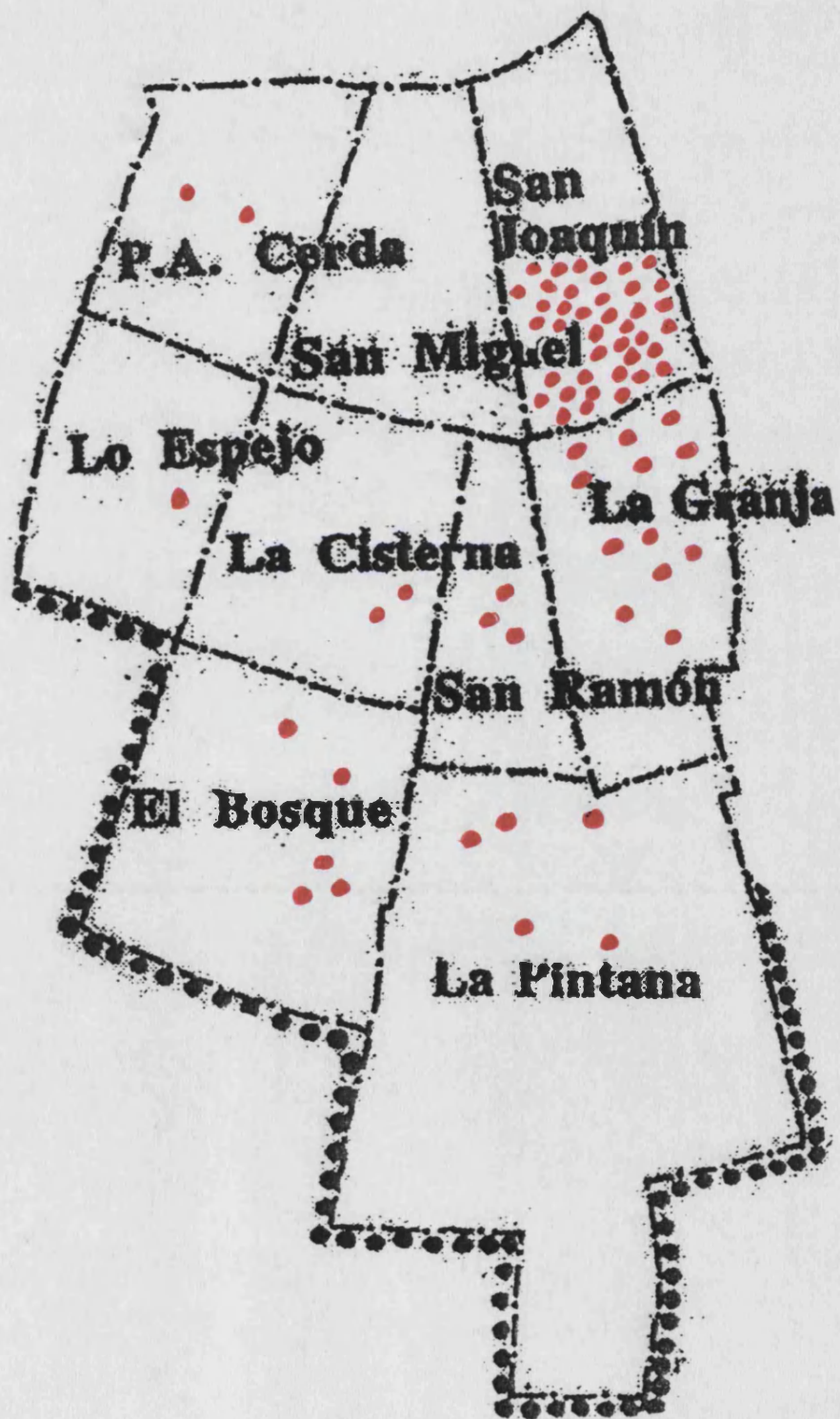
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<sup>14</sup> In the thesis I sometimes refer to 'younger' and 'older' women. 'Younger' refers to teenagers and women in their early twenties. 'Older' refers to women past childbearing age or approaching such time.

Map 2: Approximate Interview Locations

*Comunas* of the southern zone of Metropolitan Region of Santiago

Original Map from: Territoire, Reproduction Sociale et Globalisation:  
Partitions territoriales et frontieres intra-urbaines a Santiago du Chili  
Masters Thesis. Geneva University, 324 P, Rodrigo Vidal Rojas (1977)



At the end of the interview, the interviewee was asked for her evaluation of the conversation. The responses varied from those that experienced the conversation as a therapeutic process, to those who were pleased that someone had taken an interest in their lives. Some women leaders with a highly politicised view questioned the value of this kind of research and whether it was actually going to be of benefit to them in the long run or whether I was just going to take the data away with me and they would never see any results. For this latter reason, I am committed to doing what I can to get the material in this thesis published in some form in Chile.

As well as the data obtained from individual interviews and through participative observation, I also spent several weeks at the local tribunal in San Miguel, which deals with civil cases in the southern sector of Santiago, observing the way in which cases concerning domestic violence were dealt with. This material is presented in Chapter 4. The study comprises 107 cases. I was present while some of these cases were dealt with, and in others I obtained the case details by reading the file of documents pertaining to the case. In addition to my own data concerning abortion, deriving from the semi-structured interviews, I also make use in the same Chapter of data on abortion cases collated by Lidia Casas Becerra (1996) of the Open Forum for Health and Reproductive Rights.<sup>16</sup>

### *Mujeres pobladoras*

The women with whom I participated and those that I interviewed form part of the popular urban sectors of Santiago, historically marginalised and subordinated.<sup>17</sup> The terms *popular*, *pobladora*, *poblador* and *población* are used commonly in daily conversation. They have not been systematically defined in the Chilean literature, although some attempts have been made (e.g. Valdés 1982). Raczynski & Serrano describe *pobladoras/es* as referring to the urban population located in the periphery zones of the city, which for their inhabitants, and those from outside, form one whole

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<sup>16</sup> I also participated in the meetings and activities of this organisation.

<sup>17</sup> I had originally hoped to include data on men as well as women. However, whilst participating in women's groups gave me access to many women, my access to men was limited, with some exceptions, to more superficial relationships. I was also concerned that, whilst I could have made greater efforts to build relationships with men, this may have compromised my position in relation to some of the women I was working with. Also, in many cases it would have been difficult to conduct interviews with men once I had begun participating with these groups as it marked me in some men's eyes as feminist and therefore anti-men.

(1986:13). These poorer *comunas*, or districts, are divided up into *poblaciones*. Most of the women *pobladoras* I interviewed live in San Joaquín (pop. 14.017),<sup>18</sup> a peripheral *comuna*, though located relatively close to the centre of Santiago. It is basically residential, although a number of factories are located here. Access to the centre of town is by bus along the busy Vicuña Mackenna highway; the journey takes about half an hour depending on the traffic.<sup>19</sup>

Some *poblaciones* came into being as the result of spontaneous population of the region, such as *tomas de terreno* (land take-overs) and others were set up with state support. Elena, 49, a leader in a women's organisation, describes how her *población* in San Joaquín came into being:

My parents were both from the North, my mother was from Antofagasta, from a nitrate camp. My father was from Iquique and they both came with their families to Santiago when the nitrate industry collapsed. The north americans left because there was no longer any need to extract nitrates as synthetic nitrates had been invented and the extraction sites were abandoned, the work came to an end, so the government recruited all those people. They gave them the money to come to Santiago.<sup>20</sup> That was the crisis that occurred in Chile in the 1930s, it was a great economic crisis, and so they came to Santiago amongst those groups of nitrate workers. My father met my mother and they got married and after a year I was born. When I was born my father was employed in the telegraph business and they offered him a job in the South and so we all went to the South and travelled. It lasted a short time, until I was 5, and then my mother and I came to Santiago because the climate in the south made my mother ill. My father came to fetch my mother, but she didn't want to go with him, so he looked for another woman there. He started another family there and we stayed here in Santiago with my aunts and uncles. We started out at my aunt's house in Gran Avenida and my other aunt, who lived here in La Legua (San Joaquín) said to my mother: 'Look, you have two children so you have to think that one day you will have to live on your own and have your own home. Where I live in La Legua there is a Housing Committee and you should go and put your name down to get a house with your children'. And so she put my mother's name down and she started going to the meetings every Sunday, and one day she said: 'Now we have to go to your aunt in La Legua, because one of these days we are going to take the street by night'. So she took us to my aunt's and we stayed until one day she said: 'Right, now we must go and take the street'. It was dark, in the middle of the night and we all had to go with a mattress and a blanket, that is how we all came and took over the street, all the women with children, with the men, there were many of us, and the curate helped us, Father Marotto, he helped too. From then on we began to live in the street, and everyone came to see us, the authorities, the journalists and they began to mobilise until they handed over those sites to us, and we all cooperated together to build the *población*, to build these houses. As we arrived together in this way, we have a shared history, we've known each other since we were children, so we see ourselves as family, for example when someone dies we pass around a list and help the person with money, and the neighbour comes, for example, and brings some sugar, another some coffee and we go to the wake and afterwards we all go to the funeral together in a bus, it's like that. For example, we went to a wedding here and all the neighbours decorated the wedding car, all helping to put ribbons and flowers on it, giving their opinions, whatever happens we help each other out. Those that arrive from elsewhere envy the sharedness, the people feel supported by everyone, everyone suffers with everyone else.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 1992 Census.

<sup>19</sup> Shortly after I left at the beginning of 1997 a new metro line was extended to San Joaquín.

<sup>20</sup> As a poverty relief measure the government hired these people on public works programmes in Santiago.

<sup>21</sup> Original Spanish text contained in Appendix V.

For the most part the residents of the *poblaciones* of San Joaquín and the other *comunas* of the southern zone are or have been employed in the lower levels of the occupational structure. Men typically work as bus or taxi drivers, as construction workers or builders, or in factories (see Table in Appendix IV). Women *pobladoras* are typically *dueñas de casa* (housewives), and describe themselves as such, without formal employment, although many do in fact undertake occasional jobs or piecework, for instance for the garment industry. The lack of change in the household division of labour is linked to class. Whilst the dominant gender role for women is the image of the mother at home (see Chapter 3), this is more emphasised in poorer sectors<sup>22</sup> where this image defines that the woman should only concern herself with the house, the children and with attending to her husband and that she should always be at home (*que no sea salidora*, that she should not make a habit of going out). For wealthier women, provided the house is taken care of, through the delegation of household work to a domestic worker, it is more accepted that women undertake salaried work outside the home (cf. Raczynski & Serrano 1986:47). A significant number of *pobladoras* do nevertheless have jobs as domestic servants, usually in other wealthier *comunas*, or as factory workers,<sup>23</sup> but many women report that their husbands will not allow them to work (See Appendix IV for employment details). Increasingly, the traditional division of labour is coming under pressure as a result of the changes brought about, in part, by the implementation of neoliberal-style economic policies. Whilst the state has continued to promote a discourse emphasising women's maternal role (see Chapter 3), the increase in unemployment of male heads of houses and the decline in wages have placed increasing pressure on households affecting the rate of participation by other members of domestic groups (González de la Rocha 1995:17). This is evidenced by the gradual increase in women's participation in the workforce and conflict around this issue in many homes. In many cases negotiation over the use of resources, and the impact this has on the

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<sup>22</sup> I refer to the *comunas* of the southern zone of Santiago as 'poorer' because this is how they are for the most part designated by my informants. In fact, the 1992 Census categorises San Joaquín as a sector which is not poor, which my informants see as a strategy to avoid allocating resources to the sector that it would otherwise have to. As the Census data is not reliable in this respect I have used the word 'poorer' to describe those women who live in households whose monthly incomes are less than CH\$350.000 (£583), the average household income amongst the women interviewed was CH\$115.000 (£192).

<sup>23</sup> In the Metropolitan Region of Santiago as a whole, of the 681.005 women that are economically active, 145.865 are employed as domestic workers in private homes and 124.775 are employed in the manufacturing industry (1992 Census).



fulfilment of gender roles, turns into confrontation.<sup>24</sup> As well as the gradual pressure to increase the number of workers per household, resulting in women taking on short-term work for meagre pay, the households of urban *poblaciones* are characterised by the intensification of non-remunerated domestic work and the growing importance of extended-family households as a strategy for saving on housing costs (cf. González de la Rocha 1995:21). Thus, having shouldered much of the social cost of the long years of dictatorship, women are now faced with the main burden of the social cost of neo-liberal style policies. There has also been an increase in female-headed households.

One of the first exercises that women are encouraged to do in activities organised by the Co-ordinations is to describe what activities they do and what men do. The responses help to give an idea of male and female roles. For instance, in response to the question ‘what do women do?’ answers include: - do *el aseo* (the housework), iron, look after the children, attend our husbands, prepare meals, make ourselves pretty for our partner, go to meetings at school, work in the market to help the household, participate in *talleres*. The same women respond to the question ‘what do men do?’ with the answers: - they work outside the home, they are heads of household, they are sexually active, they like to be served, they like to drink and have a good time, they play football, they are lazy, they leave women to do everything in the house, they are *machistas*.<sup>25</sup> Gloria (45) sums up the basis of the division of labour: ‘he provides the necessary money to sustain the household, which is what I expect, and I take care of the household and attend him, which is what he expects.’ Women continue to identify primarily with the family, whereas men are more closely identified with their economic role. Men are seen as workers with family responsibilities, while women view themselves and are viewed as wives and mothers with economic responsibilities (Safa 1995:48). This reflects the strength of the public-private split which dates back to the Spanish colonial *casa/calle* distinction, fostered by Catholicism, whereby women were relegated to the home and men to the street as a way of maintaining family honour and female virginity (Ibid.: 45). However, the fact that women also include amongst their activities participation in women’s groups, indicates the importance of the intermediary

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<sup>24</sup> The increase in domestic violence and conflict over individual and collective interests as a consequence of the increased tensions generated by the use and control of income have been documented in relation to poor urban households in other Latin American countries. See González de la Rocha 1995: 24.

<sup>25</sup> Responses to questions put at the first session of the School for Women Leaders run by Women Leaders in San Joaquín in 1996.

community level at the intersection of the public and private, which is further investigated in Chapter 5.

Most women living in the *poblaciones* identify themselves as *pobladoras*<sup>26</sup> and those that are leaders or have a long history of participation in women's groups will say that this term indicates their double discrimination in terms of gender and class. They do not generally refer to the issue of race, although this too is a factor, but not one that forms as much of a part of the discourse of NGOs and women's organisations as those of gender and class. There is a strong correlation between race and class; *pobladoras/es* generally being darker skinned, while the residents of the *comunas* in the centre and east of Santiago are predominantly wealthier and whiter.<sup>27</sup> *Negra* is a common affectionate nickname, which men apply to their wives in the *poblaciones*, and women *pobladoras* similarly often call their husbands *El Negro*. At the same time fair skin is generally considered beautiful, a marker of higher class.<sup>28</sup>

Many of the *poblaciones* in the southern zone originated in a *toma de terreno* and in many cases, whilst the occupants own their houses, the issue of title to the land remains unresolved. Most of the women interviewed live in houses, usually on one level, made of solid material, adobe or brick combined with wood. The floors are wooden and cleaned with wax. A few live in houses made just of wood called *mediagua* and some live in purpose-built flats. All the interviewees had running water, and most had hot water, although this was used very sparingly. Cooking and heating was run using gas bottles. Houses typically incorporate a living room, kitchen bathroom and one or two bedrooms. Sometimes extra rooms are built on to the back of the house to provide room for a son or daughter and their spouse and children during the early years of marriage. The houses are arranged along *pasajes*,<sup>29</sup> passages, with a row of houses facing each other along each side, usually with a small porch and railing at the front. In general the houses are equipped with basic furniture: a gas cooker, refrigerator, sofa, table and chairs, iron, radio or radio cassette, most have a television and a paraffin heater, just over half had a *califont* water heater and a similar number have a telephone,

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<sup>26</sup> Some women reject this label, namely those who consider themselves of *la clase media baja*, the lower middle class.

<sup>27</sup> The figures for residents declaring Indian ethnicity in the marginal *comunas* of San Joaquín, La Granja and La Pintana are, respectively, 11%, 14% and 15% as compared with 7% and 5 % in the wealthier *comunas* of Las Condes and Lo Barnechea (1992 Census).

<sup>28</sup> Indeed, one woman that I interviewed said that her mother used to put a brown bag over her head when she was a baby because she had dark skin and was too Indian looking.

<sup>29</sup> During my stay in San Joaquín many of these passages were in the course of being paved.

a few have washing-machines and/or cable television, some had an *enceradora* (which saves much time and energy in waxing and polishing the wooden floors) and a very small minority owned a car. The average household income is CH\$ 115,000 (£192.00) per month,<sup>30</sup> whilst the average household size was four.

In terms of food, breakfast usually consists of a cup of instant coffee or tea, usually taken black, as milk is a luxury, with sugar and maybe some toasted bread. The main meal of the day is eaten at midday, typically a *cazuela* stew with chicken, potatoes and *zapallo*, squash and some salad. If the woman's husband works too far away to be able to come home for lunch, she will save a portion for him to eat in the evening. *Onces*, literally Elevenses, is served early evening at about 6pm and consists of tea with bread, perhaps with some cheese, tomato dressed with oil and, occasionally, some mashed *palta*, avocado. Apart from preparing food, taking care of the children and attending to their husbands, women keep their houses immaculately clean, which requires daily attention. Women have little leisure time and few recreational activities. The *dueña de casa* is characterised as being *encerrada*, enclosed in her house. Women who have recently begun to participate in women's groups will describe their lives in this way and women leaders will say that one of their main objectives is to get women out of their houses.

The predominant religion in this area, as in most of Chile, is Catholic. In San Joaquín, for instance, out of the population over 14 years of age of 85,052, 29,623 declare themselves Catholic, 3,524 Evangelical, 316 Protestant and 3,568 atheist or indifferent.<sup>31</sup>

### 1.3 Research hypotheses and thesis structure

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of the international discourse on women's rights on the lives of women *pobladoras* in Santiago. As well as considering the informal channels through which women acquire knowledge of these rights and apply them to their own situations, the thesis also examines the degree to which this

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<sup>30</sup> This figure is based on the monthly income figures obtained from the sample of 89 women interviewed. In some cases the income may have been slightly higher than reported as the woman was unsure exactly how much her husband earned. The household income also fluctuates as men's jobs are rarely stable and the women may contribute earnings from temporary short-term jobs. These are so common that they have a special name: *pololos* (literally boyfriends). £ = approximately 600 Chilean pesos at the time of fieldwork.

<sup>31</sup> 1992 Census.

discourse has impacted on Chilean legislation and what difference this has made to women's lives. The chosen analytic category is gender, although the data is predominantly about women. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the term 'woman' is problematic in that it fails to take account of differences in terms of race, class and sexuality. Secondly, focusing on 'women' can promote the false idea that women can just be 'added in' without the need for fundamental transformation of disciplines. Thirdly, the use of the terms 'gender' demonstrates the interconnectedness of relations between men and women (Waylen 1996:6). The data addresses several questions relevant to debates concerning the exercise of women's citizenship including: What are the dominant discourses concerning gender and rights in Chile and how are relationships between individuals and the state differentiated by gender, class and race? In what ways are women different kinds of political subjects from men? To what extent do laws and state policies relating to reproduction, such as those concerning birth control, abortion, domestic violence, etc. operate to position the women in the *poblaciones* in relation to the state encoding a specific set of gender norms and meanings (cf. Fraser 1985)? What strategies have women in the *poblaciones* developed to resist such constructions and to constitute themselves on their own terms? How is the public/private distinction constructed in the *poblaciones*? How does this relate to ideas about gender-differentiated citizenship? How do gender relations at the private level affect women's ability to operationalise their rights? What kinds of power dynamics operate in family relationships at the domestic level? How do these questions relate to gender and human rights law? The data aims to contribute to the debate in anthropology as to whether it is possible to have universal laws and to feminist legal theory by arguing that, whilst it is possible to maintain a unified perspective at the level of theory, the operation of rights in practice needs to be understood in terms of women's situated experience.

The thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 discusses the theories to which this thesis is addressed, and sets out the theoretical basis of the field research. Chapter 3 presents and discusses cultural discourses in relation to gender and rights which form a basis for the understanding of gender relations and practices depicted in the later empirical chapters. Chapter 4 examines the role of the state as a powerful source of gender discourse and looks at the way in which the state positions women through its policies and laws and examines in detail the content and operation of two areas of law concerning domestic violence and abortion. Chapter 5 focuses on women's participation in local women's organisations, arguing in favour of an expanded notion of political

participation and showing how such participation engenders social transformation. Chapter 6 concerns women's reproductive histories. Focusing on women's experiences and perceptions it shows the power of dominant discourse, but also shows how women actively shape their lives according to their own values and strategic tools acquired through participation in the women's movement. Chapter 7, which concerns women's sexual lives, shows the way in which women are exposed to alternative discourses and how these competing discourses engender change. Cases studies concerning workshops on reproductive and sexual rights are used to illustrate this process. Chapter 8 draws together some of the theoretical issues raised in Chapter 2 and interwoven throughout the thesis.

## *Chapter 2*

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### **Theoretical Perspectives**

Conceptual revision is not...a sufficient condition of political change, but it is indispensable to significant political change. It is part of that process by which events once considered mere facts come to be seen as the outcomes of a political process...conceptual revision is involved in any political strategy that aims at restructuring social life in modest or in radical ways.

(Pateman 1985:172)

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The central concept under scrutiny in this thesis is that of citizenship, at the local, national and international levels. The starting point in theoretical terms is Carole Pateman's identification of citizenship as being differentiated by gender, class and race (Pateman 1985; 1988). Subsequently, a number of feminist writers have taken up the challenge to critique and reformulate many related categories of thought, which had previously been treated as ungendered. Some of this work has been directed towards rethinking the basis on which we understand the state and the ways in which individuals are shaped by and shape its operations. The category of rights has been and continues to be interrogated and contested at all levels and the concept of citizenship has undergone extensive revision, opening up new questions and theoretical challenges. This chapter seeks to review some of the major contributions to thought in these areas which are of relevance to this thesis and to suggest a framework for an anthropological re-working of these categories.

#### **2.2 Theoretical perspectives on the state and the construction of citizenship**

Citizenship is one of the main ways in which the relationship between the individual and the state has been theorized. Today the concept has developed new currency in social and political theory with the ascendancy of liberal democracy and the prominence given to questions relating to equality, rights and good governance. However, the dominant framework for approaching questions of citizenship is clearly

inadequate to address the new challenges that are being presented. Carole Pateman was one of the first writers to draw attention to the weaknesses of conventional theory of citizenship. By analyzing the different way in which men and women are incorporated into citizenship, her work revealed the differentiated nature of state/citizen relations. The failure of political theorists to address the issue of differentiation is not surprising given that the 'individual' in liberal and liberal democratic theory has generally been regarded as male, and usually white; female motivations having been deemed unsuitable qualifications for political life. But the problem goes much further than this and its consequences are far-reaching. Following the argument about the differentiated nature of citizenship through to some of its logical conclusions, Pateman's work reveals that the whole theoretical justification for political obligation upon which the liberal democratic state is said to rest, namely the liberal social contract, is found to be lacking. The liberal conception of equality of protection, so central to contract theory, also implies that all sections of the population are equally protected from each other. This, Pateman (1989) argues, has never been so in the relationship between the sexes. In fact, historically, the formation of the state depended not so much on a fictitious contract between men who govern and men who do not, but more crucially on the sexual division of labour and the relegation of women to a private, domestic and devalued sphere.

Other writers such as Susan Okin (1992), Anne Phillips (1993), Nira Yuval-Davis (1997a), Ursula Vogel (1991) and Anna Yeatman (1984), amongst others, have also challenged this basic premise of liberal theory that separated the public and private spheres. Revisiting the work of the contract theorists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they have catalogued the way in which most of the political theory which underlies Western liberal democratic theory has its roots in the separation of the public and the private. They show that women's exclusion from the public sphere was not incidental, but part and parcel of the entitlement of men, not only as individuals but also as 'representatives of a family (i.e. a group of non-citizens)' (Vogel 1991:59). Thus, political theory, while appearing gender neutral, by maintaining a division between private and public political life as central to liberal democracy, maintains a division between men and women, where only men can be abstract individuals (Pateman 1989). Women therefore pose an extremely awkward problem for social and political

scientists: the political is defined as masculine in a very profound sense which makes it difficult to incorporate women on the same terms as men and excludes many of the activities that women are involved in as not political. Most current definitions of civil society are derived from these earlier conceptualisations, locating it between the state, on the one hand, and family on the other. But this is problematic: in reality personal and family life are affected by state policies and regulated by the state through legislation. This is not to say that there should be no distinction between the personal and political dimensions of social engagement, but rather that the two should be seen as integrally connected, positioning women and men differently with respect to political and economic activity. Inequalities in political representation or at the workplace are intricately tied to inequalities in the family or household (Tripp 1994:151). As well as calling for a gendered analysis of the state and a re-working of the category 'citizenship', the work of feminist theorists challenges the very foundations of the theoretical bases of liberal democracy.

The analysis of the state has not been a priority for feminist academics. Studies have tended to focus either on the macro or the micro with little in between, or they have tended to depict women as the objects of state policy, seeing the state as something external which affects women's lives but over which women have little control (Waylen 1996:16). The literature on women and the state in the third world has tended to follow a similar path, tending to see the state either as essentially good, a modernising force that will bring benefits to women, or as essentially bad, basically representing men's interests to the detriment of women (Kandiyoti 1991; Waylen 1996).

Radical feminists such as Catherine Mackinnon have challenged liberal state theory. For Mackinnon the modern liberal state is inherently patriarchal. She argues powerfully that the state and its major institution, the legal system, are a direct expression of men's interests and, in terms of citizenship, that 'Existing society's image of a person never has represented or encompassed what we, as women, with women's experience, either have had access to or aspire to' (Mackinnon 1987:21). The organisation of the state both nationally and internationally privileges male voices and concerns. MacKinnon's analysis undermines the classic presentation of the liberal state as an impartial 'umpire' and calls for a remedy for three centuries of liberal accommodation, in state theory, to patriarchy.



Apart from the liberal conception of the state, critiqued by MacKinnon, the two other main conventional theoretical perspectives on the state are: firstly, the Marxist view which identifies the state with the 'ruling class' and stresses its oppressive nature as a mechanism for controlling other classes. And secondly, the approach developed by Neo-Marxist writers, such as Poulantzas (1973, 1975), which has been adopted by several feminist writers and which provides a more sophisticated basis for considering state/citizen relations. This view sees the state as relatively autonomous from the dominant classes, though sharing some of their goals. The dominant classes are depicted as continually fragmented into 'class fractions' because of competition and differences of short-term interest, the role of the state being to maintain a centralised political authority and to coordinate the different interests and activities of class fractions (Moore 1988:134).

This approach moves away from the tendency to see the state as essentially good or bad, and from the idea of the state as a unitary structure. Instead it is conceived as a differentiated set of institutions, social policies, laws and discourses which are the product of a particular historical, political and cultural conjuncture and which are not reducible to 'the state'. This does not mean that we should lose sight of the state as a separate sphere, 'a body of institutions which are centrally organised around the intentionality of control with a given apparatus of enforcement at its command or basis' (Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1989:6; Yuval-Davis 1997a:13). While ideological production, such as education and the media, can lie both inside and outside the state, the exercise of individual and collective rights continues to be tied to the state.<sup>26</sup> Thus, state practices construct and legitimate gender divisions and gendered identities are in part constructed by the law and public discourses that emanate from the state (Showstack-Sassoon 1987; Soysal 1994; Yuval-Davis 1997a). As Moore points out, this approach 'opens the way to analysing the state as constitutive of relations of power rather than solely relations of production.' As such, it is 'potentially liberating for those who wish to study the relationship to the state of social divisions other than those based on economic class', (Moore 1988:150). The approach suggests ways in which to understand and analyse how gender is assigned and deeply embedded through state practices and forms (see Chapters 3 and 4). Like Pateman and MacKinnon, she observes that women and men have a different relationship to the state. State structures and policies have a differential effect on women and men and

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<sup>26</sup> Yuval-Davis citing Soysal (1994).

women and men have unequal influence on state actions. Women are therefore 'different sorts of political subjects', (Ibid.:150).

Foucault's concept of governmentality similarly focuses on the mechanisms through which social authorities seek to administer the lives of individuals and social groups (Foucault 1991). Nancy Fraser's study of welfare provision in the U.S. is a case in point. Developing Foucault's analysis of need as a political instrument and Habermas's insights in relation to the interpretive function of institutions and the increasingly clientelist nature of welfare state capitalism, Fraser describes the way in which welfare programmes have served to institutionalise the 'feminisation of poverty' in the U.S. (Fraser 1989). These programmes are officially gender-neutral, but in practice they are unmistakably gendered. The two-tiered system which Fraser describes operates to 'encode' a specific set of gender norms and meanings, thus reinforcing assumptions concerning the sexual division of labour, in particular that society is divided between the female sphere of home and the male sphere of work outside the home. The U.S. welfare system thereby defines women's needs and positions them as subjects in a particular way. As well as in relation to social welfare, in every society laws such as those relating to the family, inheritance, taxation, homosexuality, birth control, abortion, prostitution, sexual assault, domestic violence, pornography etc. operate in a similar way to position subjects in relation to the state.

Fraser also draws attention to the soldiering aspect of citizenship; the conception of the citizen as the defender of the polity and of those who allegedly cannot protect themselves - women, children, the elderly. Pateman identified the fact that our political status as citizens is premised on arrangements of sexual inequality: men having 'earned' their citizenship as soldiers and workers, women having 'earned' their citizenship as mothers and educators of their children (cf. also Steinhilber 1983). Fraser's data shows that this premise holds true in the United States today, confirming the gender subtext of the citizen role (see also Chinkin 1993). The view of women as in need of men's protection,

underlies access not just to the means of destruction, but also [to] the means of production - witness all the 'protective' legislation that has surrounded women's access to the workplace - and [to] the means of reproduction [-witness] women's status as sexual partners and wives.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Fraser 1989:126, citing Carole Pateman, 'The Personal and the Political: Can Citizenship be Democratic?' (Lecture 3 of her 'Women and Democratic Citizenship' series), The Jefferson Memorial

Fraser concludes that the citizen role in male-dominated, classical capitalism is therefore a manifestly masculine role. The concept of citizenship is not just a political concept, it is a 'gender-political' concept (Fraser 1989:128).

Manicom (1992) highlights similar processes at work in the context of colonial Africa, focusing in particular on 'the Native' as a category of rule, an apparently neutral regulatory procedure that in fact inscribed gender and authorised a particular social form. As she sees it, the state, in its policy and legislation, 'regulates, not men or women as concrete historical subjects but rather the gender categories of "women" and "men" as defined and constructed within the particular discourses and practices of the ruling' (1992:456). Indeed she goes further to suggest that 'the state' in South African history should be understood not merely in terms of state policy that reflects patriarchal and racist ideology, but rather as organised by gender (and race) difference and subordination in its very formation (Manicom 1992:457).

Taking Fraser's work one stage further involves developing Poulantzas'(1973, 1975) theoretical perspective, which sees the state as relatively autonomous of the dominant classes and co-ordinating the different interests of class fractions, to seeing the state as a site of struggle. Waylen, for example, sees the state as 'not lying outside of society and social processes, but having, on the one hand, a degree of autonomy from these which varies under particular circumstances, and on the other, being permeated by them' (1996:16). While state practices in part construct gender divisions and identities, the relationship between the state and gender relations is not fixed and immutable. Waylen's approach enables us to conceive of spaces for manoeuvre in which individuals and groups can take an active role in the process of the construction of gender identities and of citizenship (Ibid.17). Operating within these spaces women's and men's multiple activities have a bottom up effect on gender, politics and economics, disrupting state constructions and cultural stereotypes (cf. Carroll 1989; Peterson 1996). Women's relationship to the state can in this way be seen as a site of contestation.

This begins to open up a theoretical basis for a re-working of the category of citizenship. Adopting the findings of the initial feminist theoretical works on the subject, the usefulness of a concept originally predicated on the very exclusion of women

may have seemed questionable. More recent studies, however, point the way to the development of citizenship as a broader concept with strategic importance, both intellectually, providing a platform for interdisciplinary research on the problems of social membership in advanced societies (Roche 1992:2; Turner 1993:ix; Lister 1997a:7), and politically, as a tool for mobilisation and for negotiating rights. Focusing on citizenship as a strategic concept also involves an emphasis on human agency, 'going beyond the conceptions of citizenship of both the liberal and the civic republican traditions while building on their respective strengths' (Mouffe 1992:4, cited by Lister 1997b:34)).

Citizenship has re-emerged as a dominant concept due to a number of international developments, such as the reshaping of national boundaries; growing pressures in some nation-states for regional autonomy; and the implications for all nation-states of the forces of 'globalisation', as well as the implications for citizenship rights and obligations of the growing movement across national borders of migrants and asylum-seekers, the increasingly multi-ethnic nature of many societies and the claims of indigenous peoples (Lister 1997a:1). While the notion of citizenship cannot encapsulate adequately all the dimensions of control and negotiations which take place in different areas of social life, it can throw light on some of the major issues which are involved in the complex relationships between individuals, collectivities and the state, and the ways gender relations (as well as other social divisions) affect and are affected by them (Yuval-Davis 1997a: 6). In Latin American countries, many of which have had the experience of violent and repressive dictatorships, the discourses of citizenship and rights have a lengthy history. In Chile, they have been central to the struggle for democracy and, for the women with whom I worked, 'rights' and especially 'human rights' are a part of everyday ethnographic life, though not necessarily something they apply to themselves. It is my intention in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to show how the use of these concepts is changing, and to show how the acquisition of new ideas about rights and autonomy can make a difference to women's lives. In a context like Chile, where there has been much attention focused on the politics of adjustment and liberalisation and comparatively little attention on the transformations at the societal level,<sup>28</sup> ideas about citizenship are of immediate strategic use, providing a basis

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<sup>28</sup> Jelin & Hershberg, discussing Latin America more generally, make the point that the previous decade's preoccupation with issues of institution building came at the expense of considerations of the composition and the role of collective actors in democratic societies, particularly those collective actors representing the so-called popular sectors (1996:2).

for individuals to be able to negotiate and operationalise their rights. As Jelin and Hershberg identify, democratisation involves changes:

not only in society but also in political institutions: It requires the emergence of new sets of rules governing the distribution of power, respect for individual rights, and recognition of social actors. People have to adopt beliefs and practices embedded in the notion of democracy and, at the same time, must learn how to act within the new institutional framework. For their part, political leaders and dominant classes have to acknowledge the rights and identities of diverse social actors. The fundamental challenge during the posttransition period is to combine formal institutional changes with the expansion of democratic practices and to create a *culture of citizenship* encompassing individual and collective actors.

(Jelin & Hershberg 1996:2 (my emphasis) )

Thus the concept of citizenship is of particular strategic use in the process of assessing the implications of the construction of democracy at the level of society, especially when addressing the issue of political participation and the provision of rights and their implementation in practice.<sup>29</sup> Latin American women in particular are attempting to establish a new relationship to the state, one based not on subordination, control, and dependency but on rights, autonomy, and equality (Valdés & Weinstein 1989; Icken Safa 1995); in effect constructing a new notion of citizenship.

The meaning of citizenship has never been univocal; there are a number of historical traditions in this respect, which I do not propose to discuss here.<sup>30</sup> T.H. Marshall (1950) in his classic text on citizenship, defined citizenship as ‘a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community’ (1950:14), which includes civil, political and social rights and obligations. As Yuval-Davis points out, by formally linking citizenship to membership in a community rather than to a state, as liberal definitions of citizenship do, Marshall’s definition ‘enables us analytically to discuss citizenship as a multi-tiered construct....It also enables us to raise the question of the relationship between “the community” and the state and how this affects people’s citizenship.’ (Yuval-Davis 1997a: 5). This represents a definite shift from a strict

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<sup>29</sup> Carole Pateman’s work also draws attention to the fact that democracy does not necessarily, or even usually, imply participation. She formulates the ideal of a participatory democracy to draw this distinction (Pateman 1988; 1989).

<sup>30</sup> For a detailed discussion of these traditions see Andrews (1990); van Steenberg (1994); Lister (1997a).

political definition of a citizen – with an emphasis on his or her relationship with the state – to a broader definition, which implies a greater emphasis on the relationship of the citizen with society as a whole. It is important therefore to consider people's participation in civil society, and not only their dealings with state institutions, bearing in mind that 'communities' and collectivities are not natural units, but ideological and material constructions, whose boundaries, structures and norms are the result of constant processes of struggles and negotiations (Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1992). In particular this approach enables us to consider the mediatory influence of NGOs, which often provide a focus for women's participation in public life.

Marshall (1950) distinguished three types of citizenship, which emerged during the last three centuries in such a way that each new type stood on the shoulders of its predecessor. In the eighteenth century, the first type emerged: civil citizenship, which established the rights necessary for individual freedom, such as rights to property, personal liberty and justice. The second type, political citizenship, was built primarily in the nineteenth century and encompassed the right to participate in the exercise of political power. The third type, social citizenship, was constructed in the twentieth century. This type emphasised the citizen's rights of economic and social security and gained its expression in the modern welfare state as it developed in Western Europe. These social rights are meant to give the formal status of citizenship a material foundation. A certain level of material well being is guaranteed, which enables the citizen to exercise his or her rights to full participation in the community. For Marshall, this last type marked the final stage of this development. But it is now evident that this notion of social citizenship as the final stage is not accepted (van Steenbergen 1994:3). New types of citizenship are unfolding: the notion of cultural citizenship, active citizenship, global citizenship and of ecological citizenship (see, for instance, van Steenbergen *et al.* 1994). At the same time, Marshall's triad is being 'radically extended' (Doyal & Gough 1991:16) to include new areas of rights. Held sees this radical extension as corresponding to key sites of power - health, social, cultural, civil, economic, pacific and political (Held 1995). Habermas suggests thinking of the rights of citizenship as a pattern of concentric circles, with a hard core of basic human rights at the centre (1994:13). The United Nations in its terminology now refers to 'generations' of rights (Jelin 1996:104). This creative activity is occurring not just in intellectual

academic circles or international agencies, but also, as this thesis argues, in practical grass-roots contexts in different settings throughout the world.

This multi-tiered notion of citizenship, as well as extending the idea of citizenship beyond the relationship between individuals and the state to include their affiliation to dominant or subordinate groups in civil society, also incorporates the international level. International organisations and collectivities also play a role in the construction of citizenship in the process of the development of international rights, including new areas of rights such as reproductive and sexual rights which were elaborated at Cairo and Beijing. This enables us to see the potential for individuals to make strategic use of rights that reinforce alternative constructions to those that the state may endorse. While it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of human rights pressures, as Jelin points out, in a less visible but equally important sense, the human rights movement is effective when it helps transform the cultural and moral context (Jelin 1996: 72). It is in this sense that human rights play a transformative role in the content and practice of citizenship.

Looking at citizenship in this broader multi-tiered way, Yuval-Davis *et al* (1997) draws attention to notions of difference and differential access to power. They make the case that if a more inclusive and democratic notion of citizenship is to be achieved, this differential access to power needs to be analysed and located within a variety of different areas. Hence, power cannot be understood as solely contained within the public domain just as rights cannot be limited to the individual-state relation (Yuval-Davis *et al* 1997:1). This means that studying issues relating to citizenship and rights necessarily involves analysing the matrix of power relations within which the individual is located. Seeing these power relations in terms of a matrix that cross-cuts the boundaries which are often conceived of as separating issues of nation and state, from those of family and community, helps us to reconceptualise these boundaries and to move away from the rigid separation of the public and private that has long been a barrier to women's citizenship. This is not to say that attention should not be given to reconceptualising the relationship between the public and private.<sup>31</sup> Rather, that

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<sup>31</sup> Lister advocates firstly the deconstruction of the sexualised values associated with public and private so that it is the gendered quality of the distinction and of the attributes associated with each of the spheres that is dissolved, rather than the distinction itself. Secondly, the rigid ideological separation between the two is rejected in acknowledgement of the many ways in which the public and private impact upon each

emphasis should be placed on a broader conceptualisation, which differentiates between not just two but three spheres of the state, civil society and the domain of the family, kinship and other primary relationships (Yuval-Davis 1997a: 13), and which includes in addition the international level which may have distinct links and alliances with each of these spheres. This enables a far broader more inclusive understanding of what constitutes political participation and citizenship (see Chapter 5). Situating citizenship in the context of relations of power also helps to avoid over-abstraction, which can assume away relations of dependence and interdependence that are central to most women's lives (O'Neill 1993: 303). It also points the way towards analysing the process by which women's rights are reconceptualised in the context of gender relations and the tensions between the different levels identified. As Lister argues, this does not mean equating 'the political' and citizenship as if they were interchangeable (1997:29) as some writers have tended to (e.g. Phillips 1993:86). Rather it is about expanding our notion of the public and recognising that our ability to exercise political rights is in part conditioned by the way in which we are positioned in each of these three spheres, which are interlocking.

Questions of power draw us back to the fact that citizenship is not just to do with the content of rights, but also with agency and the nature of subjects. In Chile, as elsewhere, it is clear that basic human and civil rights, whether they derive from the national or international level, have little meaning for people who for a variety of reasons beyond their control are unable to make use of them. They therefore lead to a series of needs of empowerment, which may in themselves also acquire the quality of rights (Habermas 1994:14). What should or should not be included in these enabling rights is in itself a legitimate subject of debate, and of political struggles (ibid:14).

Without 'enabling' social conditions, which incorporates the need for empowerment (agency) as well as the infrastructure (structure) to implement them, political rights are vacuous. At the same time, citizenship rights without obligations also construct people as passive and dependent (Lister 1997a: 21). The other aspect of citizenship concerns the responsibilities and duties of the citizen.<sup>32</sup> Sometimes the

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other. Thirdly, recognition has to be given to the changing nature of the boundaries between public and private (Lister 1997a: 121).

<sup>32</sup> The emphasis on duty and civic responsibility derives from the ancient republican tradition of classical Greece, articulated most famously by Aristotle.



dividing line between rights and responsibilities is blurred. Voting, for instance, is considered a primary citizenship right, but in quite a few states, Chile being one, it has become a duty, resulting in fines for non-compliance. Thus, one of the most basic responsibilities of citizens is to exercise their political rights and to participate in the determination of their societies' trajectories. It is argued here that the particular way in which women and men are called upon to participate as citizens is, as with the other aspects of citizenship, gendered. Frequently, the call to duty directed at women concerns their reproductive function. In Chile this has at different times meant a civic duty to reproduce and to be good mothers (see Chapter 3). The basis of modern civic republicanism focuses on the reclaiming of active, collective politics, based on a notion of the 'public' or 'common good' (Lister 1997a: 24). There has been much debate as to what this notion of 'common good' might mean; for some it lies in the creation of a sense of community (Oldfield 1990:74), for others it has to do with developing an ethic of care (see for example Tronto 1993). Feminist critiques have focused around the tendency for such an approach to promote a homogeneity that suppresses group differences (Phillips 1991, 1993; Young 1989: 255-257; Lister 1997a: 30). This issue is considered below in the section dealing with difference.

### **2.3 Anthropology and the dilemma of universal human rights**

Citizenship is now, in theory, constituted at two levels: firstly, at a national level, in terms of the individual's relationship to the state in the country in which they are domiciled and secondly, at an international level, in terms of the array of human rights which now exist. For anthropology, however, this is a contentious proposition. Fifty years have passed since Melville Herskovits' well-known rejection of 'the applicability of any Declaration of Human Rights to mankind as a whole', (Herskovits 1947). The statement emphasised that the 'rights of Man in the Twentieth century cannot be circumscribed by the standards of any single culture or be dictated by the aspirations of any single people', (Ibid : 543). Since this time, anthropologists have commonly opposed or shown peripheral interest in the subject, and where they have they have tended to support a relativist stance.<sup>33</sup> While a

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<sup>33</sup> Adamantia Pollis and Peter Schwab (1980) engage in serious criticism of what they see as cultural and

number of reasons may be cited for this,<sup>34</sup> the most fundamental reason for anthropologists' limited involvement with human rights issues relates to the theory of cultural relativism (Preis 1996:288). This places emphasis on different peoples' concepts of different rights and tends to see the international legal framework as ethnocentrically Western. As a result there has been a marked strand of thinking in the discipline which has espoused a value-free cultural relativism, where cultures are neither better nor worse, only different. All judgement and evaluation becomes impossible and potentially discriminatory or disrespectful (Moore 1997:134). The problem is that this relativity is potentially disempowering and dangerous, in that it can provide a justification for gender and race discrimination.

After so many years, the question of 'cross-cultural validity' of human rights remains a battlefield and some writers have decried anthropology's neglect of the problem of reconciling human rights and cultural relativism. For Cohen, for instance, the controversial considerations to be addressed have to do with the relative value and validity of contradictory claims by those from different cultural and ideological traditions about human rights. At issue are questions about 'when and under what (if any) circumstances contradictory human rights beliefs and practices are supportable', and, contrarily, 'when do they run counter to truly human interests, if such a quality can be defined?' (1989:1014); 'which among the relativity of moral values judged to be an aspect of our common humanity have true or supportable validity, and which are simply context-determined aspects of specific traditions?' (Ibid.: 1016). He suggests that part of the reason for the limited contribution from anthropology is that the debate has shifted to national and international levels of interaction, 'leaving anthropologists in advocacy roles for the welfare of those they study, or mired in the microlevel of face-to-face, small-scale social life' (Ibid.: 1015). This is changing, however, as anthropologists are increasingly seeing the need to situate their work in terms of broader social realities. At the same time the theory of cultural relativism has gradually lost its import within anthropology. The rapid changes in the modern world have caused us to rethink the notion of 'culture' as a

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ideological ethnocentrism in the area of human rights and human dignity. They conclude that the 'Western conception of human rights is not only inapplicable' and 'of limited validity,' but even 'meaningless' to third world countries (1980:13). See also Asmarom Legesse (1980) and Raimundo Panikkar, who reject the notion of transcultural values, 'for the simple reason that a value exists as such only in a given cultural context' (Pannikar 1982:86).

<sup>34</sup> See Ellen Messer (1993) who details five major reasons why anthropologists have been largely uninvolved

homogenous, integral and coherent unity (see Appadurai 1986; Barth 1989; Clifford 1988; Preis 1996). The contemporary globalization of economic, political and social life has resulted in cultural penetration and overlapping, such that cultural flows are no longer seen as culturally bounded. More emphasis had been placed on the analysis of culture as practice and culture is increasingly seen 'as a network of perspectives, or as an ongoing debate', (Hannerz 1992:266). Clifford makes the point:

Anthropological 'culture' is not what it used to be. And once the representational challenge is seen to be the portrayal and understanding of local/global historical encounters, co-productions, dominations, and resistances, then one needs to focus on hybrid cosmopolitan experiences, as much as on rooted, native ones...the goal is not to replace the cultural figure 'native' with the intercultural figure 'traveller'. Rather the task is to focus on the concrete mediations of the two...

(Clifford 1992:101).

These theoretical shifts have inevitably brought elements of the relativist position under scrutiny and present an opportunity to revisit the universality-relativist stalemate.<sup>35</sup> Human rights may be seen increasingly to 'form part of a wider network of perspectives which are shared and exchanged between the North and South, centres and peripheries, in multiple, creative and sometimes conflict-ridden ways', (Preis (1996:290). Human rights have become 'universalised' as values and are thus open to interpretation, negotiation and accommodation.

This is reflected in the fact that in different parts of the world, different human rights discourses have now become a vehicle for the articulation of a wide variety of concerns of different people at different levels of society. Countries differ considerably in the precedence they ascribe to civil and political rights compared with economic and social rights as well as in their interpretation of the origin and meaning of these rights. In general, governments of northern countries have stressed the primacy of political and civil liberties in their domestic policies and in international discourse, while southern countries and communist or socialist regimes have more often stressed the primacy of economic and social rights (Johnson 1988; Dixon-Muller 1993:7). Southern jurists have made a sustained critique of the international legal order, contesting the inevitability or universality of particular international law principles by pointing out the Western origins, orientation and

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in human rights research (cited in Preis 1996: 287).

<sup>35</sup> Indeed, Bhabha questions the use of the notion of cultural diversity because the relative/universal opposition on which the notion is based hinges 'on an image of cultures unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical location' (Bhabha 1994:34).

cultural bias of such rules. (Chinkin & Astor, forthcoming). The southern perspective has also been more sharply critical of north-south inequalities in the distribution of resources (Ferrero 1986) and more insistent on the rights of national sovereignty in setting their own policies (Callahan 1981). Crosscutting these distinctions, regimes differ in the importance they attach to the individual relative to the community as a focus of social identity and human rights; the importance of duties relative to rights (that is, obligations on the part of the individual to the community or the state); and on the extent to which socio-economic inequalities are correctable or inevitable (Johnson 1988).

The many facets of gender inequality also take on different form and meaning in different contexts, varying across nations and by class, caste and other bases of social rank (Mason 1986). Whilst it has been argued that there are conceptual links between the critiques of the South and feminist analyses of international law. In practice, Southern critiques have been as blind to issues of sex and gender as are other approaches to international law (Chinkin & Astor, forthcoming: 4). This thesis seeks to address issues concerning gender and human rights, and their relevance for understanding notions of citizenship, from the perspective of local cultural practice in the everyday life of women in the *poblaciones* of southern Santiago. The main focus is on reproductive and sexual rights, on the basis that reproduction and sexuality are two of the main areas in which women tend to be defined, and define themselves, as different kinds of citizens to men.

Considering human rights law, in practice rather than in purely abstract terms, opens the way for modern anthropology to engage in the processes of human rights formulations and practice.<sup>36</sup> Concurrent with the theoretical shifts described above, it is increasingly recognised that while absolute universals cannot be found, it is possible and desirable to seek common denominators across cultures. These can in turn be used to develop contextually relevant notions of, in this case, reproductive and sexual rights. It is here that anthropology can make a valuable contribution, by examining the cultural factors influencing the operationalisation of international rights in local contexts.

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<sup>36</sup> Ken Dwyer's (1991) work on the human rights debate in the Middle East, for instance, addresses the notion of human rights and the need to set this notion in the context of the local, national and regional history and culture. Nancy Scheper-Hughes (see § 2.5 below) has also examined the relevance of human rights in Northeast Brazil (Scheper-Hughes 1992). Ann-Belinda S. Preis considers a number of case studies in Botswana, including the highly-publicised Unity Dow case, to exemplify the multivocal and multidimensional character of what she refers to as 'human rights as culture', (Preis 1996: 302, 306).

Having established that the way is open for anthropological engagement in the area of human rights, it would be a mistake to suggest that all the theoretical issues have been resolved. The question of how to deal with 'difference' remains open and problematic. Thus, whilst rejecting the relativist position, this thesis nevertheless adopts a pluralistic stance. The mistake is to confuse pluralism with relativism by seeing it as wholly antithetical to the search for commonalities: 'a conception of human good..can be, and should be, universalist as well as pluralist: it can acknowledge sameness as well as difference, commonality as well as variety' (Perry 1997:473). Abstract principles can guide contextualised judgements without lapsing into relativism (O'Neill 1993: 305). There is already considerable transcultural agreement on this point. In June 1993, at the UN-sponsored World Conference on Human Rights, the representatives of 172 states adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. As at most international conferences there was much heated debate and discussion reflecting the fact that different people, different cultures, different traditions have different views about the way or ways of life that are good or fitting. Nevertheless there was agreement as well as disagreement about what some of these things are. Thus there is considerable agreement first, that people have human rights and, second, about what some of those rights are. Whilst the original Universal Declaration of Human Rights evolved in a particular historical context after the second world war and the states that contributed to its development were mainly European, Christian and capitalist, the same cannot be said about many later documents. This reflects the fact that it is possible to find commonalities and points of convergence, but the issue of difference remains. Many societies have no voice in international debates and where they do this voice does not represent all the divergent views and interests of every sector of that society. This is an issue to which feminist theorists have devoted a considerable amount of attention and their findings are discussed in the following section.

## 2.4 Feminist theory and universal ethical standards

### *Feminist theories and international law*

If states sustain gendered hierarchies in national contexts, this is reinforced on the international plane.

(Charlesworth 1993:8)

On the basis that citizenship is now constructed at the international as well as the national level, international human rights directed at women require consideration to determine the ways in which they may play a transformative role in women's lives and to establish to what degree they reflect women's varied needs. International human rights standards continue to be perceived as gender-neutral; but this neutrality often amounts in practice to a disregard of women, in much the same way as the neutrality of the concept of citizenship has mystified the exclusion of women as political subjects. Where women have been explicitly considered, it has been as objects of special protection, (of motherhood, rather than womanhood), as opposed to subjects of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These apparently gender-neutral rules can have discriminatory effects on women, by disguising de facto inequalities: equal treatment of unequal situations perpetuates rather than challenges discrimination (Tomasevski 1993).

The historical development of human rights shows that women's issues, on the rare occasions when they were considered, were seen as belonging to a private sphere which should be exempted not just from domestic law, but also from human rights norms. This view has been repeatedly used as a justification for excluding women's rights from being considered human rights.<sup>37</sup>

Although rights aimed primarily at women do now form a part of international human rights legislation, they are marginalized into a separate convention (Convention on

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<sup>37</sup>Any attempts to challenge this view have tended to be suppressed. For example, Olympe de Ganges Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen, 1791, published in response to the exclusion of women from the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen 1789, the latter having in many ways established the foundations for the recognition and protection of human rights, at least those of men. The full text of both declarations may be found in Tomasevski (1993: 6-7). Typical responses to efforts to incorporate women's rights tend to be that: (1) sexual discrimination is too trivial, or not as important as other larger issues of survival (2) subordination and abuse of women, while regrettable, is a cultural, private or individual issue and not a matter requiring state or international action; (3) while appropriate for other action, women's rights are not human rights as such; or (4) when abuse of women is recognised, it is viewed as inevitable and/or so pervasive that it is futile to address it or it will overwhelm other human rights questions (Bunch 1992: 6).

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN 1979)) and 'mainstream' human rights bodies have tended to ignore the application of human rights norms to women. Human rights lawyer Hilary Charlesworth points up the reluctance of states to endow the Commission on the Status of Women with monitoring and review powers and the way in which widespread reservations to fundamental provisions by states are tolerated, as are the failures of states to comply with their obligations in relation to women (Charlesworth 1993:6). She identifies the need to document the disadvantages women face in relation to the present structures of international law, which this thesis aims to do, and, like Mackinnon, argues that simply adding women to the mix is not enough; this will obscure the fact that the international legal system is gendered itself. Karen Engle also outlines an approach which simultaneously criticises the exclusion of women and attacks the foundations upon which international law is presently conceived (Engle 1993). Carol Smart's work highlights the difficulties in adopting this type of two-pronged approach, namely the problem of challenging a form of power without accepting its own terms of reference. Smart argues convincingly that 'in accepting law's terms in order to challenge law, feminism always concedes too much...law must be tackled at the conceptual level if feminist discourses are to take firmer root,' (Smart 1989:5). Feminists must develop a deeper understanding of law in order to comprehend the specific ways in which it resists and denies women's concerns, avoiding the adoption of the androcentric standards of present legal tradition.<sup>38</sup> How law comes to be regarded as having access to the 'Truth', (Smart 1990) the processes by which law allows or disallows interpretations of events, and how law extends its terrain into traditionally non-legal discourse – are the questions which this thesis seeks to address (see, in particular Chapter 4).

The Western distinction between public and private spheres which, as discussed at 2.2 above, is central to the traditional notion of the state has also had a defining influence on the categories of international law.<sup>39</sup> The 'public' province of international law tends, as Shelley Wright observes, to be clearly distinguished from the 'private' sphere of domestic jurisdiction (Wright 1993). In general, the discourse of human rights law has tended to target 'public' state-sanctioned violations, when the most pervasive harm against women

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<sup>38</sup> I agree with Sandland (1995) and Lacey (1998:242) who reject the idea that Smart's position implies the irrelevance of critique to legal reform, or indeed a general rejection of legal reformism.

<sup>39</sup> A full discussion of the many ramifications of public/private dichotomising in relation to human rights may be found in Dallmeyer 1993:93-169.

tends to occur right within the 'private' realm. Both public policies and kinship/community claims are potential violators of the rights of individuals. As in domestic law, the non-regulation of the private realm legitimates self-regulation, which translates ultimately into male dominance (Peters & Wolper *et al* 1995). Where challenges have been directed at the 'private' realm, 'sovereignty' has been used as a curtain behind which international law cannot look. In a wider sense, 'sovereignty as a definition of the state as such, within an international order defined as an order of sovereign states, can work to deny women's human rights' (MacKinnon 1993:85).

The new feminist discourse on human rights (see Dallmeyer *et al* 1993; Peter & Wolper 1995) argues that human rights must be defined and protected when their violation originates in state as well as in private action by making states responsible for the conduct of non-state as well as state actors, in a way that presently they are not. A further problem is that the structures of international law assume that international norms directed at individuals within states are universally applicable and neutral. There is a failure to recognise that such principles may affect men and women differently and women's experience of the operations of these laws tends to be silenced or discounted (Charlesworth, Chinkin and Wright 1991:625). This thesis aims to address these problems by investigating women's actual experiences of abuses and violation of their rights and freedoms, both those that have been defined in domestic and international legislation and those that it is argued should be.

### *Feminism and difference*

One of the dominant areas of debate in second-wave feminism concerns the issue of being able to deal with differences among women without losing the impetus that derives from being a coherent movement for social change (Gunew and Yeatman 1991: viii). This is a difficulty which has not been resolved, although a number of suggestions have been put forward. Sandra Harding's (1986) identification of three types of feminist analysis, helps to put these ideas in context:

- Feminist empiricism, which sees androcentrism as a methodological bias in all disciplines which, once identified, can be eradicated; an approach associated with liberal feminism.



- Feminist standpoint theory, which stresses knowledge based upon experience.
- Feminist postmodernism which questions universal theoretical claims and stresses particularity.

Another classification of feminist theories distinguishes between 'liberal', 'cultural' and 'radical' feminisms, which I will also draw upon, as well as considering third world feminisms.

There is considerable overlap between liberal feminism and empiricism, in the sense that sexism is regarded as a bias that can be eliminated. Both approaches tend to focus on reform of the law, dismantling legal barriers to women being treated like men in the public sphere, and criticise any legal recognition of 'natural' differences between men and women. The structure of the existing order is generally accepted, the main goal being for men and women to achieve equal treatment in public areas such as political participation and representation, and equal access to and equality with paid employment, market services and education (Chinkin & Astor, forthcoming, Ch. 2). Although some versions of liberal feminism go beyond demands for formal equality, citing the need for equality of opportunity, the 'similar treatment' theme in liberal feminism requires women to conform to a male-defined world, offering the promise of 'equality' in terms of 'sameness' to men (Ibid.: Ch.2). Liberal feminism may in this sense be seen as a paradigm of a modest version, what Lacey refers to as an 'internal critique' which held legal systems up to scrutiny in terms of the standards which they professed to instantiate universally, by showing how aspects of legal and political practice systematically failed to accord rights or apply justice equitably across different groups of citizens. It has provided a stepping stone towards deeper critiques that shift understanding more radically in ways which move beyond the normative framework with which the internal critique of liberal feminism was to some degree sympathetic (Lacey 1998:232).

In relation to standpoint theory there is some disagreement between standpoint theorists as to how a feminist standpoint is defined. Catherine Mackinnon, for example, has cautioned against identifying women with particular characteristics, such as ethics of caring, conciliation and so on (MacKinnon 1991). Carol Smart has also warned that the acceptance of a distinctive 'women's voice' 'slides uncomfortably and exceedingly quickly into socio-biologism which merely puts women back in their place', (Smart 1989:75). Nevertheless, MacKinnon sees it as being possible to describe women as having 'a

collective social history of disempowerment, exploitation and subordination extending to the present' (MacKinnon 1991). This perspective may serve to moderate the postmodern approach which, taken to its extreme, denies any universal theoretical claims.

Feminist anthropological literature has also begun to examine not just the problematic issues involved in trying to establish universals in women's experience, but also of the legal project of attempting to develop universal ethical standards. In each context these issues are always dependent on the notion of the citizen shot through with class, and ethnicity as well as gender. The work of Nancy Scheper-Hughes' in northeast Brazil (Scheper-Hughes 1992), as well as exemplifying the feminist post-modern approach, frames some of the key issues which confront anthropology when dealing with issues of citizenship and rights. Her work poses awkward questions about culture and scarcity, both material and psychological and their effects on moral thinking and practice, in particular on 'maternal thinking' (ibid: 15). The environment she describes is one in which death is understood as the most ordinary and expected outcome for the children of poor families. Human suffering becomes 'rationalized', part of the 'normal' violence of everyday life. The marginalised 'matutos' have created an alternative community on the margins of urban life; contacts with the formal social and legal institutions are kept to a minimum. This 'displaced rural proletariat' have developed an informal 'moral economy' (cf. Scott: 1985), which forms a moral basis for their strategies for survival.

In investigating the 'social production of indifference' amongst matuto women Scheper-Hughes creates a picture of women as particular types of social actors in a particular social, cultural and historical setting. Her study draws attention to situations which arguably warrant a 'suspension of the ethical' (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 21). This would suggest that morality, and implicitly the moral norms upon which human rights are based, are 'contingent on and embedded within specific cultural assumptions about human life.' Scheper-Hughes acknowledges that there is an alternative existential philosophical viewpoint that puts things the other way around by suggesting that the ethical always comes before culture because 'the ethical presupposes all sense and meaning and therefore makes culture possible,' (ibid:21). Her analysis and findings also challenge the view of feminists who argue for a singular conception of women's goals, interests and moral norms on which women's human rights may be based.

Scheper-Hughes neatly phrases the question that needs to be confronted of how, given such environments, is it possible 'to articulate a standard or divergent standards, for the beginnings of a moral and an ethical reflection on cultural practices that takes into account but does not privilege our own cultural presuppositions', (ibid: 21). Her work clearly identifies the fact that the concepts of citizenship, democracy and rights may have very specific and different cultural and historical referents. And, as her research poignantly reveals, human rights law frequently neglects the most marginalised members of society and the relevance of the moral standards upon which they are based becomes questionable in many environments. This once again underlines the fact that, at all levels, the application of equal laws in a setting of manifest inequality serves merely to reinforce those unequal relations.

Post-modern feminism is, then, sceptical of modernist, universal theoretical explanations of women and embraces instead 'the fractured identities...[of] modern life', (Harding 1987a) Carol Smart has contended that we should avoid general, abstract theories and focus instead on the realities of women's lives, studying the inconsistencies and contradictions in legal regulation (Smart 1989; 70-2). The concern of post-modern feminism is with the specific operation of the law and the particular contexts of women (Chinkin & Astor forthcoming: 20), the aim being the transformation of legal categories and structures rather than merely to eradicate gender bias in their content and application. The present thesis sets out to contribute to this process, by focusing on the specific operation of the law and broader rights in a particular context, but also seeking out commonalities and points of convergence.<sup>40</sup>

Many third world feminists have been critical of the application of Western feminist theories to their communities and societies, in particular the liberal feminist emphasis on the removal of sex discrimination. They have argued that, while gender and class underpin the oppression of women in the West, third world women also have to cope with oppression based on race and imperialism (Johnson-Odim 1991:314). Tensions between first and third world feminists on issues of substance and strategy have been evident in the international arena, arguing in particular that feminism must have a broader

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. The radical pluralism posited by Mouffe (1992, 1993) and the politics of 'solidarity of difference' described by Yeatman (1993) which involves 'a readiness on the part of any one emancipatory movement to show how its particular interest in contesting oppression links into and supports the interests of other movements in contesting different kinds of oppression' (Yeatman 1993: 231).

agenda than the eradication of oppression based on sex or gender. It must pay attention to the complex interaction of gender, race, class, colonialism and global capitalism. Yeatman reflects on the 'salutary and uncomfortable experience' of finding oneself in the position of being privileged 'custodians of policy':

This, of course, is what has happened to those of us who are positioned as the custodians of feminism, namely white, Western and middle-class women. We have been challenged as voices privileged by the discursive economics of feminism by those whom these same economies disprivilege: women who are not white, Western, middle-class. Historically, the custodians of feminism drew discursive legitimacy from the universal civilising mission of the middle class in extending to their less fortunate sisters a matronizingly appropriate embrace. They could speak on behalf of **all** women, including those less privileged than themselves. It is this which the new emancipatory movements within feminism specifically contest. Within the nature of this contest, the custodians of feminism are inevitably caught within the question of how far they can be affiliated with these new movements without simultaneously appropriating their voice.

(Yeatman 1993: 238)

Third world feminisms, then, demand a much more intricate study of the forms and intersections of systems of oppression than proposed by most first world feminists, informed by an ongoing and openly contested politics of voice and representation (Chinkin & Astor (forthcoming):23). They have tended to be more concerned with 'multiple, fluid structures of domination which intersect to locate women differently at particular historical conjunctures' (Mohanty 1991:7) rather than 'a notion of universal patriarchy operating in a transhistorical way to subordinate all women' (Alexander & Mohanty 1997: xix). Instead of a given unitary standard, there has to be a process of constructing a standard norm for each specific political project. Black feminists like Patricia Hill Collins (1990) and Italian feminists like Raffaella Lambertini and Elizabetta Dominini (see Yuval-Davis 1994, 1997b) have focused on the transversal politics of coalition building, in which the specific positioning of political actors is recognised and considered. The problem is, as Yuval-Davis acknowledges, that in 'real politics' unlike in grass-roots social movements, there is often no time for extensive continuous dialogue. In reality it is extremely difficult to achieve this even at a grass-roots level.

## 2.5 Developing a cross-cultural perspective on reproductive and sexual rights

An area of particular importance for women's citizenship, both at the level of state action and private action concerns reproductive freedom. The autonomy which has traditionally been understood as a prerequisite of political citizenship embraces not just economic but also physical independence, that is, freedom from 'bodily violation, or the threat of it' and freedom to control one's body (James 1992: 50; O'Connor 1993). Feminist critiques of the UN Declaration of Human Rights have decried the omission of an explicit right to bodily integrity, which has particular significance for women. Issues such as male violence and rape, sexual harassment, pornography and reproductive rights all have ramifications for the question of women's citizenship. As Ruth Lister observes: 'different from the abstract individual qua citizen, women enter public space as embodied individuals; their citizenship can be jeopardised by sexual violence and its threat, sexual harassment and pornographic or derogatory sexual representations' (1997:71).

As Ros Petchesky has identified, the concept of reproductive rights draws on human rights principles of freedom and entitlement. It also draws on the feminist principle of a woman's right to control her own body, that is, her right not to be alienated from her sexual and reproductive capacity, and her right to the integrity of her physical person (Petchesky 1986). Petchesky also presents a historical and moral argument in favour of reproductive rights based on the social position of women and the needs that such a position generates. This states that, 'insofar as women, under the existing division of labour between the sexes, are the ones most affected by pregnancy, since they are the ones responsible for the care and rearing of children', it is women who must decide about abortion and childbearing (ibid : 2). Thus, whilst not denying that reproductive freedom has significance for both sexes, it remains crucial that any policy relating to reproductive choice confronts the fundamental point that the primary bearers of interests in human reproduction remain women (MacLean 1989:215).

There is considerable convergence of theoretical and practical issues here between feminist human rights theory and feminist views concerning population policy (Dixon-Mueller 1993). Some of the theoretical questions raised include: - how are reproductive rights related to human rights and to what extent do population policies, laws, and programs infringe on rights that are considered universal? Are family planning programs

more properly seen as the means of controlling population growth or the means of enabling women and men to exercise their reproductive rights? How are reproductive rights related to the exercise of women's rights in other spheres such as education, employment, the family, and the community? How does fertility regulation affect the physical and emotional health of women, as they perceive it? Do reproductive rights include a right to abortion? As Pippa Norris (1987) points out, because of the distinction that has to be made between *de jure* and *de facto* women's rights, one has to examine the ease with which women can exercise their reproductive rights as well as the rights themselves when assessing how effective they are in promoting women's autonomy. Finally, how can the principles of human rights, women's rights, and reproductive rights be integrated in national and international policies that effectively define the sexual and reproductive rights of women and protect them from violations by agents of the family, the community, and the state?

Most Latin American governments, including that of Chile, have modified their opposition to family planning in the past few years, but this has not developed into a concept of reproductive freedom and there is often a discrepancy between legal rights and the reality of women's lives. Husbands pressure women to demonstrate their fidelity and give public proof of men's virility through pregnancy; the Catholic church extols motherhood and blocks attempts to introduce family planning, let alone to give women control over their own bodies. (Chapters 6 and 7 provide a detailed exposition of women's experiences of reproduction and sexuality).

Decisions about reproduction require that individuals have access to information concerning reproductive matters and have the power and resources needed to carry out their decisions. In other words the exercise of reproductive rights depends in fundamental ways on the exercise of women's basic economic, political and social rights in other spheres. Therefore an examination of reproductive rights entails a consideration of women's status in Chilean society. It also involves consideration of the legal provisions, policy and infrastructure as they affect women (see Chapter 4).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women (UN 1979) says little about reproductive rights except to confirm women's rights to family planning information, counselling, and services and to have equal rights with

men to decide on the number and spacing of their children.<sup>41</sup> It is nevertheless a positive achievement in several respects. First, it elaborates on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in affirming, 'on the basis of equality of men and women', women's right to individual freedoms such as voting and free choice of a profession, and to social entitlements such as schooling and employment.<sup>42</sup> Second, the Convention introduces rights specific to women, such as prohibitions on dismissal from employment on grounds of pregnancy and the right to maternity leave and child-care benefits, that are intended to prevent discrimination and ensure women's right to work. Third, the Convention acknowledges the need in some cases for 'temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women.'

Fourth, the Convention stresses the obligation of states to modify discriminatory social and cultural patterns of conduct 'with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customs and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.'

Consideration of the special nature of women's reproductive rights had to wait until the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994 (ICPD). The reproductive rights and health framework has evolved conceptually in the intervening years since the 1979 Convention, culminating in the Beijing Conference in 1995, the product of concerted effort by women's health movements around the world to gain recognition of women's reproductive and sexual self-determination as a basic health need and human right. These international conferences focusing on human rights and population have underlined the need to search for definitions of reproductive rights that would be acceptable cross-culturally. The debates that have taken place reflect the possibility for rights to be 'radically extended' to embrace new categories demanded by social movements, in this case reproductive and sexual rights (Doyal & Gough 1991). Effectively ignored in most of the mainstream literature on citizenship, reproductive rights are, as David Held argues, the basis of the possibility of effective participation of women in both civil society and the polity' (Held 1991 cited in Lister 1997a: 18). This thesis aims to understand cultural practice in relation to reproduction and sexuality in a particular context as they relate to notions of reproductive and sexual rights, and debates concerning their meaning at local, national and international

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<sup>41</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Convention, see Dallmeyer *et al* 1993; Tomasevski 1993 and Dixon-Mueller 1993:8-10.

<sup>42</sup> State parties to the convention agree to 'pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women' in all fields of human endeavour (UN 1979 :Article 4).

levels. In the process of examining inter- and intracultural discourse and practice the thesis aims to contribute to the search for definitions and to reveal human rights practice in a specific context as 'an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process - not simply the execution of an already specified "plan of action" with expected "outcomes"' (Long 1992: 35).<sup>43</sup>

## 2.6 Conclusion

This thesis adopts a theoretical perspective in relation to rights and citizenship that aims to contribute to the search for some middle ground between relativism and universalism. By focusing on citizenship as a multi-tiered strategic concept and by adopting an approach to theory and practice that gives due accord to women's agency, rather than seeing them merely as victims of discriminatory and oppressive male-dominated political, economic and social institutions. Applying this perspective to the feminist anthropological agenda involves contributing to the major challenge facing the global women's movement of finding a way to transcend theoretical and geopolitical divides in defence of women's reproductive and sexual health and rights. By the time women met in Beijing they had already clarified, at previous meetings, that their goal was to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. This stance against discrimination included 'the right to freely choose the number and spacing of their children' (Report of the Secretary-General, 1995:243).<sup>44</sup> It is also clear that they believe that they have a prominent role to play in the democratization of their societies (Eisenstein 1997:161). Their rights, as women, are seen as part of their human rights and, therefore, necessary to any conception of citizenship and democracy.

By setting out a framework for connections to be made between anthropologists, international legal theorists and population policymakers, this thesis aims to contribute to the search for a new concept of citizenship. There are a number of strands that need to be reconciled. For feminist lawyers such as MacKinnon it appears to be essential to the project of political transformation that a unified women's perspective is sought at the level

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<sup>43</sup> Long makes this point in relation to the 'deconstructing of development, but the same point may be made in relation to human rights practice.



of theory. From a feminist anthropological point of view legal theory must, however, be responsive to and reflective of women's lived realities. Whilst it may be acknowledged that women do share similar difficulties and experiences world wide, 'these similarities must be demonstrated and specified in each case and not assumed...In order to assert a solidarity based on commonalities between women, it is not necessary to assert that all women are, or have to be, the same' (Moore 1988:198). This need not involve, as MacKinnon fears, a proliferation of pluralist feminist theories which, 'evade the challenge womens' [sic] reality poses to theory' (MacKinnon, 1989: xii). Feminist analysis needs to acknowledge the range of cultural, religious, economic and social concerns and interests that shade theoretical categories. At the same time, 'it is important not to become paralysed to the point of total relativism in this project', (Charlesworth 1993:4). Philosophers Linda Nicholson and Nancy Fraser have suggested that postmodernism and feminism can be reconciled once we realise that although it is necessary to distinguish among particular historical and social contexts, certain 'pervasive axes of stratification are likely to appear in each,' (Nicholson and Fraser 1990). Ruth Lister similarly incorporates universalism and diversity in her notion of a 'differentiated universalism' based on a dynamic synthesis of the universal and the particular (Lister 1997:9). These perspectives tie in with postmodern theories of identity which emphasise their multidimensionality and fluidity. But this need not get in the way of relational allegiances and commonalities. Thus, in the context of social movements, while identity is clearly situational, located in a person's specific history and social context, this does not prevent transnational identification, indeed it may well enrich it.

This approach accepts that there is no 'one true story' of women's domination worldwide; women's experience varies according to culture, race and class. In Beijing, women readily recognise their heterogeneity as a group, they also believe that 'the world's women share a common feature: discrimination' (Dept. of Public Information 1995:6 cited by Eisenstein 1997: 161). This reflects an acknowledgement that there are many areas of commonality: domination by men; childbearing; sexual degradation and violence; exclusion from important decision-making and the exploitation of women's unremunerated household work to name a few. It is these areas of women's lives that define them as different kinds of citizens to men. However, rather than assuming that these

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<sup>44</sup> See Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1996.

commonalities always express themselves in the same way, the particular way in which they are expressed in different contexts needs to be demonstrated in order to establish the underlying 'pervasive axes.' Women's experiences, including experiences of non-subordination (see Fox-Genovese 1988), must inform feminist legal theory in order to connect it with ordinary experience in the ongoing process of constructing a 'woman-friendly' citizenship.

## Chapter 3

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### Competing Discourses on Gender and Rights

#### 3.1 Introduction

Gender research on women in Latin America has tended to place analytical emphasis on women's productive roles and status and the links between the sexual division of labour and women's participation in economic, social and political life. These studies detected gross underestimation of women's work. Women, far from being unproductive and economically marginal were in fact highly integrated into the economy and society, but their integration was characterised by exploitation in terms of both class and gender. Moreover, the changes in terms of women's participation in the labour market had taken place without major changes in the sexual division of labour in the home. As a result of these findings, concepts like '*la doble*' or '*la triple jornada*' entered the research vocabulary (Melhuus & Stølen 1996:12). More recent studies have begun to respond to June Nash's (1985) call for research which stresses the interplay between cultural and structural factors in the transformation of gender roles, with a new focus on the importance of gender ideology (see Melhuus *et al* 1996). This chapter, which examines the influence of competing discourses on the construction of gender identities, locates itself within this approach. Together with Chapter 4, which examines the role of the state in the construction of gender identities, it provides a backdrop to the ethnographic material contained in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Recent anthropological studies have demonstrated that rather than having a single model of gender or a single gender system cultures have a multiplicity of discourses on gender which can vary both historically and socially (Moore 1994:59; Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994; Dirks *et al.*1994; Stølen 1996:159). There is therefore no single femininity or masculinity for individual women and men to identify with in their social settings. Rather there is a variety of possible femininities and masculinities which are provided by the contradictory and competing discourses that exist, and which produce and are reproduced by social practices and institutions (Moore 1994: 63).

It is argued in this chapter that there are two predominant competing discourses informing the construction of gender identities in Chilean society: the first is rooted in Catholicism: the second is centred around the discourse of international human rights

law and local discourses on gender and rights. The chapter begins by discussing Catholic gender ideology and argues that this provides the basis of a dominant 'ideological core' in Chilean society. The second part of the chapter considers international human rights as a source of notions about gender and rights that challenges dominant Catholic discourse. This is followed by a section discussing the rights discourses informing the work of NGOs. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 examine how these rights may be used as a resource in the construction of gender identities, as 'tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations' (Foucault 1981:101).

### **3.2 *Marianismo, Machismo, Motherhood and Mythology: Dominant discourses of gender roles and reproduction***

In this section it is argued that the dominant ideas about gender in circulation in Chilean culture are rooted in the discourses emanating from the Catholic Church. These ideas and the images associated with them incorporate what feminists in Chile, both popular and professional, refer to as the *deber ser* of being a woman, meaning what one, as a woman ought to be. The precise contents of the *deber ser* have varied over time; some governments have instituted policies that have at times been in conflict with Church doctrine, at other times there has been a close overlap between state and Church discourse.

Weinermann (1983:42-44) and Stølen (1996:262-264) in their work on Argentina similarly identify the Catholic Church as the most important producer and transmitter of gender values. These Catholic gender values are also seen to penetrate other institutions such as the legal system (see Chapter 4), the educational system and, to a certain extent the media. Weinermann in her study of what she considered the five most important domains of production and transmission of gender ideology in Argentina: the Catholic Church, the legal system, the education system, the social sciences and the media demonstrated that there is an 'ideological core' common to all the discourses analysed, which is rooted in the gender doctrines transmitted by the Argentine Catholic Church and highly congruent with the doctrines conveyed by the Holy See in Rome (cited in Stølen 1996a: 251). A similar argument is made here in relation to Chile. Here too there exists an 'ideological core', or hegemonic discourse, rooted in Catholic gender ideology, which positions women in a particular way.

The power of dominant discourses stems from the way in which they tend to normalise what are in fact the values and premises of a particular historical form of social order (cf. Corrigan and Sayer 1985). Over time these values and meanings, transmitted through multiple institutions tend to become 'naturalised' and thus command

a high degree of complicity in their reproduction.<sup>1</sup> They become so deeply internalised that they seem to record what is 'right' and 'natural'. In this way, dominant discourses may 'naturalise' the sexual division of roles in the family and community, as Stølen has demonstrated in her study on gender discourses in rural Argentina (Stølen 1996a), and women themselves come to endorse their own second-class status. While they do not directly reflect the social and economic conditions of women and men, dominant discourses are constituted within these conditions and help to reinforce them.<sup>2</sup> But this does not mean that they are static and unchanging, or beyond challenge. The following chapter shows how the institutional bases of these powerful discourses are themselves sites of contest, as are the values and meanings which they produce (Weedon 1987:105). Some aspects of the dominant ideological core are shown to have changed over time, whilst certain elements may be seen to be particularly pervasive.

### *Catholic ideology and notions of maleness and femaleness*

This section describes the way in which Catholic gender discourses have evolved in Chile. The centrality given to Mary the mother and the association between mother and child are explained in terms of a process of cultural syncretism between indigenous and Christian cultures. It is argued that the Mediterranean 'honour shame complex' also resonates in this context, forming part of the dominant 'ideological core'.

The typical model promoted by the Catholic Church for understanding divine relations is a nuclear family model, where God is the father, Mary the mother and the Christian community the children. The deity is male and, coupled with the older feudal model in which God is master and king over his servants, it has been suggested that the family model is by association a patriarchal one (Christian 1972; Harris 1984; Skar 1993; Stølen 1996a). Delaney argues further that monogenesis, patriarchy and mariology are different aspects of the same, an ideology that perpetuates and legitimates male dominance and authority (Delaney 1987). However, whilst this constellation of relationships clearly has considerable resonance in Catholic Church discourse, Catholic ideology in the Chilean context does not fit straightforwardly into the nuclear family model, in part because of the way in which religious ideology has developed in this context. The figure of Maria has a distinctive centrality in the discourse of the Chilean

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<sup>1</sup> The fact that women often comply with practices that subordinate them cannot be understood in terms of the exclusively repressive view of power, but rather in terms of domination based in complicity (Melhuus and Stølen 1996:20, citing Bourdieu 1992).

<sup>2</sup> S.B.Ortner and H.Whitehead, 'Introduction: Accounting for Sexual Meaning', in Ortner and Whitehead, eds., *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality* 1981, cited by Stølen (1996a:159).

Catholic Church and masculinity is more tied to being a son than being a father, neither of which are sufficiently accounted for by Delaney's argument.

There is a broad consensus amongst diverse authors (Stevens 1973; Rodriguez Sehk 1986; Palma 1990; Melhuus 1990a; Montecino 1991) that the icon of Maria has vital importance for the construction of identities in Latin America and for the reproduction of certain values linked to the feminine. However, the precise thematisation of the symbol varies according to country and context. Montecino, in her study of Chilean allegories, distinguishes in the Chilean context between different 'Marias': one for the dispossessed and marginal and one for the official power of the Church and dominant members of society (Montecino 1991:25). The 'Maria' of popular women is the one linked to Liberation theology: -

This strong woman is the example of so many others who, weighed down with children and pain, are also carrying the cross of the poor and thus help them to go forward.<sup>3</sup>

For Rodriguez Sehk (1986) and Montecino (1991) this Maria is a product of religious syncretism: between pre-Columbian cosmology consisting of a pantheon of masculine and female divinities situated in a complex of rituals and myths in which the categories of male and female, characterised as *la madre tierra* (Earth Mother), occupied a space of equilibrium/complementarity. And European cosmology with the imagery of a masculine God at the apex and a Virgin Mother who made possible human redemption via her son, the Saviour, who sacrificed himself to save humankind. This fusion led to a *mestizo ethos* comprising a new cosmology. In this process often masculine gods were displaced from their dominant place by a powerful goddess, represented by the Virgin-Mother, linked to pre-Columbian feminine deities associated with strength and vitality (Guadalupe in Mexico, Copacabana in Bolivia; La Tirana and the Virgin of Andacollo in Chile) (Montecino 1991:63).

Montecino argues that the centrality of the Marian myth may be explained in the way in which it resolves the problem of *mestizo* origin - of being children of an Indian mother and a Spanish father. By denying their origin they find an unequivocal identity in Maria: a *Madre Comun* or *diosa-madre* (mother-goddess). She concludes that whilst the cult of Maria is practically universal, it has specific contents according to the historical and cultural context. In some cultures the father or son is privileged, in others,

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<sup>3</sup> *Esta mujer fuerte es el ejemplo de tantas otras que cargadas de hijos y dolores, cargan tambien la cruz del pueblo pobre y le ayudan a caminar.* (Montecino (1991:26) citing Del Prado, Consuelo. 1986:77. 'Yo

such as in Chile, it is the Mother, to such a degree that one may refer to a 'deification of the maternal' (Montecino 1991:85; 94). The symbol of Maria assigns the categories of the feminine and masculine specific qualities: to be a mother and to be a son respectively (ibid: 30).

The influence of this symbolic categorisation is particularly notable in Chile, where Stevens detected a hyperbolization of the association between mother and child for women and men: '...everyone knows that they are *como niños* whose intemperance, foolishness, and obstinacy must be forgiven because "they can't help the way they are"' (Stevens 1973:95).

Montecino argues that this emphasis on mother and son creates a symbolic gap in relation to the father. A gap filled by *machismo*: the recuperation of the founding father (the Spanish) that manifests itself in the opposition conqueror (masculine)/conquered (feminine). Thus the symbolic gap of the father is substituted by a powerful and violent masculine figure: the *caudillo* (local leader), *el militar* (military man), *el guerrillero* (popular fighter).

The absent father behaves in this way in a presence sewn together of political, economic and warring power, a presence that fills the space outside of the house; but which imposes on it the ghostly shadow of its empire, even if this be only by evocation or fleeting vision.

(Montecino 1991:31(my own translation))

This legitimation of the masculine in a symbolic network that excludes him<sup>4</sup> is reinforced by the image of the authoritative God/father contained in official Catholic discourse. There is also a gap in terms of the feminine and masculine as sexed entities, which is denoted in the complex relation of the mother with the son: with symbolic incest and as such with perversion (ibid.: 31). This accords with the sometimes over-sexed relationship between mothers and sons apparent in my own data.

The centrality of Maria in this ideological framework has been correlated by some writers with a form of power deriving from women's role as mothers, sometimes described as a female version of *machismo*, namely *marianismo*. In Mexico, Stevens (1973) explored this concept of a cult of feminine spiritual superiority. The cult is focused around the religious symbol of the Lady of Guadalupe, declared patroness of all

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siento a Dios de otro modo' en El rostro femenino de la teología, Editorial Dei, San Jose, Costa Rica, 1986.)

<sup>4</sup> Montecino goes on to suggest that this excessive valorisation of the male drowns itself in a repressed homosexuality.

Latin America by Pope Pius X in 1910.<sup>5</sup> She argues that it is as prevalent as and symbiotic with *machismo* but less understood. She asserts that, far from being victims, Latin American women are conscious beneficiaries of that myth (Stevens 1973:89). Indeed she depicts *marianismo* as, in part, used as a form of female chauvinism:

Our historical perspective enables us to see that far from being an oppressive norm dictated by tyrannical males, *marianismo* has received considerable impetus from women themselves...While some individuals of both sexes have been 'victimized' by the strictures, it appears that many others have been able to shape their own life-styles and derive a measure of satisfaction, sometimes because of and sometimes in spite of the requirements of the system.

(Stevens 1973:99)

The ethnographic material in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to some degree affirms Stevens' notion of *marianismo*, in the sense that women in some circumstances may be seen to maximise the power that they can derive from traditional gender ideology. This involves utilising gender symbols as a strategy for resisting oppression by appealing to a specific aspect of an ideological form whose meaning suits the individual best in a particular context. This is somewhat different from seeing them as beneficiaries of this ideology. The set of meanings available to be appealed to are limited in the sense that they form part of a 'patriarchal bargain', that circumscribes women's gendered subjectivity and the potential for and forms of resistance which they can adopt (Kandiyoti 1991). As Olivia Harris points out, the fact that certain women are given exalted respect, and have on occasions used this form of female power to achieve a significant public position is important, should not deceive us into believing that men in Latin American societies do not hold overwhelming social, economic and political power (Harris 1983:4). It is worth remembering that two of the key attributes of motherhood referred to in Catholic discourse are those of self-sacrifice and suffering, both of which act to contain the degree of power that motherhood offers. The popular cult focused around Teresa de Los Andes, for instance, presents a model of womanhood which, like that of Maria, emphasises suffering and (maternal) love (Diaz 1993:160).<sup>6</sup>

Montecino catalogues a multiplicity of Marian faces, but observes that in all cases it is the maternal aspect which predominates, to such a degree that it is not so much the multifacetedness but rather the unidimensionality of the maternal that is most notable in *mestizo* territory (Montecino 1991:82). It is the image of the mother that

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<sup>5</sup>The religious symbol became a rallying point for nascent nationalistic sentiments in the early part of the century.

<sup>6</sup>Diaz describes Teresa's identification in her diaries with *Maria madre* (Maria the mother). Like Montecino, Diaz finds few references to the idea of God the father, but rather a god identified with Jesus.



resonates in the 'ideological core' of dominant discourses in Chilean society: being a mother is the most legitimate social space for the woman. It is not surprising therefore that women during the dictatorship often appealed to the Catholic symbols of motherhood and the family in legitimising their protest at the disappearance or killing of their loved ones or to seek amnesty for political prisoners or exiles. Catholic doctrine played an important role in the self-definition and quest for legitimacy of these women, and they rarely questioned traditional gender roles (Icken Safa 1995: 565). Indeed, the image of the Virgin Maria is an exaltation of being a mother, giving women who become mothers legitimacy and some degree of authority. But the ideal of the Virgin Maria is also constricting. As the model of Christian virtue, she is a superior mother, pure, without equal, virgin, which always relegates women to the profane level of the impure, and the inferior (Warner 1990). For Valdés and Busto (1994) it is this tension which is constitutive of the feminine identity in Chilean culture and of the cultural imperatives that define its realisation. The mother is the cultural figure where womanly virtues, principally her abnegation and sacrifice, are brought together and exalted. Abnegation constitutes the fount of legitimation for her authority in the social relations in which she participates, in relation to her children, her partner, her family and the whole of society. At the same time as legitimating her authority, the idea of the feminine identity presented in Catholic discourses delimits three spaces where the presence of women is legitimate and required for the normal functioning of the family: of being a mother, of being a wife and of being a housewife. The union of these three positions constitutes the subject position that Chilean society proposes to women in the context of the reproduction of social relations, which organises their everyday practices and conditions their life choices such as getting married, having children, working outside the home, participating in social organisations, etc. The image of the 'good mother' endorsed by church discourse requires the mother to care for the children: feed them, cook, look after their health, take them to the doctor if they are sick, dress them, knit and sew, keep them clean, wash them, brush their hair, wash their clothes, teach them how to behave socially, help them with homework, help out with meetings at school, obtain benefits for them, make packed breakfast and/or lunch, etc.

The maternity of the Virgin is, as Stølen observes, passive (1996:249). Thus, a woman's participation in the labour market has tended to be considered undesirable because it competes with her 'natural' role as mother. Meanwhile, as a 'good wife' she has to attend to her husband, to obey his wishes, to keep the house as he likes it, the clothes clean, the food prepared when he arrives home, to support him emotionally, to save and to spend little, to be sexually disposed when he feels like it, her own femininity being asexual, and accept bad treatment. As housewife she must keep the house clean, organise the household budget, and make domestic arrangements for when

she has to go out. Thus while in some sense women are equal, or even superior to men in religion, they are considered socially subject to men in marriage and motherhood (cf. Stølen 1996:250). The man is the provider and the protector of women and children.

Not surprisingly given the maternal symbol of Maria as a privileged representation of the feminine in imagery relating to women, the area of maternity and the regulation of fertility as well as being an object of legal norms, has fallen under the laws of religious morals. In this area the Catholic Church has been extremely resistant to liberalism. In relation to reproductive rights the system has continued to reaffirm traditional norms, which are mainly punitive, even though these are no longer in accord with the real order. Due to the difficulty of policing laws that relate to individual intimacy, the system strives to impose on this space the weight of real and symbolic sanctions in the discourses of morality and normality. Giving life is a gift of God, not of men, and less still of women and those women that do exercise control over their bodies are murderers<sup>7</sup> and madwomen menaced with mental trauma and imprisonment (cf. Olea 1995).

Several writers on Latin America have traced the linkages with the Mediterranean in order to understand gender relations and imagery. Stølen, writing in relation to an Argentine prairie community, believes that in that context, where there is not the same legacy of indigenous cultures and where immigrants have to a large extent implanted European culture, it is in fact more helpful to look at Mediterranean ethnography in order to understand the religious legitimation of male dominance. She traces shared theories about procreation and masculinity and femininity rooted in Catholicism (Stølen 1996:244). Whilst it has been argued above that Chilean culture is a case of cultural syncretism between indigenous and Christian cultures, nevertheless the Mediterranean 'honour shame complex' may also be seen to resonate in this context, forming part of the dominant 'ideological core'. Throughout the Mediterranean region, male honour is said to derive from the struggle to maintain intact the sexual chastity of kinswomen, and this renders male reputation dependent upon female sexual conduct. When males are not successful in this they lose their prestige, or honour. (Peristiany 1965; Gilmore 1987; Stølen 1996:245). Thus, female sexuality is a form of social power that is threatening to men and needs to be controlled. Female sexuality is therefore

closely supervised and transferred as part of the family patrimony: 'Male reputation is, on the one hand, dependent on the purity and chastity of women, and, on the other, on their own capacity to conquer women' (Stølen 1996:246). The realisation of maleness therefore does not only lead to the 'fall' of some women, it also requires the control of others (wives, sisters and daughters), who are the potential prey of all men at large. This accords with my own data, in which men strive to keep their wives at home with the children and not in places where they will meet men whose reputation depends not on their chastity but, on the contrary, on their capacity to seduce them (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Olivia Harris has also linked her understanding of *machismo* to the influence of Mediterranean cultures. She describes *machismo* as 'a whole ideology of behaviour, deriving in part from an emphasis on the radical difference and opposed characteristics of men and women' (Harris 1983:4). The behaviour deemed proper for one sex is positively disapproved of in the other: for example, adultery is 'natural for a man', but a serious offence for a woman; housework is a feminine activity, so that any man doing it is likely to be accused of effeminacy. To be a proper man involves being afraid of nobody, sexual prowess, siring many children, exercising tight control over female kin, authoritarian behaviour, even violence. The proper characteristics of a woman are complementary: submissiveness, dependence, and exclusive devotion to the family and home. For Harris, the Catholic Church has been significant in perpetuating some of the attitudes underlying *machismo*, particularly as regards the forms of sexuality. Also, the traditional Catholic religion has simultaneously exalted women - for example in the form of the Virgin mother - and debased them, as for example in the myth of Eve who tempted Adam and brought sin into the world. Thus, on the one hand there is the figure of the mother who in Chile as in other Catholic cultures is still an object of special veneration, while at the same time women who are not close kin are treated as inferior. This extreme contrast in attitudes towards women lies at the heart of *machismo* (Harris 1983:4).

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<sup>7</sup> One Chilean bishop recently declared on the news that the most dangerous place in the entire world, more dangerous than war-time concentration camps, was the womb of a woman. Churches invariably have a plaque on the wall outside in memory of all the murdered *seres por nacer* (unborn beings).

### *The media*

The image of Maria remains the dominant symbol of womanhood in the Chilean context, but increasingly there is imagery that challenges this symbol and the beliefs and practices stemming from it. New ideas of modern womanhood are emerging in the media, such as the image of the successful career woman with economic independence referred to in the aspirations of some younger women. Soap operas, which are extremely popular, are introducing more diverse images of women, who are less submissive and more independent (Charles 1995:3). Nevertheless they continue to present women as responsible for family life and the private sphere. There is also a tendency to choose actresses who are white, tall, blonde and slim, which, as the women in San Joaquín were at pains to point out, does not reflect what most Chilean women look like and leaves them feeling inadequate. Some of the national newspapers, such as *La Nación* (The Nation) and *La Epoca* (The Times), include excerpts and issues taken from the alternative press, such as the feminist monthly paper *Puntada con Hilo* (Sewn with Thread), dealing for instance with sexuality, domestic violence, relationships and sexual harassment. These provide images of women who are conscious of their condition, the need for change and ways to bring this about (Rodriguez & Silva 1994: 127). *Radio Tierra*, a feminist radio station set up by *Casa de la Mujer La Morada* (La Morada Women's House), regularly includes women and development issues and is run and presented by women.

Whilst the new emphasis on having a job and economic independence should not be underestimated, young women still talk of motherhood as the area in which women are *realizadas* (realised).<sup>8</sup> Montecino (1991) uses the expression *tradicionalismo moderno*, modern traditionalism, to describe this situation in which women continue to identify femininity with the roles of mother and wife.

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<sup>8</sup> The Christian Democrat's *PRODEMU* (Program to Promote Women's Development) accords with this outlook running formative workshops, with an emphasis on developing economic earning capacity, without questioning gender roles in the household.

### *Popular mythology and the Catholic family*

As well as the powerful symbolism of motherhood contained in imagery emanating from the Chilean Catholic Church, the popular notions of *huachos*<sup>9</sup> and *lachos* also reinforce the hyperbolisation of the mother-child association coupled with the absence of the father.<sup>10</sup> These popular notions in relation to family relations represent partial refractions of Catholic dogma on the family. The unions that occurred between Spanish men and Indian women during the period of conquest rarely ended in marriage. Normally the woman stayed with the child, her *huacho*: abandoned, present and singular. As opposed to the father who was absent and in a sense plural: he could be this or that Spanish man, a generic father (Morande 1984; Montecino 1991:41). Illegitimacy thus played an essential role in the formation of Chilean society, propitiated by the institutions of *amancebamiento* and *barragarría*. The former is where the couple by tacit agreement live together without legalising the union in a church, the latter describing the situation where as well as a legitimate family the *conquistador* had various relationships with Indian and *mestizo* women, usually servants. Sometimes the offspring of these relationships were added to the family although in an inferior rank, or in a form of sub-family (Montecino 1991:44). The mining and rural economy in Chile, both involving male migration, also contributed to this pattern. In this context the notion of the *lacho* developed. The *lacho* was a *huacho* who displaced from his birthplace finds a woman that will take him in. He offered her protection in exchange for a relatively easy life (ibid.: 47). This created a pattern in which the father's absence was filled by a *lacho* who was hardly ever there, he himself being the absent father from another space where a woman had sons with him, who will herself remain alone perhaps waiting for another (*lacho*) to take his place.

With the formation of the Republic of Chile, there was a transformation in official discourse with the new ideal of legitimate unions blessed by the Church. Nevertheless, while the upper classes aspired to a western-Christian family model which was monogamous and based in the law of the father, the middle and lower classes continued to reproduce the woman-centred family with absent father (Montecino

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<sup>9</sup> The word *huacho* comes from the Quechua word *huachuy*, meaning to commit adultery. It is used to designate an illegitimate child or orphan (Montecino 1991:41).

<sup>10</sup> As Villareal observes in her study of womens' beekeeping groups in Western Mexico, discourses at the periphery can at times be more conservative than dominant discourses. In that context, state representatives were seen as providing an alternative discourse, that offered a degree of space for women and in many ways subverted local 'dominant' discursive practices (Villareal 1996: 204).

1991: 49). According to Gabriel Salazar, a historian of nineteenth century Chile, men felt compelled to wander the earth, and the father turned into *un ser legendario pero inutil..el anti-heroe de lo que era deseable en la sociedad* (a legendary but useless being...the anti-hero of what was desirable in society).<sup>11</sup>

In the *poblaciones* the word *lacho* is still frequently used to refer to men, especially those who are considered flirtatious, with the implication that they have more than one woman partner. *Huacho* is a frequently used term of affection, women often greet each other: *Hola mi huacha!* This gives an indication of the extent to which this mother-centred family model is incorporated both ideologically and in practice.

### *Sexuality, the Church and HIV*

Sexuality is the area where writers as well as my informants most frequently refer to 'double standards'. Montecino describes this phenomenon as 'the cult of appearance' and Child refers to the government's attitude as the politics of *el avestruz*, the ostrich (with its proverbial head in the sand) (Montecino 1991:97; Child 1994). The Catholic Church continues to take the view that procreation is the only justification for sexual intercourse,<sup>12</sup> and that any form of sex education is unthinkable, turning a blind eye to reality, with the government tending to follow suit. For women the ideal of submissiveness, passivity and exclusive devotion to the family and home contained in Catholic discourse excludes the possibility of an active sexuality as a positive attribute. Indeed, such women that do have the audacity to express their sexuality run the risk of being labelled whores, for such behaviour is the antithesis of the moral purity expected of them. Women's sexuality is an ambivalent source of virtue, as LeVine (1989) describes is the case for women in Mexico, and Melhuus with reference to Argentina:

On one hand, the ideal of her moral rectitude is stressed and expressed through the symbolic value of virginity, which carries particular significance in relationships between men, grounding the discrete classification of women. On the other hand, motherhood is the epitome of womanhood...Girls are not only brought up to be mothers; in a sense they are also brought up to be virgins.

(Melhuus 1996:244)

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<sup>11</sup> Gabriel Salazar in 'Ser niño huacho en la historia de Chile (Siglo XIX)' (1990) in *Revista Proposiciones*, Chile, historia y bajo pueblo, N.19, Ediciones Sur, Santiago de Chile, cited by Montecino 1991:52.

<sup>12</sup> Stølen observes that the new Catholic catechism, published in 1992, confirms the literal understanding of the virgin birth from 1566, and commandments regarding gender relations in this new document are almost a blueprint of the 1566 version (Stølen 1996:250).

Thus, the virgin represents the complete state to which women should aspire, the primordial symbol of femininity. As Melhuus observes, this state, one of impenetrability, is mediated through a denial of sexuality. For motherhood to be equated with virtue, the tension between the virgin and the mother must be overcome. In Catholic imagery, the symbol of the suffering mother serves to resolve this tension (Ibid.: 244). This pattern is reflected in the relationship between the couple in Chilean culture which involves a form of domination by the man over the woman, based in a type of patriarchy, focused around *machismo* (incorporating the honour/shame complex) and feminine inferiority, particularly in the area of sexuality (see Chapter 7). In keeping with this *machismo*, whilst the ideal in terms of marital morality is sexual fidelity, infidelity on the part of men is tolerated, even accepted as normal, while infidelity on the part of women is much more negatively regarded (cf. LeVine 1989).

The problem of confronting Aids<sup>13</sup> in Chile has made visible the restrictive discourses of the state in relation to sexuality, forcing into public debate the themes which are most taboo in Chilean society: sex, drugs, pleasure and death, as well as the related themes of the acceptance of diversity and the existence of sexuality. Irma Palma (1994) observes that Aids has brought about a greater 'liberalisation' of sexual behaviour and made communication both in the public and private spheres more open. She also sees changes in the sexual sphere as being linked to changes in the political sphere. Thus, when the military regime silenced the political sphere, at the same time it silenced changes operating in the area of sexuality as part of the cultural changes it sought to implement. The silencing of the discourse of global change signified the silencing of the discourse of sexual freedom. In concrete terms this was expressed in the suppression of programmes of sexual education, the refusal of the authorities to take part in the worldwide enquiry into fertility, the criminalisation of therapeutic abortion, the restriction of family planning programmes amongst others and an absence of debate on these issues during the military dictatorship.

Palma identifies three contemporary Chilean discourses related to Aids that reflect different ideological viewpoints (Palma 1994:105-115). The first alternative, endorsed by the Catholic church, proposes a reordering of sexuality in which the practice of pre-marital and extra-marital sex is condemned; sex must be repositioned in

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<sup>13</sup> The first case of Aids in Chile was reported in 1984. By 1994, 803 people had been reported as suffering from Aids, and 1,305 carried the infection. Of these, 86% were exposed to the disease by sex, 6% by blood and 2% by transmission from mother to child. There are 13.5 men infected for every 1 woman, although this ratio is changing over time. Of the women, 26% of the women infected knew that their partner was a carrier of the infection; 53% were not aware of the situation; 2% were prostitutes; 19% were infected by blood. The epidemic has increased by an annual average of 40%, with cases existing throughout the country. (Figures from Child 1994 : 97-103).

the space of the marriage; while for the young, the single and homosexuals chastity is the only appropriate mode of conduct.<sup>14</sup> This position relies on producing collective terror. Those who express this view tend to associate the appearance of Aids with cultural transformations in the last few decades in the sphere of sexuality, in effect advocating a return to former times when female sexuality was entirely repressed, and linked exclusively to marriage and reproduction, whilst male sexuality could be expressed in eroticism and non-marital sex.

The second alternative is the denial of the proximity of Aids, the idea that everything is an exaggeration. This is connected with the common view that sees sex as something spontaneous, uncalculated and improvised in silence. According to this view, planning and discussing contraception spoils sex. This may also have to do with difficulties associated with moral issues. Palma suggests that this approach is connected with the guilt which Catholic doctrine inspires in relation to sexuality. Understandably, those who feel that they are transgressing a norm by having pre- or extra- marital sex, feel that it is less condemnable if it is not planned or premeditated.

The third alternative embraces the challenge of developing a creative solution to the problem of AIDS. Rather than condemning or denying sexual practices, this approach aims to make them protected. This is a heterogeneous response, joining together several diverse perspectives that are not always convergent. Those who share this view are the professionals connected to public health, sex education, social sciences, feminism and popular education. Their perspectives depend on their position in civil society or the state. Unlike the other discourses on Aids, it does not deny options, including that of the conservative message of abstinence and chastity, but in a new way, as a right: 'you have the right not to have sexual activity if you don't want it'. This approach advocates tolerance and choice; it recognises that sexuality in society is segmented and varied, and that proposals too must be varied to enable people to effectively protect themselves.

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<sup>14</sup> Homophobia is also a characteristic aspect of this discourse. Tim Frasca describes how in Valparaíso in 1990 Carabineros burst into two homosexual *boliches* and took away, at gunpoint, 300 men who were taken to a centre for sexually-transmitted diseases and examined by force for HIV. Two doctors of the public health service requested and supervised this action. Neither of these places is now in existence, one closed when the owner was murdered and the other, called 'Divine' suffered a fire which cost 16 lives. Two new gay discos have now opened in Valparaíso, including one called the 'Nuevo Divine' (Frasca 1994).



### 3.3 Women and international human rights

It is not now possible to analyse discourses on gender, wherever they occur, without recognising the ways in which they are implicated in larger processes of economic and political change well beyond the control of local communities (Moore 1994:63). Part of the argument of this thesis is that the personal experience of gender and gender relations is bound up with power and political relations on a number of different levels. In the case of women, international rights concerning reproduction and sexuality are gradually beginning to exert an influence on the construction of gender.<sup>15</sup> This section sets out the development and content of this discourse.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Western distinction between public and private spheres, which is central to the traditional notion of the state, has also had a defining influence on the categories of international law. The discourse of human rights law has generally tended to target 'public' state-sanctioned violations, whilst the most pervasive harm against women tends to occur within the 'private' realm. Although, as this and the following chapter reveal, rights directed at state actions in relation to women are also important. Historically women's issues, on the few occasions when they were considered, were seen as belonging to a private sphere which should be exempted not just from domestic law, but also from human rights norms. This view has long been used as a justification for excluding women's rights from being considered human rights. The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 affirmed equality among sexes as a basic principle, but only in 1975 was women's condition seriously examined by an international body, when the United Nations sponsored meetings launching the Women's Decade (Corrêa & Reichmann 1994: 57). Where women have been explicitly considered, it has tended to be as objects of special protection, as opposed to subjects of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Tomasevski 1993). A further problem concerns the fact that international human rights standards have long been perceived as gender-neutral. In practice this neutrality often amounts to a disregard of women, in much the same way as the neutrality of the concept of citizenship has obscured the exclusion of women as political subjects.

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<sup>15</sup> Whilst reproductive rights has significance for both genders, as McLean argues, 'it remains crucial that any policy designed to expand or contract reproductive choice honestly confronts the fundamental point that the primary bearers of interests in human reproduction remain women, who carry the social, physical, psychological and practical burdens of childbearing and -rearing' (McLean 1989: 215).

The feminist discourse on human rights (see Charlesworth, Chinkin, MacKinnon, Stark *et al* in Dallmeyer 1993; Peters and Wolper 1995) argues that human rights must be defined and protected when their violation originates not only in state action but also in private action by making states responsible for the conduct of non-state as well as state actors. This perspective has been the basis for the struggle, outlined in the previous chapter, to secure respect for women's reproductive and sexual rights as key elements of human rights.

Women's sexual and reproductive self-determination has been recognised as a human right at the UN Conferences in Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing, but the theme is still contentious. Within women's movements there has been a great deal of division and debate regarding both conceptual frameworks for defining women's autonomy and strategies for achieving respect for the bodily integrity of women (Abeysekera 1997: 41). Meanwhile, conservative groups and religious fundamentalists continue to oppose ideas of reproductive and sexual freedom. The Platform for Action agreed in September 1995 at the UN Fourth World Women's Conference on Women in Beijing was a more highly contested text than any of the other international statements agreed at recent international conferences (Baden and Goetz 1997:11).

In terms of reproductive and sexual rights, the Platform for Action consolidates the achievements of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994 (ICPD), whose Programme of Action enshrines what Petchesky describes as an 'almost-feminist' vision of reproductive rights and gender equality in place of the old population control discourse (Petchesky 1995:152).<sup>16</sup> It also, as Petchesky observes, reflects a defeat of Vatican and fundamentalist efforts to universalise a traditional patriarchal view of family, reproduction and sexuality, and a repudiation of neo-Malthusian views of population growth as the main cause of global economic and environmental crises.<sup>17</sup> The document integrates principles of gender equality including male responsibility for housework and childcare and the empowerment of women in the domain of reproductive and sexual health. It recognises reproductive rights, broadly defined and linked to primary health care, as fundamental human rights.

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<sup>16</sup> This section draws heavily on Petchesky 1995.

<sup>17</sup> This reflects the effectiveness of NGOs shift in discourse from a health paradigm to a human rights paradigm. As Petchesky observes (1995:153): rights language provides an effective instrument, universally recognized as political, for making group claims on governments and intergovernmental organizations, in the face of rising fundamentalism and conservatism.

Unlike earlier documents adopted in Bucharest (1974) and Mexico City (1984), the 1994 document includes a whole chapter devoted to 'Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of Women,' concerning itself with the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status. It rejects the view of women's equality as simply a means to the ultimate goal of fertility reduction. Women's empowerment is linked to their enhanced 'decision-making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life' and thus with transforming existing power relations 'at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public' - in the realms of education, nutrition, work, politics, domestic labour, and childrearing as well as reproductive health and sexuality. Accordingly, the Programme urges governments to take measures to end rape, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation, all seen as forms of violence against women that not only violate their basic human rights but adversely affect their health.

The Programme also repeatedly recognises the importance of male responsibility in many domains traditionally regarded as women's sphere: housework; care of children, the elderly and the disabled; prenatal, maternal and child health; prevention of STDs, including HIV; contraception, reproductive health care and all aspects of family planning; as well as economic support and maintenance of families.

For the first time in any international document, it recognises the similar conditions 'of poor women in developed and developing countries' and identifies the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women as a 'prerequisite' to ending poverty and promoting sustainable human development (Petchesky 1995:153). Further, the document urges governments to advance women's decision-making power both as individuals and as participants in organisations and movements:

Every effort should be made to encourage the expansion and strengthening of grassroots, community-based and activist groups for women. Such groups should be the focus of national campaigns to foster women's awareness of the full range of their legal rights, including their rights within the family, and to help women organise to achieve those rights.

(Chapter 4, Platform for Action 1995)

The Platform for Action reiterates the basic concept of 'reproductive rights' contained in earlier international instruments: the 'basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their

children and to have the information and means to do so'; 'the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health'; and the 'right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion, and violence.' In addition, it incorporates the World Health Organisation's very broad definition of 'reproductive health', encompassing sexual health and emphasising personal well-being. Reproductive health means: 'complete physical, mental and social well-being' with regard to all reproductive and sexual matters; 'access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice'; and the ability 'to have a safe and satisfying sex life.' As Petchesky observes, this emphasis on individual freedom and pleasure represents a shift from both anti-natalist and pro-natalist perspectives (Petchesky 1995: 154).

This definition provides the basis for an integrated, comprehensive model of programmes and services that includes full antenatal and obstetric care, infertility treatment, breastfeeding, prevention and treatment of gynaecological cancers, HIV and other STDs, as well as a wide range of family planning methods and counselling: and instructs governments to incorporate these services into primary health care programmes. The document also proposes that adolescents be given access to 'integral sexual education and services', that 'can help them understand their sexuality and protect them from unwanted pregnancies and STDs, while making the 'distribution of high quality condoms' an 'integral component of all reproductive health care services.' In addition it recognises the human rights principles of respect for bodily integrity and security of the person as basic underpinnings of reproductive and sexual health and rights. This affirms not only the obligation of individual men to respect the bodies and reproductive and sexual decisions of individual women but of governments and intergovernmental agencies to promote policies that guarantee such respect at all levels where power operates: interpersonal, clinic, community, state and international (Ibid.:154). The document also contains provisions concerning the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, promoting safer sexual practices, and enforcing women's control over their own fertility.

On the issue of abortion the ICPD Programme is guarded. It fails to include access to safe, legal abortion as a necessary part of women's reproductive health and rights. Although it does recognise 'unsafe abortion' as 'a major public health concern' that contributes to high rates of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity. It also urges government policies and practices that will make abortions safe wherever they occur, including 'compassionate counselling,' follow up and 'access to quality services

for the management of complications arising from abortion.' These provisions mark a conceptual advance for women in Chile and other countries in Latin America and elsewhere where abortion remains illegal. They represent an acknowledgement that legal prohibitions will not eliminate women's need for and recourse to abortions, however unsafe.

The Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing incorporates most of the ICPD Programme intact. With respect to reproductive and sexual health, it goes further with the recognition that:

The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between women, and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences.<sup>18</sup>

Conservative states blocked an attempt by the European Union to restate a definition of women's sexual rights and also succeeded in removing any mention of 'sexual orientation' as a cause of discrimination from the Platform.<sup>19</sup> In spite of this, the paragraph represents the clearest statement yet, in an international document, that women have a human right to sexual freedom (Parker 1997:34).

In terms of abortion, the Platform for Action agrees that states will 'consider reviewing laws containing punitive measures against women who have undergone illegal abortions'.<sup>20</sup> Otherwise the Platform does not go further than the Cairo population conference on abortion and contraception (Berer 1997:6). It recognises the right of women and men 'to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning as well as new and additional resources to the developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources'. It admits that 'additional resources from within the UN

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<sup>18</sup> Paragraph 96 Platform for Action 1995. (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1996).

<sup>19</sup> The Vatican pronounced that: 'The Holy See's participation in the consensus can be only a partial one'. It disassociated itself from the entire section on health, stating it represented 'a totally unbalanced attention to sexual and reproductive health in comparison to women's other health needs'. It also 'expressed concern' about the entire section on human rights, which it said demonstrated 'excessive individualism' (The Independent, Saturday 16 September 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Platform for Action: Paragraph 106k. As Petchesky observes, while couched in the weakest language, this provision does move one small step in the direction of an international norm that would decriminalize abortion (1995:154).

regular Aid budget...will also be necessary'. The Platform also recognises the existence of 'diverse family forms'.

In relation to religion, secular and religious states hotly debated the role of fundamentalism in women's inequality. The Platform reads: 'Religion, thought, conscience and belief may, and can, contribute to fulfilling women's and men's moral, ethical and spiritual needs. However, it is acknowledged that any form of extremism may have a negative impact on women and can lead to violence and discrimination.'<sup>21</sup> There was also much debate as to whether to quantify women's unpaid work. Governments agreed to develop methods for assessing the value and distribution of unremunerated work that is outside national accounts with a view to recognising the economic contribution of women and making visible the unequal distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work between women and men.<sup>22</sup>

Importantly, the Platform affirms that the human rights of women are 'an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights.'<sup>23</sup> The Platform for Action will not be legally binding,<sup>24</sup> but meant as a guide for governments.

These international discourses on rights are entering people's lives through revisions of state policy, such as the incorporation of SERNAM (see Chapter 4), and also through the activism of certain NGOs and women's groups and through discussion in the media and reportage of events such as the Cairo and Beijing conferences.

### 3.4 The discourses of NGOs

While the symbolism of motherhood has long been embedded in the institutionalised dominant discourses identified in § 3.2 above, a different contesting maternal image as well as non-maternal images began to be articulated by the diverse groupings and women's organisations that arose in the country in opposition to the military dictatorship. Some of these groups sprang up under the auspices of the Catholic Church, opposition parties and others under NGOs, some of which form part of the emerging feminist movement (see Chapter 5). A feminist perspective or *una perspectiva de*

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<sup>21</sup> Paragraph 24, Chapter II, Platform for Action 1995.

<sup>22</sup> Paragraph 165 (g) Platform for Action 1995.

<sup>23</sup> Paragraph 9, Annex I, Platform for Action 1995.

<sup>24</sup> Twenty governments registered reservations on the final document.

*genero*, a gender perspective, now informs the discourses of many NGOs. Many have adopted and indeed contributed to the development of the international women's rights discussed above, others have developed alternative rights discourses.

Whilst there is great diversity in the ways that NGOs working with women conceive of gender issues and the ways they should be approached, there are broadly two ideological camps amongst Chilean feminist activists. Different women label these camps in different ways. One group refer to the 'others' as the *institutionalistas*, who they believe are incorporated into the 'patriarchal system' in such a way that they no longer form part of the women's movement; they are referred to as having been *absorbidas*, absorbed by the system. The women who are part of the 'real' women's movement are the *autónomas*, who conceive of themselves as autonomous from the 'patriarchal system' to which they are opposed and which they believe will come to an end, either as a result of revolution; the challenges brought about by the development of a parallel society based on more egalitarian values, or because it will eventually simply self-destruct, on the basis that patriarchal societies everywhere are in crisis and this will in the end bring about their downfall. Their work is concentrated mainly on raising women's political awareness and developing their leadership skills. Meanwhile those that the *autónomas* refer to as *institucionalistas* refer to themselves as the *realistas*, the realists, and to the 'others' as the *utopianistas*, utopianists (with the implication that their utopian ideas are wholly unrealistic). Their strategy is to change the system incrementally by campaigning for women's equal rights, lobbying for changes in the law and changes in government policy. Many also run workshops for women with themes that focus mainly on women's personal development. Unlike the *autónomas* they are in favour of co-operating with SERNAM and engaging in dialogue with the government in order to bring about change.

Conference participants at the 7<sup>th</sup> *Encuentro Feminista de America Latina y el Caribe* at the end of 1996 divided themselves into these two camps. What had been planned and conceived as a conference in which women representing different viewpoints and experiences would discuss and share in a pluralistic atmosphere quickly broke down as it became apparent that the two sides were unable to communicate with each other and finally the conference divided into two parallel events. In describing these two competing discourses I will refer to each group as they refer to themselves: the *autónomas* and the *realistas*.

For the *autónomas* entering into dialogue with the state implies becoming a traitor to the cause. They see the changes effected by this form of action as involving the appropriation of feminist ideas to suit the state's own purposes; whilst this may bring about improvements in the system, the system does not fundamentally change at all. Therefore any engagement with government, even at the local level, should either be

### 3.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to set out the dominant discourses influencing gender relations in the context of the *poblaciones* of Santiago. It identifies two competing ideological camps: firstly, a set of dominant discourses centred around Catholicism and secondly, the new contesting discourse of human rights relating to women and local discourses on rights. Embedded within these discourses are different competing subject positions, which are reproduced in the multiple actions of men and women in their daily lives. Dominant Catholic discourse, it is argued, emphasises motherhood as women's 'essential' role. The high valuation of motherhood, together with other factors such as female domesticity and sexual chastity expressed in these discourses contributes to the maintenance of a particular sexual division of roles. Human rights discourse and alternative local discourses of rights challenge dominant ideas about reproduction and sexuality contained in Catholic discourse and offer alternative subject positions that focus on women's status as citizens. The important point to draw from this is that, without denying the importance of ensuring the formal enforceability of such rights, the gender perceptions enshrined in human rights agreements provide a discourse that women can appeal to, both collectively and individually, in negotiations to legitimate their positions. The ethnographic data in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, and Appendix VI, where women may be seen to make use of rights discourses to make sense of their own situations, aims to illustrate this.

In terms of formal enforceability, the impact of these agreements and conventions will also clearly depend upon the continued activities of social movements demanding accountability and lobbying to ensure that enabling conditions are put in place to put them into operation. As several commentators have pointed out, these declarations of rights are of limited effectiveness without the mechanisms, resources and political will to enforce them.<sup>25</sup> Chapter 4 examines the state's role in the production of gender discourses and investigates the impact of the women's movement and rights discourses on state law and policy. Developing upon the argument that Catholicism forms the basis of a dominant 'ideological core' in Chilean culture, which is contested by rights discourses, Chapter 4 examines the way in which this conflict is being played out at the level of the state. The state in its policies and practices may be seen to be negotiating between these two powerful discourses.

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<sup>25</sup> As Petchesky points out, the creation of such enabling conditions will also require macro-economic changes on a global scale and radically new development alternatives (Petchesky 1995:160).



## *Chapter 4*

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### **Gender and the state: the interpretation of women's citizenship**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The last chapter considered the way in which discourses are constitutive of gender. It argued that in Chile there exists an ideological core of discourses rooted in Catholicism that position women in a particular way, which emphasises motherhood as women's 'essential' role. The high valuation of motherhood, together with other factors such as female domesticity and sexual chastity expressed in these discourses contributes to the maintenance of a particular sexual division of roles. The theoretical discussion in Chapter 2 introduced the idea of the state as a powerful source of gender discourses. In its policy and legislation, it was argued, the state invokes particular discourses and practices, which regulate and define the gender categories of 'women' and 'men', and which in turn delimit the categories of male and female citizenship. It is through engagement with the social institutions that transmit these doctrines and practices, norms and values that their gender perceptions become part of a wider ordering of notions of masculinity and femininity (Melhuus, 1996:180; Moore, 1994: 61). Investment by individual men and women in the subject positions that these discourses offer causes them to be reproduced over time (Moore 1994:61). In Chile, it is argued here, the discourses emanating from the state have tended to be closely interconnected with the gender ideology promoted by the Catholic Church, forming part of the dominant 'ideological core' which emphasises motherhood as women's proper role.

The legal system, as one of the state's key institutions, also operates to position men and women in a particular way in relation to the state. The discourses that are embedded in laws and the ways in which they are applied contribute to the creation of the categories of persons (Chanock, cited in Manicom 1992:460). This approach is consonant with a number of contemporary critiques of law which draw on the methodology of Foucault to examine how the claim to truth of the abstraction 'the law' works as a mechanism of power and how legal subjectivity is constituted within discourses of law (see, for instance, Carol Smart 1989). Like the work of writers such as Manicom (1992) and Corrigan & Sayer (1985) this approach is based on an understanding of law not

just as discriminating against women but also as constitutive of gender. Thus the definitions of 'husband' and 'wife' and laws about marriage, the assumptions about the domestic arrangements that inform labour regulation, the regulation of 'normal' sexuality – all represent fundamental material and moral constructions of gender integral to state formation. In addition, as Corrigan and Sayer (1985) identify, the taken-for-granted aspects associated with the legal process – the legal recordings, the court rituals that legitimate legal rulings, the naming of persons under the law – may all be seen as elements of state formation which are based on, and produce social divisions like race and gender.

The relationship between state and Church discourses has not remained static however. Different governments with different political agendas have meant that there have been ever-changing tensions and disparities within this set of dominant discourses. Over the last twenty years, and especially in the past ten years since the end of the military dictatorship, fundamental forms of social and economic restructuring have brought about changes in ideas about gender roles. The process of democratisation and the appearance of new social organisations, as well as the influence of the international community, in particular new international rights directed at women, have all contributed to these changes (Goetz 1995:45). These processes and the organisations involved in them incorporate new discourses on gender, providing alternative constructions with which individuals can challenge dominant gender ideologies. The state itself has increasingly come under pressure to promote women's interests, such that it now has a National Agency for Women (SERNAM), with the result that the state itself has competing and contradictory discourses within its own structure. The ideas and strategies emanating from SERNAM frequently incorporate ideas about gender that conflict with the discourses that the state employs in other areas. In effect, the state may be seen to be negotiating between the two discourses described in the previous chapter: that of the dominant ideological core focused around Catholicism and that of the new discourse of human rights for women and local rights discourses. It is argued that this is what underlies the contradictory nature of the state's treatment of women.

By analysing state policy and laws relating to women, this chapter seeks to show the contradictions in the state's treatment of women. On the one hand some state policies and changes in the law reflect the desire to escape the past and present a modern image. Just as women have often been a repository of morality in the past, so in the modern era they are sought out as signifiers of modernity. Contradictions stem from the fact that pervasive cultural ideas about women, identified in Chapter 3, continue to locate them as

repositories of selfless morality centred on motherhood. This conflicts with the project of presenting Chile as *un país emergente*, an emerging power, the so-called *jaguar* of the Latin American economies, and with internal and external pressures to give women more rights. In effect the state's policies and discourses aim to modernise while at the same time maintaining certain conservative cultural mores connected with Catholicism. In the area of the law this contradiction can be seen most clearly. Whilst there has been considerable activity in relation to gender relations, most notably with the introduction of a new law in relation to domestic violence, at the same time the criminalisation of abortion prohibits women's moral agency, autonomy and choice and there is no legal provision for divorce on the breakdown of marriage.

#### **4.2 Gender discourses embedded in government projects: the examples of the Ministry of Health and SERNAM**

The 'ideological core' which emanates primarily from the Catholic Church has tended to find resonance also in the workings of state institutions, whose policies and programmes provide 'a tacit but powerful interpretive map of normative, differentially valued gender roles and gendered needs' (Fraser 1989: 9). The relationship between the two has not remained static however. In relation to reproductive health, for instance, state discourse has at different times conflicted with Church doctrine.<sup>26</sup>

The Christian Democrat government of Eduardo Frei (1964-1970) oversaw a period of democratisation and reform. It was during this period that *la planificación familiar* (family planning) was introduced in Chile in the face of what were perceived to be the most serious public health problems at that time: high levels of backstreet abortions resulting in septicaemia, malnutrition in mothers due to successive pregnancies and infant mortality. The *Movimiento pro Emancipación de las Mujeres de Chile* (MEMCH) had been campaigning for the availability of contraceptives and safe abortion since as early as 1935, on the basis of a discourse focused around enabling women to live as *seres humanos* (human beings), a precursor to the present reproductive rights discourse. Funding was now available from international agencies with their own agendas such as the World Bank, the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, and the IPPF. The *Asociación Chilena de Protección de la Familia* (APROFA) was set up to work in conjunction with the government to promote 'responsible parenthood'. In 1967 the

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<sup>26</sup> The following section draws on historical material contained in *De La Miel a los Implantes* (Jiles Moreno & Rojas Mira 1992) and *Programas estatales en salud sexual y reproductivo* (Hurtado 1993).

government agreed to provide contraceptives free of charge in state clinics and hospitals.<sup>27</sup> The Catholic Church in Chile initially declared its resistance to the use of contraceptives. In 1965 the Director of the *Servicio Nacional de Salud* (National Health Service), doctor Francisco Mardones was attacked by the *Organización de Médicos Católicos* (Organisation of Catholic Doctors) for organising family planning programmes. He had to defend his position before an assembly of bishops, who were at this time convinced by his arguments that information regarding contraceptives should be made available to couples. The Holy See's reaction, which subsequently guided the Catholic Church's opinions on contraceptives, did not appear until 1968,<sup>28</sup> by which time family planning programmes were already underway.

The modern approach adopted by the government in relation to contraceptives did not extend to promoting changes in the relations between the sexes. On the one hand, it promoted change in society and, on the other, it conserved the values seen as fundamental for the security of the family. It was under Frei's government that the *Centros de Madres* were set up, directed at women in popular sectors of the community with the aim of reinforcing the traditional role of women. Thus whilst the contraceptive pill became available and more women began to work outside the home, this was not accompanied by any redefinition of masculine and feminine roles in state policy. This is reflected in the fact that sterilisation was restricted so as only to be available to women of a certain age, with a certain number of children and only with the written consent of the husband.<sup>29</sup> For Jiles Moreno and Rojas Mira, during this period women became the objects of policies for regulating fertility, policies that they had played no part in designing (Jiles Moreno and Rojas Mira 1992:143).

Already during this period it is possible to see a number of diverging discourses in operation: those of the Catholic Church, the state, the women's movement and the influence an international donor community concerned to curb population growth. This process of contestation continued under the *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity) government.

The Socialist Popular Unity government led by Salvador Allende, which lasted from 1970 until the military coup in 1973, continued to promote family planning, now

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<sup>27</sup> The contraceptives available were the pill and IUD, which remain the most commonly used contraceptives in Chile.

<sup>28</sup> Pope Paul VI published the *Humanae Vitae* Encyclical in this year, which stated that contraceptives went against the natural order of things and were therefore illicit and immoral (Revista Católica 1968).

<sup>29</sup> These restrictions still apply to the present day, see Chapter 6.

as an inalienable right regardless of civil status. The government developed a health programme aimed at women, *Atención Integral a la Mujer* (Comprehensive Healthcare for Women), whose efforts included the diffusion of contraceptives, preventive measures against cancer of the womb and sexual education. Women were not, however, involved in the planning or execution of this programme and again the government directed policies at women in their roles as mothers and workers without questioning the relations between the sexes. Legislation was enacted to improve the situation of women workers by providing for maternity leave and nursery schools, but a traditional feminine model was reinforced by a discourse which referred to *la abnegada madre* (the abnegated mother) and *la valerosa trabajadora* (the courageous worker). The *Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer* (National Secretariat for Women), an antecedent to SERNAM, was also set up under Allende, but it had little opportunity to get under way before the military coup in 1973. The women's movement, which was largely supportive of the government, was relatively quiet during this period.

In relation to reproductive health, the activities of APROFA continued under the Allende government, with emphasis on family planning and responsible parenthood. The government took the position that abortion could be legalised if the people felt it necessary and desirable. The Barros Lucos hospital began a programme in which it would carry out abortions for women who lived in the locality whose contraception had failed. President Allende even spoke out in favour of sex education, saying it was time to break with *una moral absurda y canija* (an absurd and foolish morality). Meanwhile, the Church became increasingly resistant to notions of reproductive freedom and began to condemn women who underwent abortions. The *Revista Católica* (Catholic Magazine) in 1973 stated that: 'the problem of abortion should not merely be discussed in terms of the individualistic considerations of the woman, but rather in terms of the common good and, above all, in terms of the personhood of the being to be born. True feminine emancipation does not consist in formal or material equality with the opposite sex, but rather in the recognition that the feminine personality is essentially specific: a woman's vocation to be a mother' (cited in Jiles Moreno and Rojas Mira 1992: 171 (my own translation)).

The period of military government saw a return to 'traditional' Catholic values. It sought to promote its ideological stance through the *Centros de Madres* (CEMA/Mothers Centres) which had been set up under Frei. In 1977 they were put

under the control of Pinochet's wife, Lucia Hircart de Pinochet, and became a vehicle for the military's view of motherhood (Weinstein 1993:179). The volunteers were organised in the *Secretariat Nacional de la Mujer* (SNM), the direct predecessor of the current national women's agency (SERNAM). Its mandate was to enable women 'to better carry out their roles as mothers, wives and housewives' (cited in Waylen 1992:306) and its discourse emphasised women's apolitical nature, as well as being markedly anti-feminist (Jiles Moreno & Rojas Mira 1992: 180).

Although the government's modernising projects led to changes such as a growing incorporation of women working outside the home, the values of the social economy of the market did not permeate through to women. This was because the value system sustained by the military government hyperbolised the image of the mother and also because of the persistence of the idea that women's extra-domestic work was seen as a necessity rather than in terms of personal realisation (cf. Montecino 1991:100).

In terms of family planning, the policies of the dictatorship fluctuated over time. After initially continuing with the efforts of the previous two administrations to offer information and contraceptives, in 1979 the government adopted a pro-natalist policy. The government had already in 1975 further restricted access to sterilisation, requiring not only the permission of the husband but also of a team of doctors, signalling increased control over women's bodies. In 1979 the government set out its aim to increase the size of the population to improve the country's prospects of economic development. It decreed that sterilisation would no longer be available, contraceptives would only be available on request and that it would promote programmes that 'dignified the role of the mother'.<sup>30</sup> In its discourse the government defined women's procreative capacity as their primordial social function. During this period, in relation to matters of reproduction, the government and the Catholic Church affirmed one another in their opposition to birth control and in terms of women's proper role.<sup>31</sup> It tried on numerous occasions to end the responsible parenthood programmes of organisations such as APROFA, without success, and made it increasingly difficult for people to obtain contraceptives. Sex education, which had been initiated under the *Unidad Popular*, ground to a halt.

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<sup>30</sup> Boletín APROFA, June 1976, p 4-5, cited in Moreno & Mira 1992: 188.

<sup>31</sup> It should be emphasised that this does not mean that the Catholic Church supported the dictatorship in other ways. Indeed parts of the Catholic Church, most famously the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad*, were actively involved in social movements campaigning against the abuses of the military regime.

The repressive nature of the dictatorship, paradoxically, stimulated unprecedented growth in civil society, with the formation of a wide range of social organisations united in opposition to the authoritarian regime. New discourses developed within the newly galvanised women's movement, some of which radicalised women's traditional role,<sup>32</sup> others of which began to question what was perceived to be patriarchal ideology (see section 3.4 below and Chapter 5). Thus while the symbolism of the mother was institutionalised in the policies and practices of the military government, another *faz materna* (maternal face) was articulated as a way of contesting its domination (Munizaga & Letelier 1988, cited in Montecino 1991:111).

Chile's recent history has seen a range of different forms of political and economic models: the Popular Front, Socialism, and Dictatorship. There has been some variety in the way that different governments have dealt with women. But the ideological basis underpinning ideas about masculine and feminine roles in dominant discourse has shown relatively little variation. The symbolic figures of the mother that is present (the feminine) and the absent father (the masculine) have continued to rearticulate themselves, transmitting their contents to men and women (cf. Montecino 1991:97). In terms of reproductive health, politics and programmes have until now been directed primarily towards women in their role as mothers without considering women as subjects in their own right. They have tended to be concerned primarily with preventing and reducing the problems of their children. Little consideration has been given to the risks that affect their health and the importance of increasing their capacity to decide about their sexual and reproductive lives (Valdés and Bustos 1994). More recently, under the transition to democracy, it would appear that the tide is gradually changing, as a result of pressures from the women's movement, reinforced by the platforms for action agreed at Cairo and Beijing.

The comparison between programmes commenced in the late 1980s and those that have commenced recently during the transition to democracy shows a potential change in state discourse. The policies of SERNAM have created a situation of internal contestation in relation to state discourses on gender. The rest of this section considers three examples which demonstrate both how state discourse is continuing to change

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<sup>32</sup> Montecino describes how the political expression of women comes from the home - spilling out onto the street, with the use of utensils from the domestic space transferred to the public space: the image of Santiago as an *enorme cacerola rugiente* (an enormous rumbling casserole) evokes the force and dominion of the maternal feminine: the power of the kitchen, the key place of reproduction (1991:105-6).

even under SERNAM's aegis, and how state discourse can be both liberal and repressive at the same time.

*Case 1: The Ministry of Health's Programa de Salud Materna y Perinatal (Maternal Health and Prenatal Care Programme)*

This programme has been one of the Ministry of Health's largest projects, commenced in the late 1980s. It followed in the tradition of health programmes directed at women in the sense of being aimed at the pregnant woman, and concerning itself with the process of pregnancy and giving birth, the unborn child and the recently born. This reflects the tendency to focus on a biomedical definition of women's needs, when in fact women's health needs are wider than just in relation to reproduction (Valdés and Busto 1994; Hurtado 1994). The state conceives of women's health needs as being intimately connected with the function of reproducing the species and society. The woman is already defined as a new child-mother unit. As Hurtado (1994) observes, the state's preoccupation with the situation of women in the fertile age presents an image of women as intrinsically connected with the child to be born. This reproduces and reaffirms the symbols of gender that circumscribe the social role of the woman to maternity, leaving the male gender outside participation and responsibility in the areas of reproduction, biological and social. The programme not only provides assistance, but also disciplines women to assume the role of mother with all its cultural significance, as well as to respond favourably to the social expectations of that role. From before the birth of the child she is being prepared to be the agent of the child's health and well being (Hurtado 1994). In theory the programme was aimed at involving the parents in the activities of education in paternal responsibility, but in practice the parents do not have the opportunity of real participation because the consultations are so brief. This is clearer still when it comes to the moment of birth and during postpartum, where the father does not have access to the room where birth takes place nor easy access to the postpartum area.<sup>33</sup>

Other projects, for example, the projects of the MINSAL-ONG (Ministry of Health and NGO) agreement<sup>34</sup> specifically emphasise concern for women *pobladoras*, women in situations of greatest vulnerability regarding physical and mental health. But these have tended to operate through community and participatory work directed at actors in general, without specifying the recipient. In this way women remain invisible

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<sup>33</sup> Patricia González, Director of La Legua Polyclinic, interview October 1996.

<sup>34</sup> This line of action is aimed at the development of forms of co-operation between the health services and NGOs with the aim of contributing to primary healthcare.



through the image of members of families of scarce resources, members of community organisations, etc. (Hurtado 1994).

On the other hand in the case of projects that do specify the subjects/recipients of the projects as women, for the most part these projects deal with problems of health already defined by the state, such as the prevention of cervical cancer and breast cancer and adolescent pregnancy, again reflecting a biomedical approach focusing on women's reproductive function. In addition, in the case of projects aimed specifically at poorer women, there is a tendency to position them as passive receptors of assistance. Rather than offering support to improve their quality of life, this assistance is directed at relieving emergency situations. Sources of assistance are so limited that recipients sometimes find themselves having to lie and hide their belongings in order to receive assistance. This is often the case in relation to obtaining a *tarjeta de indigente*, which enables the recipient to receive free health care. Some individuals develop a reputation for exaggerating their situation and are referred to by other women as *los vivarachos* (scroungers). Health workers and social workers, for their part, often generalise this vision to all the applicants and treat them accordingly (cf. Weinstein 1993:181).

#### *Case 2: SERNAM and recent Ministry of Health programmes*

The more recent Ministry of Health programme *Salud con la Gente*, in which the women from the Co-ordination of women *pobladoras* in San Joaquín participated, adopts a different approach. It conceives of *pobladores* in general as active participants in the programme rather than as recipients. In the case of the Co-ordination, it was willing to provide unconditional funding for a project on sexuality and mental health, as they had specified in their application, leaving the women to plan and execute it on their own terms. Some people involved in the programme expressed a sense that they felt that they had been co-opted by the Ministry to do free work for them due to understaffing in local clinics, but the women of the Co-ordination had foreseen this possibility and clearly negotiated their own terms. All political parties now pay lip-service to women's equality, but, as other writers have identified, the Right, represented by *Renovación Nacional* and *UDI* (Independent Democratic Union), places it in the context of women's special role at the centre of the family and as the bearer of moral values (Waylen 1997: 128). There have been discussions in parliament about changing the civil codes which affect women's rights, which have focused particularly on issues such as mothers' lack of control over their children, especially *patria potestad* (the 'power of the father' and the name given to the laws surrounding aspects of marriage and the family, particularly the control of children and women's movement) and more recently on divorce. In February 1997, a narrow majority agreed on the need to legislate in this area.

On 3rd January 1991 the government under Aylwin created SERNAM<sup>35</sup> (*Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*), a national governmental body answerable directly to the president and staffed in part by feminists from the Christian Democrats and Socialists. This was partly in response to the requirements of CEDAW<sup>36</sup>, but also a result of the specific history of the women's movement in Chile, where dictatorship ended with processes of democratic recovery in which women played a significant role, thereby making legitimate their demand for an institutional place in government. The legacy of CEMA, the antecedent to SERNAM in terms of institutionalising women's presence in the state, has persisted in one of SERNAM's main objectives: 'to strengthen family values' (Pollack 1994a: 2). In spite of this, right-wing parties were opposed to its establishment, seeing it as a threat to the family. The Catholic Church has opposed some of its proposals, reflecting the transformation from its oppositional role against the dictatorship to a more traditionally conservative role, with a marked antipathy to reproductive rights and divorce.

SERNAM has an unusual statutory basis. It is a unit within the Ministry of Planning and Co-operation, yet a State Minister heads it. Its mandate is to formulate women-oriented policy and to incorporate a gender perspective in policies defined by other government units. Like other such national agencies aimed at institutionalising women's interests in policy processes, it is responsible for submitting regular reports to the UN Committee for the Advancement of Women. At the local government level, several Municipalities have also set up women's offices in their headquarters, which are meant to try to develop programs for women at the local level, to establish links with grassroots organisations, and to give them information and advice. The success of these offices has depended on the individuals involved and also the will of the mayor/mayoress in office to allocate it funds, often they are isolated and lack influence (Pollack 1994b: 11). Many have strong links with SERNAM.

Despite the conservative tone of some of its objectives, SERNAM has targeted programmes at women's rights, violence against women, childcare provision for women in paid employment, and affirmative action to encourage women to enter non-traditional fields of employment. These measures have to some degree challenged the patriarchal structures of the Chilean State, society, and the judicial system (Matear 1997:93).

In the area of health, SERNAM has been responsible for the *Programa Unidad Movil Ginecológica* (Mobile Gynaecological Unit) and the *Programa del Embarazo en Adolescentes* (Adolescent Pregnancy Programme). Two other important projects are the

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<sup>35</sup> Under Law No. 19.023.

<sup>36</sup> According to article 5 of the Chilean Constitution, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Chile in December 1989, is incorporated as part of the basic rights of the Chilean citizen. CEDAW provides for the creation of government agencies to address women's problems; its regulations provide for establishing 'national machinery for the advancement of women'.

*Programa de Violencia Intrafamiliar* (Domestic Violence Programme) and the *Plan Nacional de Apoyo a Mujeres Jefas de Hogar de Escasos Recursos* (National Plan of Support for Women Household Heads of Scarce Resources). The *Programa Unidad Movil Ginecológica* was started with awareness of low levels of PAP and self-breast examinations and, whilst well intentioned and educational, tends to reinforce the image of the woman dissected under the biomedical approach.<sup>37</sup> The *Programa del Embarazo en Adolescentes* operated (the project has now ended) in a vacuum in terms of an absence of diagnostics which would enable one to understand the multiple social and cultural factors that result in adolescent pregnancy (Hurtado 1994).

With the *Programa Nacional de Violencia Intrafamiliar*, SERNAM has taken an approach which moves away from the tendency to deal with women only in terms of their reproductive role and incorporates notions relating to gender relations and in particular the relations of power experienced in everyday life in the home. Domestic violence is treated as a problem that affects all society, not just the individuals directly involved. The consequences according to SERNAM are deterioration in the woman's self-esteem, lack of motivation, fear, neurosis, and predisposition to the consumption of tranquillisers and lack of concentration.<sup>38</sup> They set out to approach domestic violence as a human rights problem, proposing to attack the problem in a multi-dimensional way, through formal education, by means of communication and through legislation. In general this project has contributed in an important way to making visible a social situation that has traditionally remained hidden.

The *Plan Nacional de Apoyo a Mujeres Jefas de Hogar de Escasos Recursos* sought to address the complex causes of social and economic disadvantage for female heads of households. It conceives of a relation between woman-headed families and poverty, associated with low levels of education, a precarious work situation and the double burden of work of this group of women. Unlike in previous programmes, women are identified as performing a social role traditionally connected with men.

Thus distinct images of women and assumptions co-exist in SERNAM projects which position them in particular ways vis-à-vis the state. In some cases the projects are framed in terms of assistance and discipline that suppose an interaction with women in their reproductive and maternal roles (e.g. *Programa Unidad Movil Ginecológica*). Under this logic, in face to face interactions the healthcare system imposes a *deber ser*, a particular way of being/identity, on women as mothers and wives in a reproductive/caring role, as being poor, and without education, who as such will be beneficiaries of the state. By identifying women as carers the programmes may operate to position them in an inferior way symbolically. Women will only continue to obtain

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Patricia Gonzalez, Director of La Legua Polyclinic, San Joaquín October 1996.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Coty Silva, director of the Domestic Violence Programme December 1996.

# CONSTRUYENDO FUTURO

PROGRAMA DE APOYO A  
MUJERES JEFAS DE HOGAR  
DE ESCASOS RECURSOS

## Para ti mujer que eres Jefa de Hogar



**SENCE**  
SERVICIO NACIONAL  
DE CAPACITACION  
Y EMPLEO

**ILUSTRES  
MUNICIPALIDADES**



Plate I: Cover of SERNAM promotional material in relation to its programme for female-headed households.

benefits as long as they fulfil the roles assigned to them. On the other hand, the more recent projects are framed in terms that emphasise community participation through women developing tools and capacities to resolve their health problems in their local contexts through community networks. Adopting this approach, projects direct themselves towards women as active subjects with the understanding and capacity to take decisions regarding their body and health. The *Plan Nacional de Apoyo a Mujeres Jefas de Hogar de Escasos Recursos*, whilst again positioning women in terms of their poverty and lack of education, also incorporates the image of women who work outside of the home as providers, traditionally a male role, as well as caring for their children. The *Programa Nacional de Violencia Intrafamiliar* incorporates the image of women as individuals with the right to recourse to the state and legal institutions in the event of domestic violence. These trends are more in line with SERNAM's present day discourse.

### *Case 3: The Equal Opportunity Plan*

Frei's government has now made a commitment to the politics of equal opportunities based on the Nairobi strategies<sup>39</sup> promoted by SERNAM. On 8th March 1995 the government promised to implement the *Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Mujeres* (Equal Opportunity Plan), formulated by SERNAM. This is conceived more broadly than the conventional association of equal opportunities with employment rights to 'promote an equal distribution of resources and social tasks, of civil rights and participation and access to power between men and women and to value women's contribution to economic development'. The document comprises eight principal elements:

1. To develop constitutional and legal changes, including proposals for implementing international conventions which Chile has ratified; extending women's access to the justice system and creating awareness amongst lawyers and judges about women's rights; provide information for women regarding women's juridical situation.
2. To facilitate equal opportunities to all types of families.
3. To incorporate the concept of equal opportunities in the education system.
4. To promote a non-discriminatory image of women in the media and in the culture.
5. To improve women's access to and situation in the workplace.
6. To improve women's health and healthcare.

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<sup>39</sup> Whose paragraph 11 states that: 'equality is the objective and means by which individuals receive equal treatment before the law and have equal rights to exercise their rights and develop their attitudes and potential conditions, with the aim of being able to participate in the political, economic and cultural development of the country in which they benefit from its results'.

7. To motivate women's social and political participation and access to decision-making.
8. To strengthen the public policy process to enable the implementation of equal opportunities policies, mainly by permitting closer involvement of SERNAM in the development of state policies.

The section dedicated to women's health (SERNAM 1995: 46-54) specifies the need to embrace a wider notion of health and well-being and in particular to modify the biomedical model which is predominant amongst health service providers to one that is '*psychobiosocial*', incorporating the psychological, social and biological aspects of health (Valdes 1994). This more 'integral' approach should be directed towards women at all stages in life, not just *a su función reproductiva*, in terms of her reproductive function. It identifies specific measures in the ambit of reproductive health, with the aim of 'assuring the exercise of reproductive rights and access to a free decision as to the number and spacing of children'; 'prevention and treatment of adolescent pregnancies' and 'improving the prevention of death and maternal health in perinatal processes'. The document promotes women's right to 'a sexuality free of risks to their mental or physical health'. The section dealing with women and the workplace incorporates proposals relating to care of infants and promoting shared responsibility of men and women in childcare and domestic responsibilities.

This Equality Plan, with its goal of gendermainstreaming, goes beyond earlier programmes which although made positive achievements have all been short-term and relatively marginal to national policy. Up until now SERNAM has been less successful in holding government ministries to greater accountability on their incorporation of gender perspectives into the political process (Matear 1997:93). The extent to which it can ensure implementation of the Plan with its limited institutional muscle remains to be seen. It has remained cautious in relation to controversial issues and its discourse. Mention of abortion is limited to a short provision specifying the need for studies relating to the causes of abortion and forms of prevention. As Matear observes, this reflects the fact that many of the women in key positions in SERNAM have close links with political parties; expressing their personal views could be highly prejudicial for their own political future. As a result, in seeking to politicise the private sphere, SERNAM has not been immune from pressure from right-wing forces and the church (Matear 1997:94). Coty Silva, director of the programme against domestic violence, speaks of being tied to official discourse and restricted by the fact that SERNAM is a state institution and must be seen to be in accord with government policy. She says that she constantly has to be aware that she must not give personal views about things and feels that SERNAM has distanced itself from the women's movement and the proposals that it elaborated at the beginning of the democratisation process. Whilst the issue of

divorce is being more openly discussed, controversial themes, such as abortion are *temas de ONG* (NGO issues).<sup>40</sup> She regrets the fact that, although SERNAM has had no formal mandate to work with women's organisations or NGOs, there is no effective interlocutor between SERNAM and the NGOs. The Equal Opportunities Plan itself did not involve consultation with women's organisations. This accords with Matear's finding that SERNAM's collaboration with a select number of NGOs and university departments have produced a kind of 'insider trading' (1997:96). Although disillusioned by its process, Coty Silva nevertheless believes that SERNAM has had an important impact.<sup>41</sup>

From SERNAM's point of view, too much interaction with outside constituencies can be seen as a violation of professionalism to the extent that it is regarded as politicising the administration and eroding its integrity (Goetz 1995:43). Meanwhile women's organisations may resist association with an administration linked to a government that is not seen as responsive to their concerns. For some observers SERNAM's relative detachment from the women's movement may be due to a reluctance to become embroiled in political differences within the NGO and women's communities (Pollack 1994b: 4, cited in Goetz 1995:43). According to this view, in a context of highly politicised forms of associational life in civil society, this reticence on the part of SERNAM is understandable and probably healthy. Feminist organisations thereby preserve their autonomy and are able to pursue a more radical agenda outside government. But this does not fully explain the uneasy relationship between SERNAM and NGOs. For Goetz, the transformative potential inherent in the relationship between an active women's movement and state agencies promoting a gender and development agenda is perhaps best exploited where each retains a degree of autonomy from the other (Goetz 1995: 43). Autonomy is important, but given the SERNAM has now replaced the women's movement as the key interlocutor in the public discourse on women's issues, it would seem important to maintain dialogue with its major constituency. The mistrust that exists may have to do not only with different approaches to feminism, but also with social class (cf. Matear 1997:98; Schild 1997). This issue is explored in the following section.

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<sup>40</sup> For these reasons SERNAM has little credibility in the women's movement. Although there are a few well-known women from the women's movement in key positions, most of the other appointees have little experience of working in or with women's organisations (cf. Chuchryk 1994: 88).

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Coty Silva, director of the Domestic Violence Programme December 1996.

### **4.3 Women's legal status in Chile**

Before taking a detailed look at the content and operation of the laws in relation to domestic violence and abortion, which it is argued represent the contradictory limits of women's citizenship in Chile, this section considers the struggle to place women's rights on the political agenda and women's current legal position in Chilean society.

In spite of the central role played by women in the opposition movements and the profound changes in the economic and social structure of the country resulting from the process of modernisation, these factors have not substantially changed women's position in society. Indeed, Chile is one of the most backward countries in terms of women's rights in Latin America (Gómez de la Torre & Matus 1994:9). To understand fully this situation it is necessary in the first place to look back to the formation of Latin American states. As Jelin has pointed out, most states gained legitimacy and social consensus on the basis of their active role in the provision of services, and issues of political democracy and civil rights were pushed into the background. In this cultural matrix there are few examples of citizens of either gender having constructed themselves as 'subjects of law', with some degree of individual or group autonomy (Jelin 1996:107). In Chile, as elsewhere in Latin America, this pattern of power relationships has overlapped with a markedly patriarchal culture, causing a double toll on the social condition and rights of women (cf. Valdés 1990). The formation of the Chilean State is premised on the notion of patriarchal right, which continues to underlie the content of most laws as well as the functioning of the legal system. In this sense the law and the legal system operate as a discourse incorporating certain ideas about female and male, positioning men and women in different ways in relation to the State. The law thus forms a central part of the dominant ideological core identified in Chapter 3. As outlined above, this discourse of law in some of its aspects conflicts with the project of modernity and with internal and external pressures to give women more rights. This has meant that whilst the law has for the most part continued to enshrine a particular sexual division of roles, in some areas it has undergone liberalising reform.

A process of change commenced during the 1970s with the struggle against the military dictatorship. As described in Chapter 5, the closing of traditional political channels under the military government (1973-1990) permitted the strengthening of



civil society, favouring the growth and development of pluralistic and autonomous movements which brought together diverse sectors of the community to denounce and protest against the dictatorship. This brought new themes to the fore and revealed new and different forms of political action to those adopted traditionally by political parties. In this context a strong women's movement developed that, together with other movements, participated actively in the recuperation of democracy. They achieved two important things: they visibilised and rescued women's capacity to organise and strategise, and they drew attention to women's condition in Chilean society. The first National Women's Conventions took place in 1973, 1979 and 1980. The women's divisions of various political parties were the seedbeds for a number of important women's organisations. The bests known of these at a national level were the Committee for the Defence of Women's Rights (CODEM), Women of Chile (MUDECHI) linked to the MIR and the Communist Party respectively. Other organisations that came into being during this period include the Union of Chilean Women (UCHM), linked with the Socialist Party; the Juanita Aguirre Front, of the Radical Party; Feminine Action connected with MAPU and the Popular Women's Union (UPM) of the Socialist Party. In 1980 the Movement of Women Pobladoras (MOMUPO) was born. 1983 marked the beginning of a new period, the Movement for the Emancipation of Chilean Women, MEMCH '83, was formed, which co-ordinated the work of a variety of women's organisations with the aims:

- To fortify the fight of the Chilean people with the combined force of women and their organisations for the reestablishment of democratic institutions and the respect and full operation of the rights of the human being;
- To promote a massive joint denunciation of all forms of discrimination exercised against women;
- To link Chilean women with the international women's movement, not only on the basis of its own specific revindications, but also in its more universal aspect: the fight for all forms of peace, the fight for the harmony of human life with the natural environment.

(Cited in Gaviola *et al* 1994: 150 (my own translation))

MEMCH '83 played an important role throughout the dictatorship.<sup>42</sup> In 1985 it elaborated 'The Principles and Revindications which Constitute the Chilean Women's Platform' which clearly links women's subordination to the economic, political and social conditions in Chile. Whilst not expressed specifically in terms of citizenship, this is clearly implicit in the proposals which it makes, which sees women's participation 'as an active subject' as a responsibility, a right and as essential for democratisation and development.<sup>43</sup> In terms of rights it identifies the areas of Equality before the law, Political Participation, Employment, Health, Education, Housing, the Family, Sexuality and specifies changes in law and policy required in each of these areas. The 1986 Women's Petition (*Pliego de las Mujeres*) presented to the Civil Assembly uses similar language. Women's commitment to the restoration of democracy is phrased in terms of their duty and right as active subjects. The need to end women's subordination is linked to the struggle to end the dictatorship on the basis that true democracy cannot exist without the democratisation of women's condition. In addition to the earlier demands, it seeks the ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).<sup>44</sup> Rural women added their voices in their own document Rural Women's Demands (*La Demanda de la Mujer Rural*), which identifies similar areas in which changes in law and policy are required and in addition identifies the need to abolish laws in relation to holding property and its administration that discriminate against women.

In 1988 the feminist movement put forward the 'Women's Demands for Democracy' (*Demandas de Las Mujeres a la Democracia*). Amongst its demands, clearly stated in terms of citizenship and personhood, are the ratification of CEDAW, the creation of an institution of ministerial rank staffed by women specialists able to channel the demands of the women and their organisations, to study and make proposals in public policy, to supervise the implementation of the policies in other ministries and to ensure the development and participation of women in public life. It also sought the creation of local women's offices to support the implementation of these policies at the local and sectoral levels. It proposes changes in education and the

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<sup>42</sup> During the first years of its existence MEMCH '83 co-ordinated 26 women's organisations, but the difficulty of arriving at agreements that respected and expressed the differences of its members meant that some, such as the Feminist Movement left. In the end it was comprised of 7 principal organisations (CODEM, MUDECHI, UCHM, UPM, the Association of Democratic Women, Juanita Aguirre Women's Front and Feminine Action) (Gaviola *et al* 1994:152).

<sup>43</sup> *Principios y Revindicaciones que Configuran la Plataforma de la Mujer Chilena, Coordinadora de Organizaciones Femeninas* MEMCH '83, reproduced in Gaviola *et al* (1994:238-243).

media that perpetuate inequality between the sexes and affirmative action to eliminate discrimination by imposing quotas of 30% of government posts and 50% of trade union and political party positions in favour of women.

As well as addressing women as citizens, it also addresses them as mothers and workers. Referring to motherhood it expresses the value of this role, but also emphasises that it should not be a source of discrimination or impede women's development. It stresses that women's realisation as persons went beyond motherhood and that maternity should be considered a social function that should be assumed by society as a whole. The document recognises that women's domestic work is one of the pillars on which the national economy rests, but that it is neither recognised nor valued. It states that domestic work limits women's capacity to exercise the right to undertake paid work. Women's traditional role in the rearing and education of children and the idea that women's work is complementary to the family's income are all seen to discriminate against women. Amongst other reforms it seeks the revision of protective legislation which in practice operates to discriminate against women, replacing it with legislation for 'workers (men or women) with family responsibilities'.<sup>45</sup> Significantly, the document does not call specifically for divorce legislation or the decriminalisation of abortion. The failure to address these issues was due to pressures from the political parties as it was becoming increasingly likely that Pinochet would lose the national plebiscite making way for democratisation (Matear 1997:88). This sidelining of divisive issues continued as the democratic process came underway, due to the need to preserve unity within the democratic opposition (the *Concertación*) whilst the transition process was negotiated between the military and the mainstream political parties. Thus while the presence of female political élites within the women's movement enabled them to incorporate many of their demands into the newly elected government's political programme, the most controversial issues, including legislative changes affecting the family – most notably divorce and abortion – were sidelined (Matear 1997:89).

Although the movement was able to structure common demands, this did not translate into an agreed common strategy. By the beginning of 1989 a sector of the movement had formed the Co-ordination of Women's Social Organisations (*Coordinación de Organizaciones Sociales de Mujeres*), which emphasised the need

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<sup>44</sup> *Pliego de las Mujeres*, reproduced in Gaviola *et al* (1994:244-247).

for autonomy and acting beyond the interests of the state and political parties. Another sector, made up mainly of party activists from a number of political parties, formed the Women's National Alliance for Democracy (*Concertación Nacional de Mujeres por la Democracia*), whose main aim it was to open up institutional spaces for women within the democratic opposition and ultimately within a future government.

Thus, the process of transition began with a women's movement that had played a protagonistic role during the dictatorship, but was submerged in the invisibility of civil society in this period (Gómez de la Torre & Matus 1994:7). Now, the transition to democracy has emphasised the re-establishment of institutional democracy over the processes of social democratisation. As a consequence the women's movement, after having played a crucial role in the opposition to Pinochet, has found its role as an autonomous pressure group circumscribed (Matear 1997:91). The main responsibility for law reform now falls to the National Agency for women, SERNAM, whose proposals and Equality Plan seek to incorporate many of the demands articulated by the women's movement.

For the most part, the present legislation situates women as objects of regulation. The civil and penal legislation is obsolete given that it dates from the end of the last century and does not take into account the changes experienced in the political, social and cultural contexts and their effects on the lives of individuals and their families (Gómez de la Torre & Matus 1994:10; Valdés & Gomáriz 1995). This has contributed to a situation in which social reality and legal regulation are out of step with each other as is demonstrated in the following consideration of the four main branches of the law: constitutional, family, criminal and employment.

In terms of constitutional rights, the Chilean Constitution does not expressly consecrate the juridical equality of men and women, except in generic form in the first article which states: 'Men are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. It is clearly essential to advance the constitutional equality of men and women given that that is the norm to which all juridical ordering must adjust itself and constitutes a principal which informs all the law. With this aim in mind President Aylwin's government sent a constitutional reform to the Parliament that stated 'Men and women are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. Unfortunately, this reform was sent to the Parliament together with a set of political reforms that were contentious in character, such as the removal of the Commander in Chief of the Army (at this time General Pinochet). The

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<sup>45</sup> *Demandas de las Mujeres a la Democracia*, reproduced in Gaviola *et al* (1994:251-256).

Parliament considered these reforms all together rather than separately and they were rejected, as the *Concertación* did not have sufficient support. Although SERNAM has had more success in relation to other non-constitutional reforms, such as the new law in relation to domestic violence, this experience reflects the strength of dominant discourses in relation to women (see Chapter 3), as well as the contrast between the optimistic expectations placed on the process of the transition to democracy and the often frustrating reality of the workings of the institutional system. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was ratified by the executive in 1989, also now in theory forms a part of women's constitutional rights.<sup>46</sup>

In relation to family law, the modifications that have been effected in the civil code have not altered the conception that it had in the past century about the role of the woman in the family and in society: mother, wife and pillar of the family. The law has tended to protect women, understanding them as weak and not capable of acting and deciding for themselves. The reform in 1989 eliminated the *potestad marital* that gave the husband rights over the goods and person of his wife, and the adult woman has full legal capacity. Nevertheless, the woman married under the system of conjugal partnership does not have the capacity to administer her own property or that of the conjugal partnership, maintaining the husband as the administrator and chief of the conjugal society.<sup>47</sup> SERNAM has elaborated a project to present to the Parliament that in principal substitutes the regimen of the conjugal society for a regimen of participation in the earnings.<sup>48</sup>

The personal duties between spouses are equivalent, the provision that the woman owed her husband obedience and the latter undertaking to protect her having disappeared two decades ago. On the subject of parental authority, Chile constitutes an exception to other Latin American countries where authority is exercised jointly, as it is exercised by the father, and only if the husband is not available does the wife exercise

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<sup>46</sup> There are two different views regarding the operation of international law in member states. The first argues that it is sufficient that the international law is incorporated in the law of the state through ratification. The second that the two systems are completely separate and the international law can only have effect if it is transformed into law through determined proceedings. There is no consensus between states as to which of these prevails and generally a mixture operates. It is argued that Chile follows a pattern of automatic incorporation. Where there is a contradiction between Chilean domestic law and international law it is likely that domestic law will prevail (Mediana 1993:39).

<sup>47</sup> Law on the System of Participation in the Community Estate dated 1994.

<sup>48</sup> In the regimen of participation in earnings, the patrimonies of husband and wife are maintained separate and each of them administrates and enjoys and disposes freely of their own earnings. At the end of this regimen (i.e. separation or, in the future divorce), the earnings generated during the lifetime of the regimen are balanced out in such a way that the partner who has obtained less (for example the woman who has dedicated herself to the home) has a right to participate in the earnings produced by the other partner (Gómez de la Torre & Matus 1994:16).

it. The law makes a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children.<sup>49</sup> The latter may be 'natural' (born out of wedlock of persons who were free to marry) or simply illegitimate. Natural children have fewer rights than legitimate children and more than illegitimate ones.<sup>50</sup> In all these aspects, the legislation is anachronistic in establishing one model of the family and ignoring the reality of the many men and women who organise their lives at the margins of these legal norms, either because they do not want to marry or are unable to do so because of the absence of a divorce law.<sup>51</sup> Chile is the only country in Latin America that does not admit divorce with dissolution of the marital bond and the only country that does not grant legal effect to consensual unions. This has meant that there are many couples with illegitimate children with all the characteristics of a family but without the protection of the law. The government has agreed on the need to legislate in relation to divorce, but at the same time a project is underway to tighten up the law in relation to annulments. This project seeks to bring an end to annulments based on the incompetence of the Civil Registry (i.e. based on legal technicality), thereby closing the one possibility for legally ending a marriage. Some legal initiatives are underway which encourage men to share and assume responsibility as parents, for example enabling men to have time off work in the case of the birth or illness of a child (Gómez de la Torre & Matus 1994:15). In relation to adultery, a further project seeks to modify the discriminatory treatment towards women in the law, which presently provides that she cannot marry the person with whom she commits adultery. This reform would also establish that either partner can be guilty of adultery, both receiving the same penalty.

Whilst there have been some positive developments in the areas of constitutional and family law, the criminal law still contains many provisions that are detrimental to women. As in many Latin American countries, the honour, honesty and good name of

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<sup>49</sup> A proposal to change the law in relation to filiation has been sent to Parliament. This seeks to establish equal rights between children independent of the married status of the parents, it seeks to replace the labels 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' with 'children of the marriage' or 'extramarital' and aims to facilitate the use of DNA tests to prove paternity (Gómez de La Torre & Matus 1994:18 ). This project is important given that more than a third of children in Chile are born out of wedlock. The newspaper 'La Nación' on 16th February 1997 reported that the Civil Registry records indicated that 41% of children in Chile are 'illegitimate'.

<sup>50</sup> The only other country in Latin America where this is still the case is Paraguay (Valdés & Gomáriz. *Mujeres Latinoamericanas en Cifras, Tomo Comparativo* (Latin American Women. Compared Figures) 1995).

<sup>51</sup> The edition of 'La Nación' dated 16th February 1997 reports that, according to the last national census, there are 324,926 people whose civil status is '*separado de hecho*', separated in fact, and 537,444 who are '*convivientes*', people who live together as partners but who are not married.

the woman characterise certain crimes and determine their punishment. Thus, a woman receives a lighter punishment in the case of abortion *honoris causa*, where abortion is carried out to cover up the woman's dishonour. In the case of abduction, punishment is more severe in the case of the abduction of a woman with a 'good reputation'. One of the requirements of statutory rape is that the victim must be a virgin, over 12 and under 20 years of age. At the moment the law against rape is contained in the Penal Code in the section dealing with 'crimes against the order of the family and against public morality'. Rape of a woman by her husband is not punishable. For the crimes of abduction, rape and statutory rape, the offender who marries the victim is exempted from punishment. By marrying the criminal the woman apparently recuperates what he took from her: her honour and that of her family. The action to pursue an offender in a rape case is semi-private, requiring the prior filing of a formal complaint by the victim or her legal representative. This limitation of the exercise of public action is a result of the stereotyped protection of the victim's honour. Inter-familial violence is now covered by the new law against domestic violence (see § 4.4 below).

Employment law, unlike other codes of law, is permanently developing and changing. The result is constant changes and greater protection of the worker, who has recently been threatened by the 'flexibilisation' of employment laws required by neoliberal policies. In any case, the protection only benefits those workers who have a work contract, and people who work in the informal sector of the economy, most of whom are women, and are therefore excluded. In terms of principles, employment legislation does not merit many objections, although there is a latent danger of flexibilisation. For instance, women have become important in the textile industry, where work that used to be conducted in industrial complexes is now being done by women at home. Here women are often subject to the requirements of the flexible model in work contracts (Gómez de la Torre & Matus 1994:11; Valdés & Gomáriz 1995). In general terms there is no work that is forbidden to women as the result of a legal reform dated 1993. There are now many more women in the labour market, but the labour market is sexually segregated with women's work concentrated in the service sector, particularly personal services such as domestic servants.<sup>52</sup> Those who work in domestic service – mostly women – are deprived of the essential rights that are

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<sup>52</sup> From 1960 to 1990 the percentage of women in the economically active population grew from 22.0% to 29.4% (Valdés & Gomáriz 1995:69). In 1989, 78.4% of economically active women worked in the service sector (Ibid.:79).

recognised for other workers: minimum wages, reasonable limitation of working hours, maternity leave, holidays, job security, etc. The workday for household workers lasts twelve hours, and they have no right to charge overtime for anything in excess of that. In the event of illness, if the worker does not recover within thirty days or if she should fall sick again, the employer can consider the contract concluded without compensation (Valdés & Gomáriz 1995:150).

For those women that are protected under employment law, the law provides considerable protection to women during the period of maternity. During pregnancy and up to a year after the expiration date of the maternity leave, a worker cannot be dismissed from her job. Women workers have the right to a paid rest period of six weeks prior to childbirth and twelve weeks after it. The mothers of unweaned children are meant to have one hour a day in which to breast-feed their children. This can be divided into two periods of equal or different duration. Establishments that employ twenty or more women workers must have day-care centres (Ibid.: 153). However, whilst the provisions in relation to maternity aim to address women's needs, the lawyer at one NGO<sup>53</sup> commented that in order to avoid the expense and inconvenience of compliance employers were likely to avoid employing women. Many of the women in San Joaquín said that they were asked to undergo a pregnancy test before they were offered work, reflecting the desire of employers to evade the law in relation to maternity. This is one example of the difference between having rights *de jure* and the ability to operationalise those rights in practice.

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<sup>53</sup> The Open Forum.



#### 4.4 Domestic violence

##### *The new law against domestic violence*<sup>54</sup>

I see it as good in theory, but in reality I don't see it as good. It is said that the women can bring a claim, the woman can assert her rights, or the children can [bring a claim]. But these people don't have anywhere to go. What I mean is, a place to protect these people. There is no physical space, no structures. So that if a woman wants to leave her home, she can't, she doesn't have anywhere to go, apart from not returning to her own home, perhaps another family member [would take her in]. And you know that most women, women that are housewives, *pobladoras*, we don't have the means to rent a house alone. The structure isn't there to be able to say 'these women who have been beaten or raped can take refuge here'. I think that they just concern themselves with the theoretical part, but they don't deal with the reality of putting it into practice.<sup>55</sup>

Fernanda (53 P)

Being the subject of male violence undermines women's position as citizens, preventing them from being able to move and act freely. This view has been strongly argued in human rights law and is endorsed by the Committee for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, in General Comment No. 19, and the Beijing Platform for Action. The demand to confront the issue of domestic violence has also formed part of the demands made by the women's movement in Chile contained in the documents referred to in § 4.2 above. SERNAM, part of whose mandate is to ensure the implementation of CEDAW, began work on the project of creating a law against domestic violence as soon as it came into being. Nevertheless, the law took four years to proceed through Parliament and become law. After discussion in the Senate jurisdiction was relegated to the civil courts, as opposed to the criminal courts, and a first step was added to the process - *una audiencia de conciliación* (a conciliatory hearing). This changed the spirit of the original project and some question the appropriateness of conciliation between injured and aggressor (Gómez de la Torre & Matus 1994:18). Nevertheless, most will concede that the law, which came into effect in September 1995, is a positive step in addressing the problem of domestic violence in Chile.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Ley Numero 19.325.*

<sup>55</sup> *La veo como teoría buena, pero en la realidad no la veo buena, se habla de que la mujer puede denunciar, la mujer puede reclamar sus derechos, o los niños pueden hacerlo pero no tienen donde llegar esa gente, o sea donde proteger a esa gente, no hay espacio físico, estructuras, como para decir que si una mujer quiere dejar su hogar, no puede, no tiene a donde ir, salvo que no vuelva a su propio hogar o donde un familiar, y tu sabes que la mayoría de las mujeres, las mujeres dueñas de casas, pobladoras, no tenemos como para arrendar una casa sola. No nos brindan la estructura como para decir 'aquí van a ser acogidas estas mujeres que son golpeadas, son violentadas', o sea yo pienso que ... se preocupa solamente de la parte teórica pero no de la parte de enfocar la realidad, de la práctica.*

<sup>56</sup> A survey undertaken in Chile found that 80% of women interviewed said that they were victims of violence in their homes (Carillo 1991:180).



La Violencia Intrafamiliar se sanciona  
**POR LEY**

**PROGRAMA PREVENCIÓN  
VIOLENCIA INTRAFAMILIAR**


  
Servicio  
Nacional de la  
Mujer  
Hagamos un nuevo trato

Plate II: Cover of SERNAM pamphlet on the new domestic violence legislation.

The idea is that the law should be able to operate rapidly and it is meant to be operable without the need of a lawyer. The victim (or a neighbour, family member or witness of the violence) should make a *denuncia*, complaint, either directly at the civil tribunal or to the police. The police who receive the complaint are meant to contact the civil court immediately and the parties should then be called to the conciliatory hearing (*comparendo de conciliación*) within 8 working days. The judge has the power from the moment s/he receives the complaint, to make orders to protect the safety of the victim, such as prohibiting the aggressor from the home (for up to 60 days) or the place of work or study of the victim; to order the handing over of the victim's personal effects, where they have had to leave the home, to fix a provisional maintenance agreement and to establish a provisional regimen of custody of the children. The law defines domestic violence broadly to include 'all maltreatment that affects the physical or psychological health of one or more persons, who form part of a family nucleus'. The offender is also defined broadly to include an unmarried partner as well as family members.

According to the law, after listening to the offender at the conciliatory hearing, the judge puts forward to the parties what s/he considers are the fundamental issues to decide whether a reconciliation is possible and will personally ensure that the parties commit themselves to any such reconciliation.<sup>57</sup> If the parties cannot be conciliated or in the absence of the offender, the judge will then hear the evidence against the offender. If the judge deems that violence has been proved s/he will sentence accordingly. The main sanctions against the aggressor include obligatory psychotherapeutic therapy or *orientación familiar*, family orientation therapy, or carrying out work *ad honorem* for the local authority. In the case of injuries whether serious or of a minor nature the case can be referred to a judge of the criminal division to take appropriate precautionary measures and also to apply rules relating to testimonial proof and a medical report on the injuries.

Details of 107 domestic violence cases brought under the new law against domestic violence and dealt with in the *Segundo Juzgado Civil, San Miguel* (Civil Court No.2. San Miguel) are set out in Appendix IIB. This was the civil tribunal with jurisdiction over the locality where I conducted my research. The cases were all dealt with by a functionary of the court, except as specified where the judge was involved in sentencing. In these cases, as the system in Chile is an inquisitorial one, the judge sentences on the basis of the paperwork without seeing the parties to the action.

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<sup>57</sup> *Ley Numero 19.325. Titulo II, Artículo 3 f.*

### *Theoretical perspectives and interpretation*

The first observation to make is that dealing with data concerning domestic violence is problematic. Olivia Harris (1994)<sup>58</sup> draws attention to this in her description of the conflicting accounts of such violence given by Kristi Ann Stølen (1987), who sought to interpret her data within the context of 'a questioning and undogmatic feminism' (Harris 1994:42), and José Sánchez Parga (1990), who sought to reveal the inadequacy of this feminist reading of marital violence, but undermines his own case by a male complicity identical to the female complicity of which he accuses Stølen. It is no surprise that anthropologists rarely address the complicated issue of domestic violence, in part because it necessarily involves negotiating a theoretical position in relation to the uneasy relationship between feminism and anthropology. As Harris suggests, this can sometimes result in attributing blame, which is an 'inappropriate short-circuiting of the task of anthropology which is to elucidate the context of such behaviour' (Harris 1994:43).

Harris and others have sought to produce more sophisticated analyses of domestic violence (see Harvey and Gow: 1994) and Henrietta Moore has devised a general theory of violence which derives from the analysis of how individuals become engendered subjects, focusing on the contradictory and fragmented nature of discourses about gender difference and how these are related to interpersonal violence (see Moore 1994a and 1994b). In particular she suggests that 'we might come closer to the understanding of the phenomenon if we shift our gaze and move from imagining violence as a breakdown in the social order - something gone wrong - to seeing it as the sign of a struggle for the maintenance of certain fantasies of identity and power' (1994b:154). Applying this theoretical approach to the context of Chile, Chapter 3 described the way in which 'fantasies of identity' are embedded in competing discourses and the part they play in the construction of gendered identities through the process of interaction by individual men and women with these discourses. This chapter and Chapter 3 have sought to identify some of the contradictions that exist between and within these conflicting discourses. At the household level these incoherences and contradictions reveal themselves in the tensions lived out in personal relationships, as individuals appeal to old and new discourses in the struggle to constitute their own

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<sup>58</sup> See also the Introduction Harvey and Gow 1994.

subjective positions. At their most extreme, these tensions explode into violence. Thus, analysing domestic violence involves consideration of conflicts in institutional discourse as well as in terms of individual discursive practices.

As Wade argues in relation to Colombia, violence does not emerge in a straightforward way from some self-evident conflict between 'masculinity' and 'femininity' seen as univocal opposites in a relationship characterised simply by 'male dominance' or 'patriarchy' (Wade 1994:134). Rather it emerges from conflicts within and between different aspects of masculinities and femininities, which are valued and appealed to in different ways in different contexts. Unlike Wade, however, I have argued that a dominant ideological core exists which powerfully endorses particular notions about masculine and feminine roles. Whilst this set of discourses cannot be explained simply in terms of a universal monolithic concept of 'male dominance' or 'patriarchy', I argue in favour of a contextualised notion of patriarchy which may be seen to form the basis of this ideological core (cf. Kandiyoti 1991).

A consideration of the cases in Appendix IIB reveals certain clear patterns. A recurrent theme in the legal cases and in the ethnographic data in Chapters 6 and 7 is the woman asking the man for money, or saying that he does not provide enough to maintain the family acting as a trigger to violence. Men, meanwhile, often accuse women of failing to carry out their duties as wives and mothers. In addition, men frequently beat women for imagined infidelities. These findings suggest that there is a link between domestic violence and what Moore has described as the thwarting of investments in various subject positions based on gender (Moore 1994a:66). She describes this 'thwarting' as 'the inability to sustain or properly take up a gendered subject position, resulting in a crisis, real or imagined, of self-representation and/or social evaluation'. This results in the individual being unable to enjoy the rewards of taking up a particular gendered subject position. Thwarting may also result from contradictions and the pressure of multiple expectations about self-identity (Ibid.:66). Thus in many of the cases men respond with fury at their partners' requests for money due to the implicit criticism of their capacity to fulfil the role of *proveedor*, economic provider, because this represents a threat to their self-identity. The frustration at being thwarted in the attempt to live up to the discourse which presents this as man's legitimate role is ignited by the defensive anger of that which locates him as the irresponsible *lacho* who is answerable to no-one, and violence erupts. Violence in this case involves not only the thwarting of one aspect of masculinity but the affirmation of

another. By dominating the woman he feminises her and asserts a particular aspect of his masculinity. Thus violence can be as much about the affirmation of a one aspect of a gender position as the thwarting of another. The failure to live up to the image of husband and father flares up as violence when the man's self-identity is called into question by the woman in relation to whom his identity is, at least in part, defined.<sup>59</sup> In fact the discourse which supports the notion of the providing husband/father is in this moment violently discarded and a discourse which provides him with an alternative self-identity which he can fulfil, and vindicates his actions, is taken up. Wade sees these moments when violence erupts from men's point of view in terms of 'a productive tension between contradictory aspects of their masculinity'. Whereas, for women, these are more moments of 'unproductive tension in which their subjectivity is put in stalemate while they become objects violated in the constituting of masculinity' (Wade 1994:135). For this writer, these moments are as much about the constitution of femininity as masculinity. Being the object of male violence endorses that aspect of femininity contained in dominant discourse that emphasises suffering and self-sacrifice. In this sense women may to some degree be complicit in violent behaviour. Similarly the woman's perceived failings as a wife or mother, by neglecting her household duties or not caring properly for their children may be experienced by the man as a challenge to his self-identity.

The recurrent theme of jealousy (*celos*) and accusing the wife of infidelity and even of prostitution reflects the presence of the honour/shame gender discourse discussed in Chapter 3. This sexual jealousy is aroused in men by female sexual infidelity, real or imagined (cf. Harvey 1994:75). Moore discusses the issue of sexual jealousy in a general way in terms of the ability to control other people's sexual behaviour (Moore 1994a:67). As Moore states, in these situations what is crucial is the way in which the behaviour of others threatens the self-representations and social evaluations of oneself. As Harvey observed in the Peruvian context, women are often beaten for their past sexual experiences and may also be punished for the deeds of other women. In one case a man had spent years punishing his wife for the fact that she had had a long-term partner before him. This case clearly shows how the man perceived his own identity to be tied to his ability to control his wife's sexuality, even to the extent of

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<sup>59</sup> The tension between these two competing discourses is similar to that described by Peter Wade in relation to Colombia between the husband/father and the *hombre parrandero* (Wade 1994, cited by Moore 1994a:68).

feeling threatened by sexual 'infidelity' before he had met her. Men will also often blame their own infidelity and violence on their wives' behaviour.<sup>60</sup>

The way in which poverty operates to thwart the realisation of the male subject position of *proveedor* may also have much to do with the high degrees of alcoholism and drug addiction among men. In the sample, in 26% of the cases alcohol or drugs were specified as being connected with the violence.<sup>61</sup>

The cases show that, for the most part, actions are brought in respect of violence occurring in the context of a married relationship (see Figure II). In almost all of these cases it is the wife bringing an action against the husband. Women brought 92% of all actions in the sample.<sup>62</sup> A large number of these (58%) are in the younger age cohort, which clearly shows that violence is not just a problem of older generations. In many cases older couples will have 'resolved' this problem, although this may mean the woman decided long ago to tolerate violence from their partner and therefore the problem is not reported. It may also indicate that younger women have greater awareness of their rights and believe that the legal system should protect them.

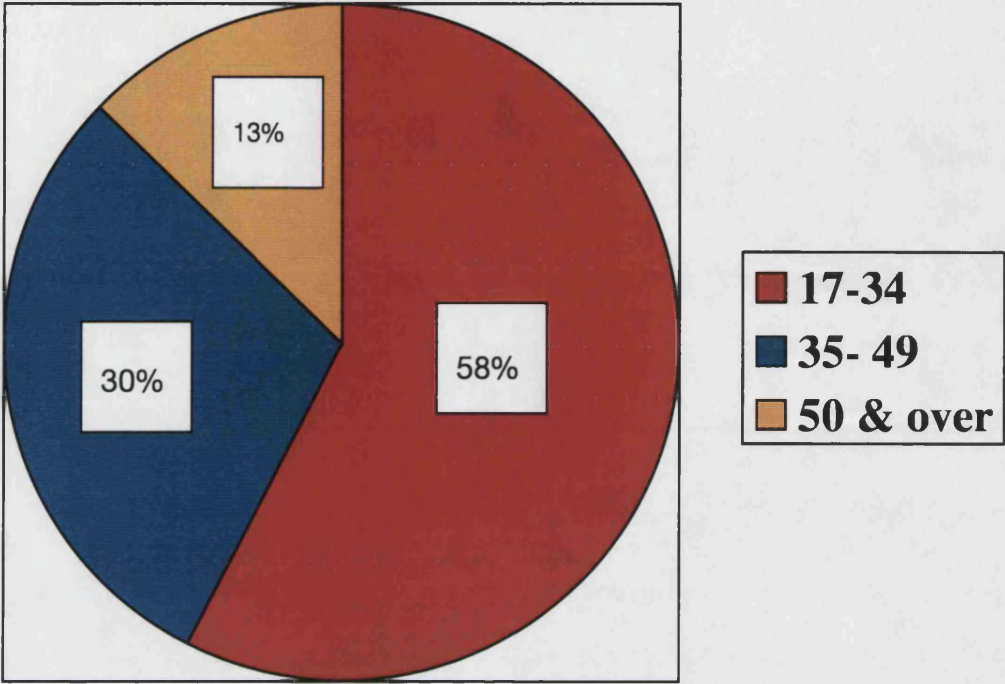
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<sup>60</sup> It may be the case that women's subject position is less vulnerable to thwarting, being affirmed as it is by the presence of children. In the case of men their subject position as *proveedor* is susceptible to the vagaries of the marketplace. The main alternative, the *lacho*, is similarly precarious in that it hinges on his ability to control his partner's sexual behaviour.

<sup>61</sup> Moser also documents tensions generated by the use and control of income and the increase in domestic violence in her (1989) study in Guayaquil, Ecuador, identifying a parallel increase in alcohol and drug addiction.

<sup>62</sup> This does not mean that women are never the perpetrators of violence. Many women in the course of learning about gender and violence through participating in women's organisations would say that their husbands hit them, and they hit their children.

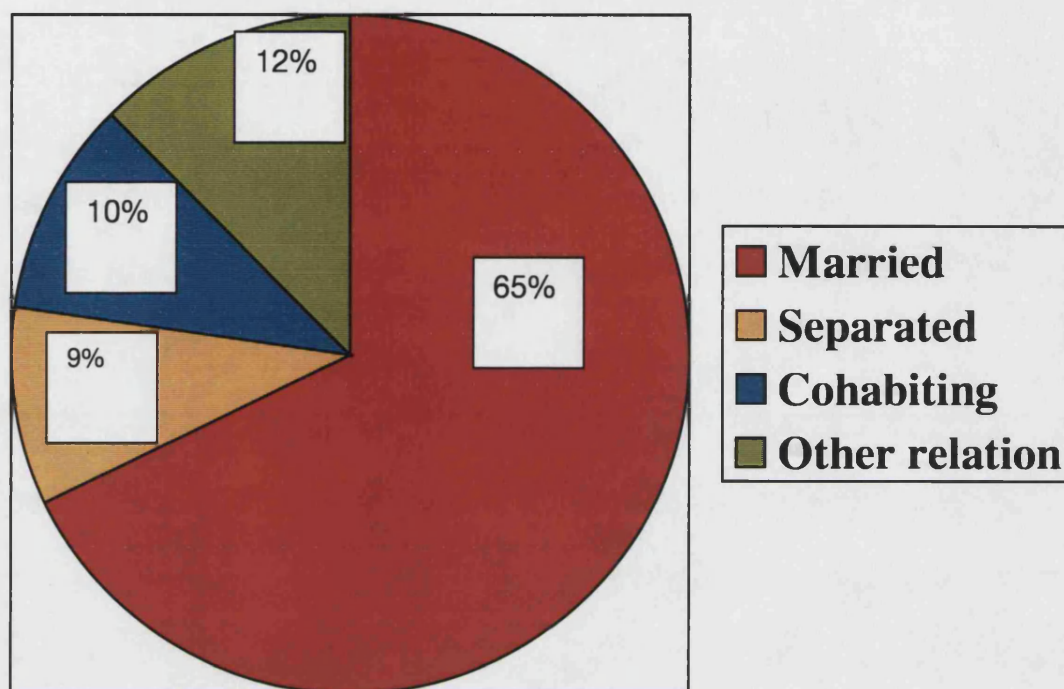
**Figure I: Age Composition of the Sample (Total sample 107 cases)**



Source: Study of Domestic Violence Cases, 2<sup>nd</sup> Juzgado, San Miguel 1996



**Figure II: Relationship between Defendant and Complainant (Total sample 107 cases)**



Source: Study of Domestic Violence Cases, 2<sup>nd</sup> Juzgado, San Miguel 1996

In terms of the functioning of the law, a number of observations may be made. In the first place, the law envisages cases being dealt with by judges, rather than by functionaries of the court. In fact the judge decided only 20% of the cases that had been dealt with and, of these, 25% were dismissed due to lack of evidence. The requirement to bring witnesses often proves problematic in cases of domestic violence where the violence takes place at home behind closed doors. Thus, out of the 107 cases brought, only 18 resulted in an order being made by the judge, either prohibiting the defendant from the home for 60 days or ordering the defendant to undergo therapeutic treatment. In the cases where the defendant was ordered to undergo therapeutic treatment, frequently he failed to attend and the court had not taken any action to enforce the order. This suggests the need for supervision both of orders and conciliatory agreements. In 36% of cases an agreement was reached between the parties under the supervision of a

court functionary. Women are clearly not getting the response they had hoped for from the tribunals given that in the majority of cases the complainant is seeking an order for protection against violence, and in a large number of cases is seeking the permanent removal of the defendant from the common home. The latter cases reflect the absence of a divorce law and the attempt by many women to use the law against domestic violence to achieve this result, although in fact the judge only has power to restrict the defendant from the home for a limited period of time. It was apparent from witnessing many of these conciliatory hearings that there was an element of coercion involved in terms of imposing an agreement when the complainant was not aware that there was any option other than to agree to what the functionary said.

The cases also reveal a lack of adherence to the time limits specified in the law, which are meant to ensure the expedition of such cases. These require that the police who receive the initial complaint notify the court immediately, that the conciliatory hearing take place within 8 working days and that sentencing take place within three days after evidence has been given, if an agreement has not been reached. The case material indicates that in general none of these time limits is adhered to. A further criticism is the fact that the law is not drafted in terms of gender. A lawyer from the *Instituto de la Mujer*, an NGO, at a meeting to discuss the problem of domestic violence, talked about the need to broaden the theme by talking not just about domestic violence but rather *violencia de género*, gender violence.<sup>63</sup> The inclusion by Parliament of a conciliatory hearing has also been criticised. There is a considerable body of literature that questions the appropriateness of mediation in cases of violence, let alone conciliation.<sup>64</sup>

These problems reflect the fact that while the government has responded to internal and external pressures by passing this law, ensuring its effective implementation is not a priority. The fact that the Chilean government has not signed the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women, recently enacted by the Organisation of American States in Brazil (Matus Madrid 1995:474), also makes its commitment to this issue questionable. This means that pressure needs to be generated which obliges the state to take concrete steps to ensure the effective operation of the new law by strengthening the infrastructure

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<sup>63</sup> This is highlighted by the fact that most *denuncias* and/or police reports specify that the violence 'threatens the woman in her condition as a wife and mother' (*menoscobandola como mujer y madre*).

<sup>64</sup> See for example Hilary Astor 1994.

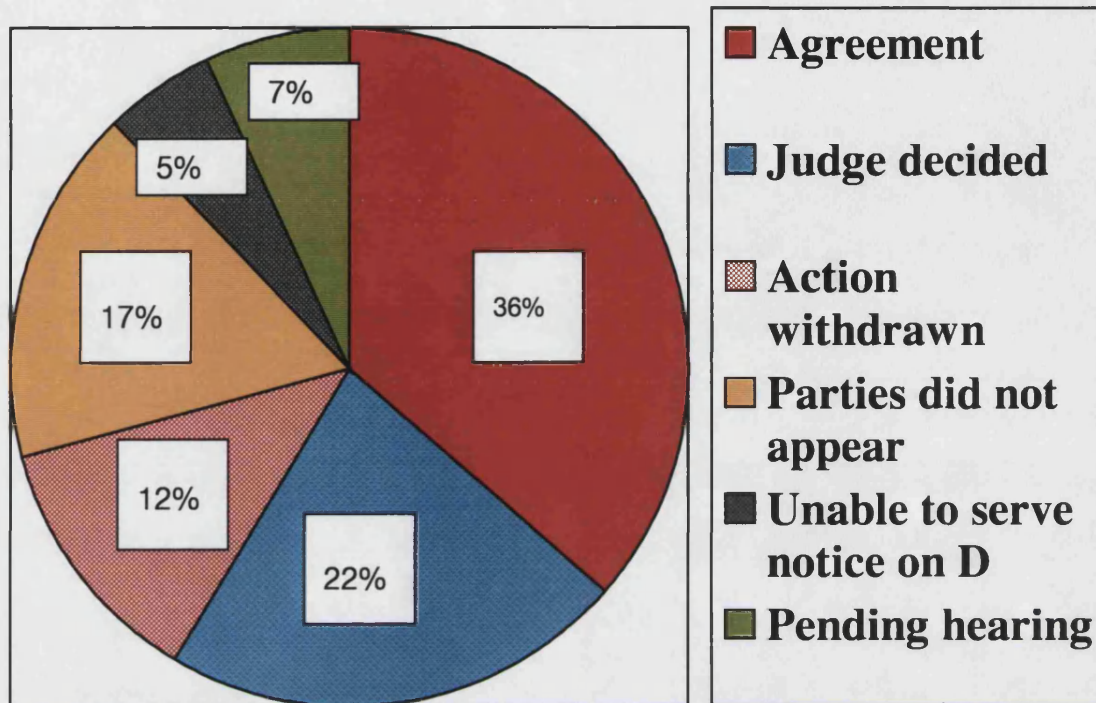
through the provision of more resources and providing adequate training to those applying the law. One enlightened judge *Sr. Mario Carroza*, at a meeting to discuss domestic violence organised by the NGO Quercum in March 1996, stated that there was a need to raise levels of awareness amongst the police and the personnel in the *Oficina de Denuncias*, the office which receives the complaints. He also suggested the setting up of local and regional offices to receive complaints and emphasised the need for local government involvement. A representative of SERNAM at the same meeting called for the strengthening of local networks of support in addition to state support on the basis that such laws work better where women have support, awareness and information.<sup>65</sup> This view is borne out by the accounts of experiences of participation in women's organisations discussed in Chapter 5. The need for support networks and refuges which are presently non-existent is also crucial, otherwise, as one woman said to me, she will have to continue going back to lie down next to the same man who has just beaten her. Clearly, the ratifying of conventions and changes in the law are one thing, but ensuring their proper application is another.

Nevertheless in spite of its many failings the law is a positive step. In a number of cases women describe having been victims of violence for many years. The fact that these women have brought actions at all after such a long silence indicates the importance of having such a law and of ensuring its proper exercise through adequate infrastructure and training. It is also important to draw attention to the fact that the law establishes a norm that says that violence in the home is wrong. This is an important change given that men and women have long accepted violence in the home as something normal, and it provides a new set of rights that women can appeal to in order to influence behaviour in many other cases which do not come before the courts.

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<sup>65</sup> I.Ortíz Pulgar, Lawyer, SERNAM Legal Reform Programme at a meeting to discuss the new law on 9.4.96 organised by the NGO Quercum.

**Figure III: Outcome of domestic violence cases (Total sample 107 cases)**



Source: Study of Domestic Violence Cases, 2<sup>nd</sup> Juzgado, San Miguel 1996

#### **4.4 The operation of the law against abortion**

In most societies pregnant women's behaviour is influenced by social norms of proper pregnancy behaviour, which are usually reinforced by the dictates of physicians and health professionals (Brodie *et al* 1992:8). In the context of Chile a particularly powerful set of dominant gender discourses exists, which is centred around motherhood. This is reflected in the discourses of the state, which have tended to position women in such a way as to emphasise motherhood as women's role. Although the state's position

in relation to the politics of reproduction has varied over time, according to the politics of the different governments in power, the focus on motherhood has remained. It is not surprising therefore that the state should step in to reinforce the idea that a woman should act in particular ways and for particular reasons during pregnancy. The message used to justify state intervention is that a pregnant woman is a mother who should think and act first and foremost to protect the health of the foetus she carries and that she should do so not only to ensure a good future for the foetus, but also for society. The point being that when the state regulates women as childbearers it legislates the ideology of motherhood. In Chile the cultural emphasis on selfless motherhood translates in law into an absolute prohibition against abortion. Seeing abortion in this light makes clear that an issue that we habitually conceptualise in terms of women's bodies in fact involves questions concerning pervasive discourses about women's roles (cf. Siegal 1992:265). The legislature's decision to save foetal life by compelling pregnancy, contrary to a woman's human rights, is one that both reflects and enforces cultural notions concerning women's roles. Clearly, the values represented in law are much broader than the specific laws and judicial decisions that embody them and may be traced back to the dominant discourses discussed in the previous chapter.

### *Legal cases concerning abortion*

Presently Chile has one of the most severe abortion laws in the world. It is one among only sixteen countries in which abortion is illegal under any circumstances,<sup>66</sup> that is, not even in cases of pregnancy resulting from rape and incest, nor when the woman's life is endangered is it legal. The law has not always been this strict. Between 1931 and 1989, the country's Sanitary Code contained legislation allowing a medical termination of pregnancy when the mother's life was in danger. This right to a 'therapeutic abortion' was quite restricted, such that the number of abortions that actually fell within its scope each year was quite low. However, in 1989, during its final months of power, the military government removed even this limited reproductive right. This government left behind a legacy of complete repression of abortion which has now survived eight years of democracy and which does not seem likely to change for some time. In spite of this,

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<sup>66</sup> 'World Abortion Policies.' New York: United Nations, Department for Economic and Social Information and Analysis, Population Division, 1994.

it is estimated that over 159,650<sup>67</sup> abortions are carried out each year, and that abortion accounts for a quarter of all maternal deaths (Requena 1990). These are carried out in clandestine clinics or by professional and non-professional individuals. This network is organised according to the rules of the marketplace, which means that the type of service available depends on the amount of money at women's disposal. For the wealthy this means a private clinic, for the poor, at the worst extreme, a back-street abortion carried out by a non-professional in unsanitary conditions. The most common form of backstreet abortion involves the insertion of a metal rod, called a *sonda*,<sup>68</sup> which is inserted through the vagina into the uterus. The woman is sent away with the *sonda* in place and is usually told to return some 36 hours later when, if the procedure has been effective, the remains of the foetus as well as the placenta are removed. Other common methods include the insertion of plastic tubes, stalks of plants, particularly *perejil*, parsley, *alambres* (wire coat hangers), or the injection of antibiotics or drugs that produce contractions such as metergyl.

The law in relation to abortion (see Appendix IA) punishes the woman who aborts as well as the person who carries out the abortion and any accomplice, the 'accomplice' usually being a friend or family member (usually another woman) who may have helped the woman to find someone willing to carry out the abortion or who accompanies her. Women who seek abortions are generally aged between 17 and 44. Lidia Casas Becerra of the *Foro Abierto de Salud y Derechos Reproductivos* ('the Open Forum')<sup>69</sup> carried out a recent study in Santiago of 91 women prosecuted for having abortions in conjunction with the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in New York. I will refer frequently to the findings of this study in this section.

Not surprisingly, most of the women who are tried for having an abortion live in extreme poverty in the poorest of neighbourhoods. In terms of age, 82% of the women in the Open Forum study were aged between 18 and 29, the average age being 25.2 years old (Casas Becerra 1996:4). This reflects similar findings in the other two main studies conducted on the subject by Leal & Ortega (1991:63) and Salazar (1993:27). The Open Forum study identifies 11% as married, 22% living with a partner, 4% separated, 1% separated and living with a partner and 60% single (Casas Becerra 1996: 6), which again confirms the earlier studies. In terms of education, 23% were illiterate

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<sup>67</sup> *Mujeres Latinoamericanas en Cifras* (1995)

<sup>68</sup> According to a study carried out by the Open Forum, in the cases considered 68% of the abortions are carried out using a *sonda* (Casas Becerra 1996:22).

or had not completed primary level schooling. 56% had not completed their secondary education. 18% had completed their secondary education and only 6% had or were in the course of obtaining technical or professional qualifications. In general women processed for having an abortion have one or more children (Ibid.:11). There is also a relationship between level of education and number of children. Women with less education have on average more children than those who are educated. In 1982, women without formal education had an average of 3.8 children, which by 1988 had reduced to 3.5. Women who had completed primary education had on average 2.6 children, decreasing to 2.5 by 1998 and those who had completed secondary education had an average of 2.1 children (Cleary 1994: 14). In the Open Forum study, 86% of the women who had aborted already had children (Casas Becerra 1996:12). Single mothers account for 70% of the women in the study with one child and 27% of those with two children (Ibid.:14).

According to SERNAM, women head 25.3% of households (Cleary 1994:8-9). These women in general have to work to maintain their children. In the Open Forum study, 60% of the women that worked were mothers (Casas Becerra 1996:16), which accords with the significant number of single mothers with one or two children. 68% of the women prosecuted for having had an abortion had remunerated work, and 26% described themselves as *dueñas de casa*, housewives (Ibid.: 17). 4% were students. Of those that had remunerative work, a large number, 52%, were domestic servants (Ibid.: 19). As indicated in section 4.2 above, these workers have little protection under the law.

The reasons for choosing to abort vary according to the age and marital status of the woman. The studies cited together with the women I interviewed myself suggest that in the case of married women or women living with a partner, fear of abandonment and precarious economic circumstances were the main reasons. Women would say that they were '*protegiendo a los hijos que ya tenía*' (protecting the children that I already have), others would say '*que voy a hacer, si ya tengo tantos hijos y tengo otro hijo más*' (what am I going to do if I already have so many children and have another child?). For single mothers, the fear of losing paid employment was also given as a reason for aborting, 9% said that the reason for having the abortion was losing their job, or the fear of losing it. Young women fear the reaction of their parents, in particular of being

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<sup>69</sup> In conjunction with the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in New York.

thrown out of their home. A number of the cases contained in the Open Forum study cite women who had received inadequate information about contraceptives, or did not have adequate access to contraceptives. In one case a woman (aged 36, illiterate, with 3 children) had undergone a colostomy due to severe appendicitis. When she was first brought in to hospital they had removed her IUD. She was told before she left that she must not get pregnant because this would put her life in danger. The doctors did not provide her with any advice or information and did not replace the IUD that they had removed. She subsequently got pregnant and had a backstreet abortion. She found herself in hospital due to complications and was denounced to the police. She was found guilty and sentenced to three years and one day in prison, of which she served seventy-seven days (Casas Becerra 1996:63).

In terms of legal process, the prosecution of an abortion begins with the woman being reported to the police or investigations detectives. The large majority are turned in by hospitals when they seek medical attention for complications.<sup>70</sup> A significant minority of 11% (Casa Becerra 1996:38) are reported by angry lovers, neighbours and family members. The person who carried out the abortion is sometimes apprehended as well. The professional who attends the woman in the case of a complication questions her to try to find out whether the problem has resulted from having or attempting to provoke an abortion. The doctor or midwife will then contact the police. The woman is detained in the hospital until she is well enough to be transferred to a detention centre (the *Centro de Orientación Femenina* ).

Although Article 84 of the Criminal Procedure Code<sup>71</sup> requires personnel at public hospitals and private clinics to report cases of abortion, the fact that some hospitals have a much higher rate of women reported for abortion (Casas Becerra 1996:40), reflects the degree to which the decision to report is at the discretion of medical personnel. Medical personnel at both public hospitals and private clinics have a duty of confidentiality (affirmed in Article 201 of the Criminal Procedure Code) to their patients, yet this is only broken in the case of public hospitals. Although the personnel are the same in both cases, women of scarce resources clearly receive different treatment from those who are able to afford private treatment. Apart from being reported in some cases, women are often treated extremely badly in public hospitals by

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<sup>70</sup> In 1990 more than 30,000 abortions resulted in complications which led to the woman being hospitalised (Ferrando *et al* 1994:22).

<sup>71</sup> República de Chile. Código de Procedimiento Penal. Editorial Jurídica de Chile. Santiago. 1995.



hospital personnel in cases of suspected abortion; this is clear from my own data (see Chapter 6) as well as the data collected by the Open Forum (Ibid.:41). Indeed, it is not unknown for women to be falsely accused of provoking an abortion, as it is difficult to distinguish a spontaneous abortion from one that has been provoked. One woman I interviewed had not even had a spontaneous abortion, when she was accused of having provoked an abortion upon arrival in hospital haemorrhaging severely. Ultimately it was discovered that she had cancer of the uterus. In many cases the medical personnel perform a hysterectomy as a result of the complications resulting from an abortion; this is affirmed both in my own data and that of the Open Forum.<sup>72</sup>

Once in prison, the woman is held until she receives bail. Free legal assistance is available from the *Corporación de Asistencia Judicial* (Corporation of Judicial Assistance) at the *Centro de Orientación Femenina*, although no mechanism exists to inform the detained women of its availability. In the first place the lawyer requires the woman to provide two witnesses to testify as to her good character. As the Open Forum study indicates, often this is not easy. Many poorer women who work as domestic servants are from the South and do not know anyone in Santiago. The majority are granted 'provisional liberty', but the period of incarceration varies greatly from a week to over a year, with an average of 40.7 days (Casas Becerra 1996:51). One of the grounds used to deny liberty is that the accused represents a danger to society, which is clearly untenable. Police and investigations detectives are involved in the investigation, which generally involves a medical examination of the woman and the foetus, a search of the woman's house and interviews of her family members, sexual partners, and neighbours. A minority of the cases in the Open Forum sample were granted stays at the end of the initial summary stage. The majority of the cases went on to the plenary stage and the women were found guilty. The penalty imposed is generally 541 days of incarceration for having obtained or performed an abortion. In most cases the sentences were commuted such that the women have to check in with the authorities periodically rather than serving prison time. In practice, however, all spend a period of time and many have already spent a considerable amount of time in detention in the course of the prosecution, with all the consequences that this implies. Their children may be put into care, they may lose their jobs and/or homes and have to deal with the social stigma of having been imprisoned.

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<sup>72</sup> These are generally performed without the woman's informed consent.

## 4.5 Conclusion

It is the state that continues to prescribe the basis of citizenship, both through its laws and policies and in terms of the gender discourses that they embody. Initiatives are being taken at the level of the state to facilitate women's advancement. Alternative images of women are beginning to appear in state discourses, which to some degree challenge the 'ideological core' which has tended historically to position women primarily as mothers and wives. In the area of law, the state has responded to some of the demands of the women's movement and to pressures from outside and has begun to give rights to women. The results have been contradictory and ambivalent, on the one hand liberalising and on the other reinforcing ideological traditionalism.

Section 4.2 examined some of the changes in gender discourses embedded in state policies directed at women, culminating in SERNAM's *Plan de Igualdad*. In terms of discourse, the *Plan de Igualdad* makes impressive reading, and it is clearly a very significant step, providing as it does alternative ideas about gender and an alternative language which women can appeal to in negotiating their lives. But it is also important to distinguish between institutional discourse and substantive policies and interventions that in fact further woman's right to health and well being. It is in this area that SERNAM to a large degree has its hands tied. The *Plan de Igualdad* expresses the will of SERNAM, but not that of the government as a whole, and there is no guarantee that it will be implemented given the limits of SERNAM's mandate, which explicitly excludes project implementation. As SERNAM is neither a full ministry with an input to Cabinet decisions, nor an established boundary-bridging body, it straddles two administrative identities in a way that diminishes its potential impact. In principle its institutional position provides it with access to the core of policy-making, but it lacks mechanisms for ensuring changes in government decisions. This is a problem shared by national women's affairs machinery the world over (Goetz 1995: 35). SERNAM's mandate was carefully drafted to limit its political effectiveness, its position being one of advising on policy rather than implementing it. Apart from opposition from the Catholic Church it has also been constrained by the *Concertación* government, with the Christian Democrats favouring greater emphasis on preserving the family. As a result, it has found it easier to promote practical gender interests around issues which focus on poverty alleviation such as employment training for women, rather than more controversial measures which would directly challenge existing gender relations such as reproductive and sexual rights (cf. Waylen 1997:129).

In order to be effective, the *Plan de Igualdad* needs to be embraced by government ministries. At present many of the government's policies would seem to

predicate against the changes envisaged in the *Plan de Igualdad*. The ministries of labour and education are an exception in that there has been committed top-level support for the issue of gender from senior male ministers (Goetz 1995:26), but the government as a whole continues to reaffirm many traditional norms in relation to family models and roles. Furthermore, its neo-liberal economic model, far from building the infrastructure necessary to bring about the changes envisaged by the *Plan de Igualdad*, emphasises privatisation. Corrêa *et al* note the alarming trend away from state responsibility for basic needs in Southern countries more generally (1994:87). This also reflects one of the failings of the Beijing Platform for Action, which does not address the implications of privatisation and structural adjustment policies for women's health. On the one hand it urges governments 'to address the basic needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population,' 'to ensure their access to social services,' and in other places it contradicts this promoting the privatisation, commodification and deregulation of reproductive health services (Petchesky 1995: 157). The tendency toward privatisation limits even further poor women's access to health care (Corrêa *et al* 1994:87). In Chile this incoherence expresses itself in a discourse which, on the one hand, offers unquestioning support to a system based in free market relations, but, parallel to this tries to perpetuate family models and roles that are no longer coherent with the late capitalist model of society (cf. Olea 1995:23). At the household level this incoherence reveals itself in the tensions resulting from the reality that families can no longer satisfy their needs with just one salary. Women are therefore joining the labour force in increased numbers, while at the same time the images of the male provider and the female mother and housewife continue to dominate in state discourses.

In the area of the law, the new legislation against domestic violence discussed in § 4.3, with all its imperfections, exemplifies how the state may contribute to and support shifts and modifications in social understandings and practices in terms of gender relations. But in § 4.4 we saw how the state continues to reflect and enforce women's subordination in reproductive politics through its punitive abortion laws. The criminalisation of abortion severely prohibits women's moral agency, autonomy and choice. These areas of law reflect the fact that, in spite of some liberalising changes, women's position vis-à-vis the state is still to a large degree fixed within maternal responsibility. Proposals to reform the law, such as the right to abortion or divorce, which threaten this are rejected, leaving the dominant ideological core which positions women primarily as mothers intact. The authority and influence of the Catholic Church,

which played an important role during the period of the authoritarian government, has much to do with the fact that these issues have not been in the political agenda of any party (Gómez de la Torre & Matus 1994:9) and with the fact that the system has continued to reaffirm traditional norms in relation to reproductive rights even though these are no longer in accord with the real order.<sup>73</sup> Thus, while the state has over the years permitted the gradual selective incorporation of women as citizens, initially through education and then through political incorporation, this process continues to be bound up with cultural ideas about women's roles as symbols of virtue and altruism. As Maxine Molyneux observes in relation to Latin America in general, whilst women could not always be denied citizenship, they have been given it unequally (Molyneux 1998). Gender ideologies and identities have remained quite strongly differentiated with women still closely identified with the family.<sup>74</sup>

Although it should not be assumed that the presence of women in government necessarily assures the promotion of gender issues, the question of law reform needs to be seen in the context of women's representation in the formal politics. Women in Chile continue to be under-represented in the political sphere. In 1994 there had only been one woman Minister in the Cabinet, seven in the Chamber of Deputies, three in the Senate and none in the Supreme Court, reflecting the low presence of women in decision-making roles, when women constitute 51.73% of the voting public (Gómez de la Torre & Matus 1994:11).<sup>75</sup> SERNAM'S presence has since 1991 made a difference in terms of women's visibility in the formal political sphere and legal reform, but this too has produced losses as well as gains in terms of women's interests. The opening of an institutional space for women has been at the cost of the closing of many other informal spaces that had opened up in civil society under the dictatorship. With the transition, the expectations of participation and citizen's rights on the part of women have had to confront a system that has political parties as protagonists and the state taking the place of and weakening the movements that had developed under the authoritarian government. Women have felt distant from the discussions in Parliament in political and

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<sup>73</sup> Some members of the Democratic Christian party which leads the coalition government recently petitioned to tighten up the sentences in relation to abortion.

<sup>74</sup> In this respect, attempts by some feminists to speak in a different voice by valuing motherhood or using it as an ideological focus may have ceded too much ground to defenders of male privilege (Craske 1998).

<sup>75</sup> The entry of women into the executive branch has been slow and belated throughout Latin America. For comparative figures with other Latin American countries see Valdés & Gomátriz 1995:162.

legislative matters.<sup>76</sup> In addition, as Matear argues, such movements appear as dysfunctional to the political logic and policies of the transition, in the sense that they put forward themes that challenge the agreements and political pacts achieved previously (Matear 1997:89). And yet the relationship that citizens establish during the process of transition is crucial. Women must demand and push for changes, as well as monitoring and enforcing the exercise of national and international rights already gained, while at the same time learning democratic practices constructing their own citizenship (cf. Jelin 1996: 112). As, Valdés suggests, the need is to pose the issue of equality of rights in contexts of social relations in which differences, including those of power and marginalisation can be explicitly stated (Valdés 1990). In the case of domestic violence the state has gone some way towards recognising this, but in the case of abortion the Catholic Church and ideological traditionalism have continued to hold sway. Nevertheless, the government has modified its position on family planning in the past few years in response to Cairo and Beijing. This shift is reflected in the transformation by SERNAM of the *Programa Materno y Perinatal* (the Prenatal and Maternity Programme) of the Ministry of Health into the *Programa de Salud Integral de la Mujer* (Women's Integral Health Programme). These kinds of changes open new perspectives for reproductive and sexual rights, but it is still clearly a long way from developing into a concept of reproductive freedom. Cairo and Beijing brought the debate regarding abortion and reproductive rights to the international level and made visible the political action of the Vatican and its opposition to the notion of reproductive rights, stimulating discussion in civil society and at government level. The challenges that result from this debate reflect the ways in which culture and religion may interact with political systems to prevent women from exercising their full citizenship, (Corrêa *et al* 1994:84). Nonetheless, Valdés and Busto comment that for the first time in Chile the political will exists to overcome women's inequality and comply with the obligations emanating from the international conventions (Valdés and Busto 1994).

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<sup>76</sup> In the *poblaciones* women when asked how they saw the Parliament, would reply that it was something *ajeno*' something distant that they could not influence. In the 1997 local elections many decided to annul their votes to reflect their sense of disillusionment, and the extremely high proportion of annulled votes in the national elections later in the same year reflects general disenchantment.

## Chapter 5

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### Participation in the Women's Movement

#### 5.1 Introduction

The beginnings of women's collective action in Chile go back to the end of the nineteenth century, when women's workers groups and Catholic action groups began to demand rights to education and suffrage for women (Gaviola *et al* 1994:19). During the first half of this century women's groups fought for access to education, for labour reforms, and for equality of civil and political rights with men.<sup>120</sup> After women won the right to vote in 1949, the women's movement, which had been able to bring highly differing social sectors together in this unifying cause, broke up, and many of its members joined political parties or unions believing that obtaining civil rights alone would lead to an equal presence in all areas of society (ibid: 22).<sup>121</sup> Nevertheless, women continued to play a prominent role in networks of neighbourhood and community organisations, though their importance has seldom been explicitly acknowledged (Caldeira 1987:77). It was women that provided an important base for *tomas de terreno* (land take-overs),<sup>122</sup> characteristic in Santiago because of the lack of housing for poor migrants, as well as acting both as leaders and participants in social mobilisations.

Initially, the most important of these community organisations were *Centros de Madres*.<sup>123</sup> With the installation of the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in 1973 these groups, previously relatively autonomous, were completely subverted to the needs

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<sup>120</sup> See Gaviola *et al.* (1994: 18ff) for a more detailed exposition of this period in which institutions such as the Women's Union of Chile (1928); the Movement for the Emancipation of Women, MEMCH (1935); the Chilean Federation of Women's Institutions, FECHIF (1944) and the Chilean Women's Party, PFCH (1946) came into being. Apart from demanding suffrage for women, these organisations were also concerned with world peace and poverty, and MEMCH was also demanding the right to divorce, to abortion and to contraceptives.

<sup>121</sup> The same authors appropriately describe this period as 'the mirage of integration'(ibid:21).

<sup>122</sup> Women conducted the *tomas de terreno* because the men would have been arrested and detained by the police.

<sup>123</sup> It is estimated that by 1973 nearly one million women participated in these Mothers' Centres (ibid:25).

of the state for control and co-optation of poor women (Valdés and Weinstein *et al.* 1989). They were run by volunteers appointed by the government and headed by Pinochet's wife, and offered courses that focused largely on improving women's domestic role. Political participation was discouraged as 'unfeminine', although members were often called upon to display their loyalty to the regime by taking part in rallies and other activities. As a result, membership of the *Centros de Madres* declined drastically, and new, unofficial women's groups arose, in the areas of human rights and collective survival strategies (Arteaga 1988: 573). When the already poor living conditions deteriorated under the military regime, it was these community organisations and new groups, often supported by the church, that mobilised to assume tasks of social aid. They organised *ollas comunes* (soup kitchens) and co-operative child-care efforts, in the absence of social action on the part of the state.<sup>124</sup> These movements stimulated unprecedented activism around issues of human and civil rights. Women were at the forefront of this activism from the outset, as mothers and grandmothers needing to learn their relatives' whereabouts and recover victims (Jelin 1996:184).<sup>125</sup> Women entered the public arena with demands related to their social responsibilities. But while they were not explicitly asserting gender demands,<sup>126</sup> human rights organisations and economic survival organisations created new spaces for political mobilisation and the development of gender identity (cf. Valenzuela 1998:52). The private search for a son or

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<sup>124</sup> In the metropolitan region of Santiago in 1986 there were an estimated 1,383 Organizaciones Económicas Populares, or OEP (Popular Economic Organisations), of which 1,208 were self-help organisations with almost exclusively female leadership and participants (Valdés and Weinstein 1989:11).

<sup>125</sup> I disagree with Jelin's categorisation of such mobilisation as non-political: 'these women's activities did not stem from democratic ideological convictions or strategic calculations in the struggle against dictatorship' (Jelin 1996: 184). Whilst women did mobilise as mother, wives, sisters, daughters and grandmothers of the victims of repression, I believe it is incorrect to say that they were not political actors. Less than three weeks after the coup, on October 1, 1973, the Association of Democratic Women (*Agrupación de Mujeres Democráticas*) was formed to organise solidarity work. They often used traditional female activities to camouflage their meetings (Chuchryk 1994: 71). The rationale of their activities was both practical and political.

This trend of 'maternal politics' also manifested itself prior to the dictatorship in the movement of women from the right that demonstrated against the Popular Unity government in defence of the *viejos valores*. They used a style of contestation that appeared later in the epoch of the dictatorship: that of drowning the city with the noise of saucepans. The political expression comes from the home spilling out onto the street, with the use of kitchen utensils transferred to the street (Montecino 1991:105). The politics they are making is irreducible to 'traditional' politics. It is appropriate that what they should be doing is creating noise: an unarticulated sound is the live manifestation of a language that is not anchored in the systematic political discourse, articulating itself in a transcendental rhetoric.

<sup>126</sup> Jelin points out that it is clear that the presence of women in the human rights movement does not imply that rights of women were primarily at stake. She cites Schirmer (1988:68) who quotes a woman from Chile's *Agrupación* (consisting of relatives of missing persons) as saying, 'We are *mothers*, not women.'

daughter was gradually transformed into a public and political demand for democracy (Schirmer 1988; Chuchryk 1994:79; Jelin 1996:185). This process was influenced by the fact that the dictatorship and the human rights violations that took place in the 1970s coincided with the period during which women began to gain international attention. The International Year of Women (1975) opened with a large meeting in Mexico. It was in this context that feminism appeared, as the women's movement mobilised to improve women's status and living conditions. In the struggle for democracy: *Democracia en el país y en la casa* (democracy in the country and at home) was what women were demanding. The struggle against human rights violations had created an infrastructure of non-governmental solidarity organisations and links with international organisations, which were also in some cases sympathetic to and even encouraging of feminist demands. Several new NGOs<sup>127</sup> sprang up concerned specifically with women's issues and providing support to grass-roots women's groups. Consciousness-raising groups and study groups on women's status gave birth to new ideas and forms of action. These activities have been directed both outward, in the sense of campaigns directed at the government, and inward in the sense of reflection and the search for new identities and ways of relating to the world.

Levels of participation have developed which have created transformatory spaces for women, in which they have been able to question their roles and change and develop. New discourses became available to them, opening up new alternatives and providing them with tactical tools to enable them to put their rights into practice and develop self-esteem and self-confidence. However, women have found it less straightforward to mobilise around women's issues than to unite against the dictatorship, where the common enemy was more obvious and defined. In the process of defining objectives and strategies the women's movement has become fragmented, with some sections unable to sustain dialogue with others and even questioning their membership of the movement.<sup>128</sup> Some writers have questioned the movement's ability to challenge the patterns of politics they have identified as alienating, oppressing and

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<sup>127</sup> *La Morada, Tierra Nuestra, Arcilla, El Telar, Domus* to name a few.

<sup>128</sup> In particular there is a division between the *autonomas* or *movimentistas*, who continue to emphasise the importance for the women's movement of retaining its autonomy and therefore to avoid having anything to do with state institutions, and the *realistas* or *institutionalistas*, who see it as necessary to change the system by co-operating with state institutions (See Chapter 3 §3.4).



excluding (Salman 1994:17). However in some cases this has not been the aim. Rather the objective has been to create alternatives and open up new spaces of participation. This approach is also limited by seeing things through the lens of the traditional public/private dichotomy, devaluing the importance of political activity that occurs in 'private' spaces and at smaller scales (Ryan 1992; Staeheli and Cope 1994:457) and ignoring the contribution this activity makes to cultural change. In particular, in these smaller levels of political activity women develop in ways that enable them to negotiate and exercise, or 'operationalise' (Moore 1994a: 93), their rights in every sphere.<sup>129</sup> This chapter concerns the experiences of women *pobladoras* from the southern sector of Santiago who have participated in the women's movement. Their experiences suggest that accepted notions of political action and political agency need to be revised and expanded to include political activity that occurs outside the formal 'public' sphere.

Now, as 'democracy' is seen by outsiders to be in place in Chile, the women's movement is facing a new crisis as NGO funding from foreign sources is increasingly scarce and women's groups and organisations are increasingly having to look to state institutions, such as SERNAM, for financial support. Women have achieved levels of empowerment by developing their own spaces that have arisen out of their organisation in social movements. The shrinkage of the NGO sector could lead to the weakening of these forms of social agency and endanger the important advances and achievements that have been made.

## **5.2 Women's individual histories and experiences of participation**

Reflecting the history outlined above, many women who are now *dirigentas* (leaders) in women's organisations began participating in leftist groups or in the Communist Party fighting against the military dictatorship. Others began participating in *Centros de Madres*, some through participating in national campaigns organised by NGOs or

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<sup>129</sup> This is not to suggest that women previously had no options or strategies with which to negotiate their everyday realities, but rather that they now have organisational support to enable them to develop and educate themselves and their struggles are reinforced by discourses on rights.

mobilisations such as the 'No' vote<sup>130</sup> and others by participating in Church groups or *juntas de vecinos* (neighbourhood organisations). A few have only begun to participate relatively recently and their first experiences have been through taking part in women's groups or *talleres*. Two case studies provide a more detailed description of the trajectories typical of women who are now leaders in the women's movement.

### *Case study I*

Prior to participating in the women's movement, Elena (49 L) had been involved for many years in the Communist Party. Her political objectives had all been connected with bringing down the dictatorship. She describes walking the streets and visiting people carrying clandestine publications, which she and her friend Jana (38 L) would hide in their infants' prams. Sometimes they would go out with their prams and place a pile of papers by the road just before a bus came along which would scatter the propaganda. Other times they would carry a piece of knitting with them, which had messages inscribed in it which they would paint onto the walls at night. They were so angry, she said, that they had no fear. She and her friends had been talking about forming a women's group. They had been involved in MUDECHI (*Mujeres de Chile*), allied to the Communist Party, but disliked the fact that it was so tightly controlled by the Party. They began to distance themselves from the Party, which they began to see as undemocratic and not representing their interests any more than any other political party:

It is always the man that is fought for and therein lies the whole of humanity; like a little bird they convince you that everything has been taken into account, and being naive one believes everything.<sup>131</sup>

They wanted to see objectives related to women's needs as well as the fight against Pinochet. Finally they were ejected from the Party when they refused to conform to voting for a list of designated candidates in the Party elections. Elena reflects that the

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<sup>130</sup>In 1989 a referendum took place in which the people were given the opportunity to vote either in favour of Pinochet remaining in power, or 'No' they did not want him to continue in power, they wanted to vote in free elections.

<sup>131</sup> *Siempre se lucha por el hombre y ahí está la humanidad entera, como pajarito nuevo te meten que la cosa ya está considerada, y uno es huevona y cree todo.*

Party wanted to get rid of them because they were always arguing and questioning things. She, like most women leaders, says that she had no consciousness of feminism at this time:

No, nothing, just the concern that we wanted something else, we were already feeling crushed and that we wanted to get away from that, we wanted another way of meeting together and we didn't know how.<sup>132</sup>

She reflects back on this period of time:

I think about all those women who traversed the streets shouting against the dictatorship, against Pinochet: they had a dictator at home and couldn't see it. We believed that it was our obligation to be there at the feet of that man, and of our children and everyone, and (yet) we were going out and fighting in the street for bread and for the workers.<sup>133</sup>

This is when they formed the *taller Nehuen Domo*.<sup>134</sup> The local curate allowed them to meet at the church, as there was nowhere else they could go. At first there were about thirty women. Initially there were problems of power because some women wanted to take control, and one woman wanted the *taller* to be named after the curate and to be closely linked to the church. At this point some of the women met members of the NGO *Tierra Nuestra*. 'They spoke in a different way', says Elena, and 'began to show us another way of seeing things'. Subsequently the group split in two, the more Catholic women leaving to form another group. Although those that remained were meant to be an independent group, in practice the curate soon had them baking *empanadas* (pasties) to make money for the church and the women got fed up. Women from this and other women's groups that were starting up in the neighbourhood and formed the Co-ordination, which would co-ordinate the activities of the groups, in 1979. They negotiated with the *junta de vecinos* to use their space for meetings and left the church.

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<sup>132</sup> *No, nada, solamente la inquietud de que algo más queríamos, es como ya nos sentíamos aplastadas, como que queríamos salir de eso, queríamos otra manera de juntarnos y no sabíamos como*

<sup>133</sup> *Yo pienso en todas esas mujeres que andaban en la calle gritando contra la dictadura, contra Pinochet, tenían un dictador en la casa y no lo veíamos, y creíamos que era nuestra obligación de estar ahí a los pies de ese hombre, y de los hijos y de todos y luchábamos y salíamos a la calle a luchar por el pan, por los obreros, por los trabajadores.*

<sup>134</sup> The women chose Mapuche names for their *talleres*.

Elena later formed a further *taller* with other women in her street which is also a member of the Co-ordination, in which she participates representing her *taller*.<sup>135</sup> The women in her *taller* meet together once a week, usually in one of their houses. The Co-ordination meets about every fortnight, most often in the *junta de vecinos*. She is also representative of her block in the *junta de vecinos*. She says that she is particularly interested in personal development, saying that *pueden haber mil leyes pero si yo sigo sintiendo que está bien que me peguen, no hay ley que valga* (there can be a thousand laws put in place, but if I continue to feel that it is all right to be hit, then there is no law that will help me). She is involved in the Open Forum for Reproductive and Sexual Rights<sup>136</sup> and comments that their work in the area of reproductive and sexual rights is difficult, because in Chile the subject of abortion is difficult to deal with: *hay que tomarlo con tanta delicadeza para que nadie se dé cuenta de que están hablando del tema, porque cuando las mujeres se dan cuenta, se van* (you have to treat the theme with so much delicacy in order that no one realises that you are talking about it, because if the women realise, they leave), again she sees this as evidence that everything must start with personal development.

Like a number of other *dirigentas*, Elena is now working as a *monitora* for PRODEMU<sup>137</sup>, running occasional workshops for women. She describes her work in PRODEMU as fighting for her subsistence rather than participating, *pero con identidad de genero* (but incorporating a perspective based in gender).

### Case study II

Marina's (59 L) first experience of participating with other women was in a *Centro de Madres*. She said that before the dictatorship most of the *Centros de Madres* were left wing. They spent a lot of time talking about politics but not about feminism. When CEMA<sup>138</sup> was taken over by Lucia Pinochet, she began to impose obligations on

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<sup>135</sup> See Chapter 1 §1.2 for a description of the operation of the co-ordinations and *talleres*.

<sup>136</sup> A forum of NGOs interested in matters relating to reproductive and sexual health who meet to campaign in relation to these issues.

<sup>137</sup> The women's organisation of the Christian Democrat party.

<sup>138</sup> CEMA is the co-ordinator of the *Centros de Madres* (Mother's Centres), which during the dictatorship promulgated conservative ideas to reproduce the roles -of mother, wife and housewife - that were considered appropriate for women.

them and many of them decided to transfer to a *Centro de Madres* run by *Caritas*.<sup>139</sup> Under the dictatorship they were involved in communal food provision for children<sup>140</sup> and distributing foreign aid. She was also involved at this time with *comités de allegados* (committees for homeless people), trying to secure plots of land for people or places to stay, and seeking building materials for people to construct homes for themselves. From there she became involved in neighbourhood co-operatives and a multitude of popular groups concerned with health and welfare and took part in the consciousness-raising and personal development work of a range of NGOs. She always rejected approaches from political parties, wishing to maintain her independence and feeling that no party or political group adequately represented her as a *mujer pobladora*. People suggested that she and her friends should form a women's group, but at that time, Marina says, she did not want to work with women; she had a negative view of women, seeing them as *caguineras* (gossiping/brawling). Nevertheless, in 1985 they set up a women's group of twenty-five women, many of whom were ex-militants. They set about deciding what they wanted from the group, what it should do. Women said that they wanted a space where they could feel free to express themselves, because, according to Marina, they felt so *compungidas* (self-censored and repressed), in relation to the repressive regime, in opposition groups and at home. One of the women participants summed up the reason they were there: *bueno chiquillas, pero nosotras tenemos que plantearnos una forma de ver la vida desde nuestro punto de vista como mujeres* (well friends, we have to find a way to formulate a way of seeing life from our point of view as women). 'This is what we set out to do', says Marina, 'although we did not really know how to'. They began to conduct workshops on personal development; they involved themselves in campaigns to free political prisoners and took part in the 8<sup>th</sup> March mobilisations; and played active roles in the process which brought down the dictatorship including (wo)manning the election stations for the 'No' vote against Pinochet. Marina felt that at this time the Women's Movement had weight and influence which it no longer has to the same degree. It was not until they became involved with

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<sup>139</sup>A Catholic charity.

<sup>140</sup>She recalls them also trying to find shoes for the children if they did not have them by drawing outlines of the children's feet and then searching amongst second-hand clothes to find a match. Sometimes the children would carry them around to avoid getting them dirty or wearing them out and only put them on to come into the *Centro* to eat.



**Plate III**  
**Onces with the**  
**Taller Hehuen Domo**  
**(1996)**



**Plate IV**  
**The Queen of the**  
**Taller Millaray**  
**(1996)**

*Tierra Nuestra* that concepts such as feminism and patriarchy arrived to the *taller* and some of the women began to identify themselves as feminists. She is now a member of a group calling themselves *Feministas Populares* (Popular Feminists).

### 5.3 Changes in women's lives brought about by participation

Women face particular problems in terms of participating in women's organisations. In the first place they have the difficulty of finding somewhere to leave their children. One woman describes the difficulties she had leaving her three children in various houses to go out and participate and says that she met with constant criticism, being told that she ought to stay at home. For some women this public reprobation proves too much and they decide to return home. In addition, participation in community work often leads to a double day's work (or triple if they also have paid work to do). But the biggest obstacle to women when beginning to participate is their husbands, some of whom expect their wives to ask their permission before going anywhere. It is common for women participants to say: *antes le pedía permiso, ahora no, no le pido permiso á él* (before I would ask permission, but not now, now I don't ask his permission).

Often, as women begin to learn new things by participating with other women, they experience a crisis in their personal relationships. They refer to these conflicts and the other problems they experience as a result of taking part in women's groups as *el costo*, the cost they have to pay for the benefits they derive from participating. Rosa (32 L) said that her husband was *molesto* (fed up) because she now makes decisions on her own: *él todavía tiene esa idea de que hay que pedir permiso* (he still has the idea that one has to ask permission). She explained that since she had taken the course on patriarchy in the School for Women Leaders they have been in a state of friction. She said that she had realised that she did not have a husband, but a father, because that was how he treated her; he just wanted her to stay in the house looking after the children and told her it was not good for women to go out to work. She said that she finally rebelled. She now understands that there is much injustice against women because society *nos tiene asignado ese rol y es difícil cambiar algo que viene de tantos años* (has assigned us with that role and it is difficult to change something that has been like this for so many years). Through participating she was able to *clarificar mis rebeldías* (clarify my

rebelliousness). Having begun to participate with other women, Rosa said that she no longer wanted to spend her life confined to the house as she had done for years, without meeting people and living under the orders of her husband. She had tried to talk to him but he refuses to accept her independence.

Yamilia (33 L) and her husband suffered a serious crisis after a weekend workshop on power, run by *Tierra Nuestra* as part of the School for Women Leaders, which Yamilla attended. Like many other women's husbands, he was very resentful of her going away for a week-end. Yamilla felt obliged, like others, to have sex with him in the morning before she left as a way of paying him: *eso es lo jodido, tener que pagar por hacer lo que uno quiere y estar donde uno se siente bien* (that is the bloody thing, having to pay to do what one wants and to be where one feels good). She commented that they had all had to pay a price for going away that week-end. What she wants, she says, is to fight *por la libertad y no sé como hacerlo, como que se me olvido* (for freedom and I don't know how to do it, it's as if I forget). This is a sentiment that several women express, referring to the fact that it is one thing to understand the problems and to grasp feminist concepts such as patriarchy and even to have a sense that things have changed whilst in the company of other women in the women's group, but it is quite another thing to transfer that new consciousness to the context of the home and intimate relationships.

Lucía's (59 P) husband also reacted negatively to the changes he perceived in her. When she started participating in the Communist Party, she began to realise that she had rights, *no como mujer, como persona* (not as a woman, but as a person). During the dictatorship she and other women began to discover *que habían otras cosas más q' luchar por la libertad, luchar como persona como mujer q' mi marido no me impidiera* (that there were other things to fight for apart from freedom: to fight as a person as a woman, so that my husband should not impede me any more). She describes herself as being involved in *la lucha contra la dictadura y en la lucha por su persona como mujer* (the fight against the dictatorship and the fight for her own person as a woman). Then when she began to participate with other women in her *taller* she began to see herself as discriminated against: *yo dije, este es mi vida, yo soy la dueña de casa, soy la mujer nadie me tiene q' mandar y empecé yo hacer exigir mis derechos y los de mis niños* (I said, this is my life, I am in charge of the house, I am a woman and no one can order me around and I started to demand my rights and those of my children). And this, she said,



was when the conflict began which ended with her and her husband separating. She said that she could not contain her anger when she realised how she had been discriminated against and used. She eventually separated from him, although they continued to live under the same roof in different rooms until he died.

Victoria's (34 L) first involvement in the women's movement was to attend a course run by the NGO *Canelo de Nos* in 1993. The influence was immediate: she decided to separate from her husband. She says that the experience was like being reborn: *el sentir de que otras mujeres sufrían tantas cosas que yo sentía, y sentían a veces cosas peores que yo, el desarrollo personal, el llorarle todo, yo creo que ahí nacimos* (the experience of feeling that other women were suffering the same things that I was feeling and sometimes worse things; the personal development, crying everything out, I think that was when we were born). She suddenly felt a commitment to other women and a responsibility to pass on the things she was learning. She began to tell younger women not to get pregnant young like she had done because it could ruin their lives; that they should wait until they wanted to be a mother. She had always felt that relationships between women had been characterised by *rivalidad, envidia y egoísmo* (rivalry, envy and selfishness). But she noticed that women behaved differently towards each other in this space, with tolerance and acceptance and a willingness to learn from each other. It was this that gave Victoria the power to make the decision to separate.

For Angela (45 L), the problems in her marriage started when she began to participate in groups campaigning against human rights abuses under the dictatorship, where she began to meet *estas mujeres rebeldes* (these rebel women). Every time she wanted to go out it involved a fight; her husband refused to give her permission. He would never understand she said, 'he felt that something was slipping out of his hands and I was not going to turn back'. Some women faced with this situation have given up participating. Socorro (45 NP) said that her husband made her an ultimatum: him or the women's groups and she decided to stay at home. Martha (48 L), who had been a *dirigenta* and a member of the Co-ordination last year stopped participating. She said she had done this in order to devote more time to making clothes to earn some more money, but it subsequently transpired that it was because her husband had had an affair and blamed it on her participating in women's groups.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Martha has subsequently begun to participate again in some activities.

Some women say that their husbands have been better able to deal with their personal changes. Other women have chosen to stay in unhappy marriages in spite of the conflicts. In Tatiana's (48 P) case the relations with her partner have changed a great deal. Now she says that they are equals, *todo es compartido* (everything is shared). Luisa (50 L) says that her husband now respects her space and does not prohibit her from participating in her local women's organisation. Before, she says, she spent her time confined indoors, *ahora salgo* (now I go out). Sandra (59 P) says the same, saying that her husband was *super machista*<sup>142</sup> and she had brought up her sons to be the same. She said that she used to be frightened of her husband, *me mandaba como una niña chica* (he ordered me around like a little girl). Now Sandra describes herself as emancipated, saying that she goes out when she wishes. When she first started to participate she used to rush home early to make the *Onces* (tea). He used to get furious at her going out, but little by little she has got him to adapt. Now he himself reflects on how she used to be and says she was *huevona* (stupid) before.

Elena (49 L) feels that she has managed to change and to carry her husband along with her. She says that her husband is proud of her, but also gets angry and frustrated because she now argues with him and he complains that she spends all her time out and about and leaves him alone in the house. She says she often has to lie about where she is going to avoid problems.

As a result of her participation, Monica (46 L) sees herself as a different person: *porque ahora entiendo lo que fue mi vida cuando recién me casé a lo que es ahora. Ahora me doy cuenta que yo también tengo mis derechos, que yo también soy persona* (now I understand the difference between how my life was when I was recently married and how it is now. Now I realise that I also have my rights, that I am also a person).<sup>143</sup> She feels that she has managed to get her husband to change a bit too, but she does not believe she can get him to change much. She says that after every *taller* she tells him about everything that happened and the things she has learnt and, she says, he listens *aunque esté leyendo el diario* (although he is reading the newspaper).

In Luz's (39 L) case she feels she has changed as much in her relations with people outside her home as with her family. Before she felt subservient in relations with

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<sup>142</sup> The use and meanings given to this term are discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>143</sup> See Chapters 6 and 7 for a more detailed consideration of awareness of rights.



Plates V and VI: March of the *Coordinaciones* of southern Santiago, International Day Against Violence Against Women, 25 November 1995



people older than her, but now she treats people equally and stands up for herself, *aunque me tiriten las cañuelas* (although I shake through to my ovaries). Previously she censored herself *y terminaba con neurosis* (and ended up with neurosis); she has learnt through participating that expressing what you feel is good for you, and it is important not to let affection get in the way of expressing oneself. Luz describes learning about the concept of gender, and the implications of that understanding: *uno descubre que ser mujer en Chile es ser de segunda clase* (one discovers that being a woman in Chile is to be second class). She says that she has managed to share much of what she has learned with her husband and he has changed too; now he is much more communicative with their sons and treats her more as his equal. Luz feels that she is the one that exercises power in the house, in her case her experiences in the women's movement have made her less domineering than she was previously and she has also learnt not to beat her children. Other women also say that they have learnt that their husbands were not the only ones who sought to dominate; in the process of learning about patriarchy<sup>144</sup> they saw themselves as *mandona* (dominating/bossy), in particular in their relations with their children, but also in some cases with their partners. Irma (38 NP) says that she has realised that in relating to her children she was previously a *mujer castigadora* (a bully/always punishing). She said that at the time she knew no better. Luz (39 L) also says that she used to hit her children but has now learnt to communicate better with them.

Other women reflect upon their roles as mothers. Carolina (40 P) says that she has become aware of the fact that *por siglos fuimos reproductoras y nadie dijo lo contrario, esa es como la cultura nuestra* (for centuries we have been reproducers and nobody has said anything to the contrary, that is our culture). Elena (49 L) traces a pattern of self-sacrifice back to her mother, who had been a model of for her. She says that she has in turn reproduced this with her own daughters. Similarly, what Monica (46 L) finds most difficult to deal with is her new awareness of having conditioned her daughters to accept *machismo*. She recalls the way she used to criticise her eldest daughter for not attending to her husband when he arrived home from work. For her

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<sup>144</sup> Patriarchy is one of the courses taught by *Tierra Nuestra* at the School for Women Leaders. If asked, women explain the term as referring to *reclamaciones de dominio* (relations of domination), which they understand as the basis on which humans relate to the world: domination over nature; men's domination over women; women's domination over children, and sometimes over men. It is seen as a belief system

part, Sandra (59 P) reflects that she now sees that she was overly protective of her children and would not let anyone else look after them: *debía ser buena madre* (I had to be a good mother). Many women talk about having been enslaved to their children, believing that this was their role in life: *nos postergamos nosotras mismas para darles a ellos, olvidando que también somos personas y necesitamos participar y desarrollarnos* (we put ourselves last in order to give to them, forgetting that we are also people and we need to participate and develop ourselves).

Women are often able to identify moments in which they reached new levels of awareness. Fernanda (53 P) describes the moment that she ‘woke up’, when during an early workshop run by an NGO in 1982 they were asked to draw themselves and she drew herself *con collar, pulsera y todo* (with a necklace, bracelet and everything). Then they were asked to draw the inside of themselves *y ahí me dí cuenta que yo no sabía nada de mí...empezar a pensar que yo tenía algo por dentro, fue un trabajo muy bueno* (and then I realised that I didn’t know anything about myself...Beginning to think that I had something inside was a very good piece of work). She said that she was completely silent at first. It was not until the sixth workshop that she began to find her voice. Subsequently Fernanda became more confident, eventually playing a leading role in the group and inviting women from the NGO *La Morada*<sup>145</sup> to run workshops with women in her group. She is now involved in health workshops for women in her sector and has participated in the School for Women Leaders in San Joaquín.

Isabel (29 P) says that participating in the *taller* has enabled her to develop her personality, *ser diferente* (to be different) and to have opinions, which she did not have before. She said that before she was like *un pajarito* (a little bird), but now she has views and decided for herself who she would vote for in the municipal elections, rather than voting for who her husband voted for as she has in the past. In her case, her husband has supported and encouraged her participation.

In relation to dealing with professionals, Julia (39 P) comments that they only respect your rights *cuando nosotras las mujeres los exigamos* (when we women demand them). Flor (49 P) also says that her work in the women's organisation *ha cambiado mi vida completamente* (has completely changed my life). Previously she spent all her time

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which men have evolved but which women also participate in, dominating and being dominated. *Estamos mal hechas* (we were badly made/formed) they will say to describe their predicament.

<sup>145</sup> Radical feminist orientation.

*encerrada* (closed indoors), but not now. Now she has learnt to value herself and make others respect her rights: *uno no se conforma, sabe luchar y discutir, sabe de leyes, tiene mas criterio* (I don't conform anymore, I know how to fight and how to argue, I know about laws, I have more criteria). As a result people treat her differently and she sees herself as able to operate more effectively. Women talk about feeling more *parada* (standing upright), feeling more aware and confident when dealing with professionals and officials.

A recurring theme in conversations with women about participating is the notion of fear of change. Isabel (29 P) says that initially she found it difficult learning new things and changing her views. She says that she was *muy cerrada* (very closed) and used to be frightened and resistant of new ideas. After beginning to participate in her *taller* she left and returned a number of times. Now she sees herself as more tolerant and open. Elena (49 L) says that she had been very frightened of changing, of taking on responsibilities and especially of taking a position in the Co-ordination. For a long time she just helped, but Jana (38 L) finally bullied her into taking a position and not just being an invisible helper, saying *la gallina que pone huevos tiene que cacarear* (the chicken that lays the eggs has to cluck) and not let others take all the credit. Finally after participating in the School for Women Leaders *me di cuenta que fui capaz* (I realised that I was capable), she told me.

Change is also reflected in women's vocabulary. In general terms women talk in terms of *antes de* and *después de* (before and after they began to participate). Thus, Sandra (59 P) says that *antes me consideraba poca cosa, no sabía nada, ahora me siento rebien* (before I didn't think much of myself, I didn't know anything, now I feel really good). Carolina (40 P) says that previously she saw herself as *tan chicha* (so small), now she considers herself *grande y crecida* (tall and grown-up). Blanca (37 L) describes the fear initially of not understanding the vocabulary of other women with a longer trajectory of participation: *tenía miedo, no sabía lo que era la palabra 'autonomía', pero igual me decía autónoma. Rogaba que nadie me preguntara que significaba esa palabra* (I was afraid, I didn't know what the word 'autonomy' meant, but I still called myself autonomous. I prayed that no one would ask me what it meant). Now she sees other women who have begun to participate more recently struggle with language that the *dirigentas* use. The ways in which women talk and think about sexuality and reproduction have also clearly changed (see Chapters 6 and 7), enabling

them to begin to operationalise their rights both in relation to their partners and in dealings with health professionals.

A number of the women *dirigentas* with whom I worked, have now reached a level of intellectual development and political consciousness that equals, and sometimes surpasses most NGO professionals. They are therefore grappling with different issues in relation to change than other women participants. One of these is dealing with what to do with *la libertad*, the freedom they have fought for, once they have it. Angela (45 L) observes that she passed from the hands of her parents to the hands of her husband, which means that she never learnt how to live alone and has therefore found freedom and independence difficult to deal with. She reflects that *la cultura solo te muestra una forma de vivir, la que la sociedad te muestra que es la que le conviene, por eso tu no sabes que hacer con la libertad* (culture only shows you one way of living: that which the society shows you is that which suits it, for that reason you don't know what to do with freedom). Even amongst other women in the School for Women Leaders she at times felt marginalised because she lives alone, separated from her husband. She explains this behaviour as being due to the fact that *nuestra formación es totalmente patriarcal* (our conditioning is wholly patriarchal).

Angela sees herself continuing a battle that women in her mother's generation started:

I didn't fight for the right to vote like my mother, who I believe marched to the congress for the vote. She was a suffragette. She was one of the first to fight so that women wouldn't have so many children, and me now [fighting] for this other position, winning over patriarchy, deconstructing things, so that this body stops feeling so weighed down/heavy.<sup>146</sup>

In a conversation with Yolanda (50 L) and Jana (38 L), Jana expresses that she has become so reflective that she now questions everything, including her role as *dirigenta*. She has a developed sense of positionality, observing that in the space of the co-ordination, where she is with other leaders like herself, she occupies a different position and plays a different role than in the *taller*, where she is looked up to as a leader. She describes how she goes to the *taller* after a meeting in the co-ordination and tells them: *oye sabes que tenemos que ir para allá* (Do you know what, we have to go to

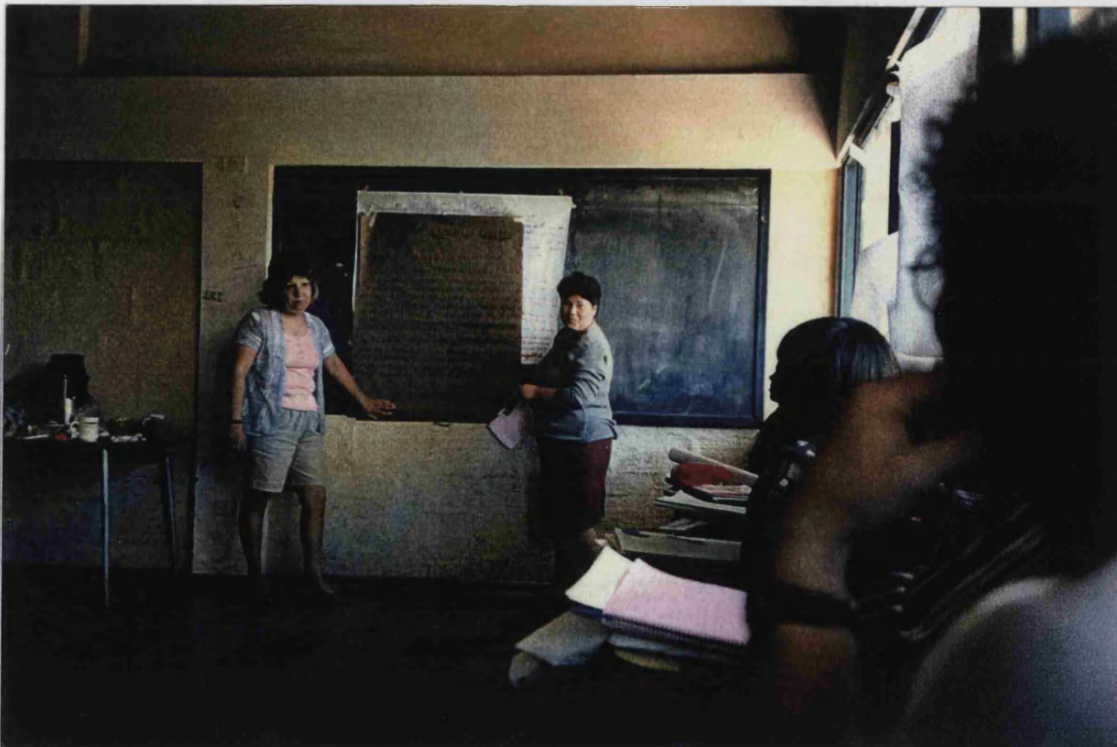
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<sup>146</sup> *Yo no peleé por el derecho a voto como mi madre, que creo que se encadenó al congreso por el voto. Ella era de las sufragistas. Ella fue la primera en pelear por que la mujer no tuviera tantos niños, y yo ahora por esta otra parada, venciendo al patriarcado, ir desarmando más cosas, que este cuerpo no se sienta tan pesado*



**Plate VII: Painting a mural in San Joaquín, in celebration of International Women's Day, 8 March 1996**

**Plate VIII: The School for Women Leaders run by Tierra Nuestra, 1996**





such and such a place). She may report to them about things that were discussed and ask them what they think, but recognises that she is exercising power, although she tries to do so *de lo más democrática* (as democratically as possible). She feels uncomfortable about these hierarchical relations, when she feels that one of the objectives of the organisation is to create more horizontal forms of relating to one another. The generally unspoken reality is that there is often a tendency to emulate hierarchical relations, in spite of intentions to the contrary. Jana questions the way in which some women in the NGOs conduct themselves: whilst most of them relate to them as equals, there are exceptions which she and other women leaders are uncomfortable about.

Yolanda expresses a similar feeling, saying that *después* (afterwards, i.e. after her experience of participating in the women's organisation) one questions absolutely everything. She realised, for instance, that by taking charge of her grandchildren she had appropriated the role of mother that she should have allowed her daughter to assume. She questions the power relations in the Co-ordination and she questions her organisation's relationship with *Tierra Nuestra*.

Yamilia (33 L) also has awareness of positionality, saying that for her the women's organisation is *como familia* (like family). In this space she feels *querida y valorada* (loved and valued) and recognised for who she is, but not at home: *soy Yamilia en la organización, en mi casa soy otra* (in the organisation I am Yamilia, in my house I am someone else).

In spite of a long trajectory of political and social participation, Marina (59 L), a member of the collective *Feministas Populares*, feels that it is only recently that she feels she is *trabajando una postura política desde mi persona* (working with a political posture stemming from who she is as a person). Now she is waging a battle *más decidida* (with more certainty): *cuando tu reconoces tu identidad sacas tu rebeldía* (when you recognise your identity, it brings out your rebelliousness). She reflects upon the force of *el problema cultural que tenemos: esa marca tan fuerte del machismo* (the cultural problem that we have: that stamp which is so strong of *machismo*). Marina also articulates the problem she has faced working with popular groups because she would always be perceived either as belonging to a left-wing political party or connected to the Church, when in fact she was *amplia y pluralista* (open-minded and pluralist), but no one could understand this. Like other women leaders she is also aware of the costs she

has paid in the course of her 'process', she is aware that emancipation is not a wholly positive experience: it also carries with it conflict, pain and stigma.

Examples of women's collective action as well as demonstrating the extent of the political efficacy women leaders have developed, also shows their ability to act autonomously from the NGOs that support them, reflecting the fact that organised *pobladoras* are not merely passive receivers of middle-class benevolence. They also provide a clear illustration of the way in which participation in the women's movement changes women's relationship to the state.

### *Case study III*

In 1994 the Co-ordination of women in San Joaquin decided that they wanted to undertake a project on sexuality, reflecting the wishes expressed by the women in the *talleres*. As *Tierra Nuestra* were not particularly interested in this project, they decided to apply for funding from the Ministry of Health whose programme *Salud con la Gente* (Health with the People) was open to applications from social organisations. They called a meeting to discuss how the form should be filled in. They took care to draft the project in terms that emphasised the health aspects. They were concerned that the Ministry might place some conditions on the way in which they conducted the project and so they described the project they wanted to undertake clearly and emphasised that the terms of this project were non-negotiable: they would be in charge of the planning and execution of the project, including selecting suitable professionals to give workshops. They achieved their aim, securing unconditional funding to conduct the project in 1995. They then decided which professionals they wanted to take part with them and held a meeting with them to plan the contents of two courses, one on bodily awareness and expression and one on sexuality. It was clear in these meetings, as in their dealings with NGOs, that they considered that the terms of their relationship with these professionals was open to challenge and that they expected to be treated as equals. At these meetings they also engaged my assistance to help them to evaluate the workshops and we planned a questionnaire together which all the women participants, including the leaders, would fill-in at the beginning. We then agreed to conduct a collective evaluation at the end of the series of workshops, in which women would work in groups to compile their

thoughts and experiences.<sup>147</sup> Subsequently representatives from the Co-ordination took part in a Ministry of Health symposium in which, after a speech from the Minister of Health, participants made presentations about the work they had conducted. As well as presenting the problems and achievements of the workshops, they used the opportunity to describe the history and objectives of their organisation. They emphasised that they co-operated with government programmes and with the network of local health professionals according to their interests and values; for them an *enfoque de género* (a focus incorporating awareness of gender relations) was essential.

#### *Case study IV*

During the campaigns in support of candidates in the 1995 local government elections, the women in the Co-ordination were sorely aggrieved when the supporters of Sr. León, a candidate for the Democratic Christian Party standing for mayor, defaced a mural they had painted putting in its place the name of their leader in bright green and yellow. They agreed to contact the candidate in question to arrange a meeting to air their grievances and demand some kind of restitution. They decided that the meeting should take place on their 'territory' in the *junta de vecinos*. He was initially reluctant to talk with them, saying that he wanted to meet with people to talk about important things, but after a number of calls in which they emphasised the importance of women's votes in the coming election they secured a meeting with him in the location that they had specified. They arrived promptly for the meeting and one of the women sat in the largest and most central chair, saying that she was not going to let the politician occupy it. The other women occupied all the seats on either side of her, so that when León arrived he was forced to sit at the edge of the group. They adopted an extremely serious posture with Sr. León, remaining seated while he came to each of them to shake hands. They took it in turns to explain who they were and what their organisation was about and that they felt that how he had acted showed a lack of respect towards them. They explained that women in the neighbourhood had little means of expression and did not feel represented by the political parties. Politicians, they said, had many platforms to express themselves, while they did not have other spaces in which to express themselves. The mural they had drawn was for them a political as well as an artistic expression; it was as far as they knew the only mural designed and painted by women in the sector. They emphasised

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<sup>147</sup> The contents of these workshops are discussed in Chapter 7.

that they were not just wives and housewives, they were capable of expressing injustices and demanding the respect they deserved. They would not accept León's excuse, which was that he had no control over the people who had painted over the mural. One of them quickly piped up asking why then was he standing for mayor when he could not even control his own supporters. Finding all his manoeuvres blocked, León, by this time wringing his hands nervously, eventually apologised and the women agreed that they would accept, provided that he supply them with materials to paint another mural, a promise which they kept him to.

#### 5.4 Younger women

Several women leaders express the view that young women are not much further advanced than their own generation. Carmena (65 P), for instance, refers to her daughter-in-law who completed her school education and now works in an office and says that she is *cerrada y atontada* (closed and unaware). 'Young women like her', she says, 'have no idea that the women's movement exists and it doesn't interest them either'.

Some younger women express limited interest in participating with other women. Mabel (18 NP) says that she would like to participate, but she has other priorities. She goes on to say that she believes that women need to organise themselves to obtain things and that there is still a long way to go. She cites the fact that women earn less than men and the fact that women often suffer sexual assault at work. Lina (16 NP), whose mother is a leader in the local women's movement, thinks that it is important that community organisations exist, where the problems of the sector can be dealt with. She believes that the *talleres* that her mother participates in are good because they provide a space for recreation for women and a place where they can learn new things, but she herself is not interested in participating. She thinks that participating has been good for her mother, in particular in terms of personal development. She observes that her mother now stands up for herself and does not bow to her husband's will.

Other women do express interest in participating. Iris (18 NP) says she would like to participate in the future. She has participated in a couple of workshops which she said helped her to express herself and she believes it is good for women to have a space

to do things outside of the home. Ruth (22 NP) also said she would like to participate but feels that most groups are of women much older than herself. She thinks it is good for women to participate, if only because it gets them out of the house: *es un escape fuera de ese mundo de la casa* (it is an escape from the world of the house). She says that her mother tells her that she should be a mother twenty-four hours a day, but she believes that her mother is wrong, that she has a right to go out. She says her husband does not stop her from going out. Margarita (25 NP) would also like to participate *para no ser tan ignorante* (so as not to be so ignorant). She thinks that participating in a *taller* has been good for her mother, that she now knows more, speaks more with her and seems to understand her better. She believes that the reason women participate, apart from wanting to learn things, is *para mejorar la vida de las mujeres* (to improve women's lives). Later in our conversation it turned out that Margarita does in fact participate in a *comité de allegados* (committee for homeless people), although she had previously said that she did not participate in any community organisations.

### 5.5 Relations between women in the women's movement

A number of women express a sense of mistrust amongst women generally: *sentimos que falta solidaridad y unidad entre nosotras* (we feel there is a lack of solidarity and unity amongst us) and some say that they have experienced reprobation for participating: *la mujer que participa es criticada* (the woman who participates is criticised). Gislea (46 L) says it makes her sad that *entre nosotras mismas nos tiramos para abajo* (amongst ourselves we bring ourselves down). She observes that if we come across a woman who is knowledgeable and is a bit *distinta* (different) we see her as a danger, a threat. Gloria (45 P) believes that women are *envidiosas* (envious) and do not like seeing other women rise up to be *dirigentas*, although she thinks that relations among women are better amongst women's groups than in society in general. Manuela (49 L) feels that *cada una quiere poner la jineta mas alta* (each woman wants to put the saddle higher), when really we are all at the same level, nobody has more value than anyone else. She feels that in the School for Women Leaders, those who feel they have more experience tend to boss other women around and not want to make the tea or do the shopping. She feels that we need to work on the relationships between women: *no*

*porque vamos a Tierra Nueva vamos a ser superiores a otras mujeres y con derechos distintos* (we aren't superior to other women or have different rights just because we go to *Tierra Nueva*). Yolanda (50 L), reflecting on the Co-ordination describes it as *un espacio más de poder y donde todas las que estamos ahí queremos manejar ese poder y hay conflictos por eso* (another space of power where everyone wants to manage that power and there are conflicts as a result). The problem, she feels, is that they have not acknowledged this. Carmena (65 P) makes a similar criticism, saying that women tend to create the same kinds of hierarchical relations that they have criticised. This and other comments reflect the problems inherent in the project of the women's movement here and elsewhere, which at times presents an image of women as an overly homogenous group when in fact they are faced with the realities of competing women's views and the problem of internal hierarchies.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that the dominant framework for approaching questions of citizenship and political participation are inadequate to address the challenges of understanding women's political activity. Conceiving of the political in the limited masculine sense described in Chapter 2 excludes many of the activities that women are involved in as not political. It is only by expanding our notion of politics and creating a broader 'multi-tiered' concept of citizenship that we can properly understand women's participation as political subjects.

The case studies as well as the women's experiences of participation reveal a changing matrix of power relations within which individual women are located that cut across the boundaries often conceived of as separating issues of nation and state, from family and community. During the dictatorship, these relations of power encompassed on one level the state, with a military government, oppressive policies and laws and a public discourse, which comprised a particularly severe version of the dominant ideological core discussed in chapters 3 and 4. They also include political parties and local political groups. In addition, at the community level there were the local women's groups and neighbourhood associations, as well as the many NGOs that supported their work. The international human rights movement and donor organisations also exerted a

great deal of influence during this period and subsequently. At the same time, it is clear from the way in which women talk about their experiences that at the level of the family, gender relations have played and continue to play a fundamental role in terms of women's ability to operationalise their rights. Situating citizenship in the context of these intersecting relations of power points the way towards analysing the process by which women's rights are reconceptualised in the context of gender relations and the tensions between the different levels identified.

It was during the period of the dictatorship that women became aware of discourses of rights and international human rights but they did not apply these notions to themselves and there was an absence of discourses relating to gender. While women's collective action under the dictatorship was liberating at times, in some ways it also reproduced subordination. For instance, women's community work in collective dining halls, in co-operative child-care efforts and in neighbourhood activities was not remunerated and often ended up being an extension of women's role in the home. Even in political parties women were often relegated to more marginal roles, as *Case study II* illustrates, although there were women leaders in the left-wing movement whose role should not be ignored. However, participation in political and neighbourhood activities did provide a training ground for political action and self-education (Jelin 1996:181) and many women's activities in subtle ways subverted dominant ideas about women's roles. Some *ollas comunes* were run by women only, which was in itself a way of challenging traditional gender relations (Chuchryk 1994: 69). It was after a background in such activities that women had the experience to be able to start up their own groups, thereby opening up new spaces for political action. In these new spaces women have been able to change and develop and acquire the skills necessary to be able to negotiate their needs and rights. Indeed their language and practice in some ways challenged authoritarianism in a way that conventional political discourse could not, precisely because their resistance to the regime, expressed in daily life survival strategies, was their discourse.<sup>148</sup> This kind of participation also shows that it is no longer valid to

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<sup>148</sup> Chuchryk cites the study by a Chilean popular educator, Horacio Walker, of one all-women soup kitchen in which he points out that because these women 'saw themselves differently,' they were capable of moving beyond the limits a patriarchal society imposed on them by collectivizing and thereby transforming women's traditionally defined roles. As Walker pointed out, they discovered that they were capable of much more than raising children and cooking and cleaning, that they were capable of political action (Chuchryk 1994:70). Women's testimonials from this time also support this view. Fisher quotes

speak of the dichotomies of public and private, or economic and political activities because they do not exist in such discrete parcels in everyday life. Indeed, as Staeheli and Cope have identified, women themselves blur the categories between public and private and between work and politics (Staeheli and Cope 1994:458). The carrying of political leaflets hidden under a baby in a pram neatly encapsulates this, as do the many examples women give of applying what they learnt through political participation outside the home to their circumstances within the home.

In the period of the transition to democracy, some of the spaces that were opened up during the dictatorship have developed into spaces in which women have been able to develop a 'culture of citizenship'<sup>149</sup>. These spaces have enabled the expansion of locally generated democratic practices in which women have acquired new ideas about rights and autonomy that clearly make a difference to their lives, providing a basis for women to negotiate and operationalise their rights both as individuals and collectively in relation to the family, the community and the state. Operating within these spaces and beyond them, women's multiple activities have a bottom up effect on gender and politics, disrupting state constructions and cultural stereotypes (cf. Carroll 1989; Peterson 1996). It is in this sense that women's relationship to the state may be seen as a site of contestation.

Women's involvement in local women's organisations clearly causes significant shifts in their lives, both in terms of their relations within the family, particularly with their partners, but also in the way that they relate to society in general both as individuals and as a group. As Yuval-Davis points out, formally linking citizenship to membership in a community rather than to a state, 'enables us to raise the question of the relationship between "the community" and the state and how this affects people's citizenship.' (Yuval-Davis 1997a: 5). This represents a definite shift from a strict political definition of a citizen – with an emphasis on his or her relationship with the state – to a broader definition, which implies a greater emphasis on the relationship of the citizen with society as a whole. The aim of this chapter has been, therefore, to consider people's participation in civil society, and not only their dealings with state institutions, bearing in mind that 'communities' and collectivities are not natural units,

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one woman who said that many men did not like the idea that their wife was not cooking the food just for them, resulting in big fights (Fisher 1993: 34).

<sup>149</sup> A phrase coined by Jelin and Hershberg (1996:2).



but ideological and material constructions, whose boundaries, structures and norms are the result of constant processes of struggles and negotiations (Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1992).

The search for a broader concept of political participation and citizenship is reflected in the words of one *dirigenta*, who herself finds the traditional concept of politics too limiting to describe her participation in the women's movement. She distinguishes between her experiences before she began to be involved in women's groups as political, and her experience in the *talleres*, which was *otra clase de experiencia* (another class of experience). It was not that she did not see this work also as political, just not party political, which for her had to do with *la lucha de clases* (class struggle):

Now we have another class, and a different type of fight, it is an internal fight with our selves, which we go on developing; bringing things out into the open and learning from other women. I find that it is something more integral, it is more of a whole, or rather for me it has integrated the whole of me, it isn't just the political part itself, but rather everything that has to do with being a human being, with my feelings, my emotions, my whole life, so it is something different.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> *Ahora tenemos otra clase, también es otro tipo de lucha, lucha interna que tenemos con nuestro propio yo, vamos desarrollándolo, tirando para fuera, aprendiendo de otras mujeres, pero yo encuentro que es algo más integral, es más un todo, o sea para mi me ha integrado entera, no es la parte solamente que te dijera yo, lo político en sí, sino que en todo como ser humano, con mis sensaciones, mis emociones, mi vida entera, entonces es diferente.*

## Chapter 6

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### 'Accepted but not desired': Women's reproductive histories

#### 6.1 Introduction

No sooner are we born and they take away that right, they call us '*chancleta*'.<sup>150</sup> From then on we are marked.<sup>151</sup>

Gisela, 48, leader

In that moment I wanted a boy because they said that women suffered more. That they were going to go through the same process, that they were going to get pregnant, that they were going to get sick, that you had to take care of little girls. Because even then the roles were so defined, and it was like that, that the most women thought about was getting married, about how nice it would be to realise oneself as a woman, as a housewife, a good mother and all those things. And in terms of work and all the ambitions that one might have, that was just a momentary thing: you could have that later, and if not, then you didn't. And in the end I saw it this way: that if you didn't marry and didn't have children and became a professional you would not have that pleasure of being a mother...a woman can do many things but if she wasn't a mother she was incomplete, that was how I saw it.<sup>152</sup>

Victoria, 34, leader

And our creativity? They see us just as reproducers, I believe the moment has arrived for them to know that we are creative, that's how we stand before others and show our capacity.<sup>153</sup>

Angela, 39, leader

I think that I was about nine. My father was of the idea that a woman didn't study, he said: what's the point in a woman studying if later she leaves all her studies in her babies' bottoms, that was the phrase my father used.<sup>154</sup>

Manuela, 50, leader

Chapters 3 and 4 described how different discourses encode different ideas about gender ideologies and about the natures and roles of men and women in society. It was argued that, whilst these definitions are always unstable, contradictory and vulnerable to personal subversion and collective struggle (cf. Corrigan & Sayer 1985:8), those forming part of a dominant ideological core are extremely pervasive. As well as being

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<sup>150</sup> Something that is worthless, such as an old slipper.

<sup>151</sup> *Apenas nacemos y nos quitan ese derecho, nos llaman 'chancleta'. De ahí venimos marcadas.*

<sup>152</sup> *En ese momento quería un hombre porque decían que las mujeres sufrían más, que iban a tener el mismo proceso, que se iban a embarazar, que se iban a enfermar, que a las niñas había que cuidarlas porque hasta en ese entonces los roles eran marcados, y era así, que las mujeres lo más que pensaban era en llegar al matrimonio, lo lindo que era realizarse como mujer, como dueña de casa, buena madre y todas esas cosas, y que lo profesional y todas las ambiciones que uno pudiera tener eso iba a ser en el momento, si lo podías hacer después, sino no, y por último siempre lo vi de esta forma: que sino te casabas y no tenías hijos y desearías ser profesional, no tendrías ese placer de ser madre. La mujer podía hacer muchas cosas mas pero si no era mamá era como incompleta, así lo pensaba yo en ese momento.*

<sup>153</sup> *Y la creatividad nuestra, nos miran solo como reproductoras, creo que ya es el momento que sepan que somos creativas, así nos paramos frente a los otros y mostramos nuestra capacidad.*

constitutive of gender identities, these discourses provide competing definitions of the needs and rights of the persons so differentiated (cf. Moore 1994:93). This Chapter is about women's experiences and attitudes in relation to reproduction and how these experiences relate to social identity. Thus, the focus shifts from the level of larger scale processes to the local level where social identities are played out. The aim is to examine on the one hand the constitutive nature of the discourses discussed earlier, but also to come to grips with the processes whereby notions are produced, accepted, internalised or rejected and transformed in the course of negotiating social identities (cf. Villareal 1996: 185).

Developing Nancy Folbre's argument that bargaining and negotiation within the household are not determined merely by reference to economic assets, but also to socially established differences between people, Moore emphasises the importance of normative understandings and practices associated with gender ideologies in these processes. As the data illustrates, certain gender ideologies, such as motherhood, mean that individuals are constrained as to the kinds of strategies they can employ in the processes of bargaining and renegotiation (Moore 1994:91), not only in relation to other household members but also in dealings with the state and its institutions.

## 6.2 The first pregnancy

Most of the women I spoke with had their first child when still adolescent,<sup>155</sup> often as a result of their first experience of sexual intercourse, and shortly afterwards married the father, usually as a result of social and parental pressure. In most cases the women were unaware of the risk they were running, *me embaracé porq' no sabía de controles, ni de pastillas* (I got pregnant because I didn't know about controls or pills) and often had sexual relations because they felt pressured to do so.<sup>156</sup> In two cases the first pregnancy was a result of rape, in one case by the girl's stepfather. In some cases

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<sup>154</sup> *Yo creo que como nueve años, mi papá era de la idea que la mujer no estudiara, decía que para que la mujer va a estudiar si después deja los estudios en el poto de los crios, esa era la frase de mi papá.*

<sup>155</sup> See Appendix IV. As the table shows this is still a trend among younger women interviewed.

<sup>156</sup> Younger women do have a clearer idea about the risks that they are running. Mabel (18 NP) describes how one by one her friends got pregnant. She said that they knew what they were doing but often they felt pressurised and were too embarrassed to go to the clinic to get some form of contraception. She herself admitted that she had not confronted the issue of contraception.

the woman says that she had wanted to have sex. As Juana (39 P)<sup>157</sup> put it: *lo quieres pasar un rato bien y luego te encuentras con un hijo* (you just want to have a good time and then you find yourself with a child). She became pregnant after her first sexual relationship with her first boyfriend. In Juana's case, as in many others, her boyfriend left her to deal with the pregnancy that resulted from the sexual encounter on her own. Esmerelda (16 NP) said that she felt cheated because the man who got her pregnant had promised to help her if anything happened, but did not respond when she became pregnant.

Invariably it is the girl who is seen as responsible for having got herself pregnant because she didn't *cuidarse* (look after herself, i.e. avoid men or use contraceptives). Rather than providing education or information parents, particularly fathers, are repressively controlling<sup>158</sup> of their daughters' space and freedom during adolescence. This continues to be the main strategy for protecting their daughters' virginity. Iris (18 NP) complained that her father had never let her go to parties and always controlled everything that she did. She thought it was because he wanted her to suffer and did not want her to enjoy herself. When she began to menstruate she said that her father began to be jealous (*le vinieron los celos*) and watched over her and told her that her virginity was the most valuable treasure that she had. Later she began to realise that he was worried that she would get pregnant and ruin the family's reputation.

Where an unmarried girl or woman becomes pregnant, her family usually responds with anger at the shame she has brought upon them. Sandra (55 P) became pregnant as a result of her first sexual experience with her first boyfriend. When her mother found out that she was pregnant she told her that she was a *desgraciada* and a *mujer perdida* (a disgrace and a lost woman). Victoria's (34 L) father called her *puta* (whore) when he discovered she was pregnant, and told her she was going to give birth to a *huacho* (bastard) and that nobody was going to believe in her again: she was the lowest of the low. It is not unknown for parents to send their pregnant daughter to the countryside to avoid the shame she would otherwise bring on them. In several cases women were turned out of the parental home or had to fight to be allowed back.

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<sup>157</sup> Individual women will be identified, according to their involvement in local women's organisations, as leaders (L), participants (P), occasional participants (OP) and those who are not involved in a women's organisation are referred to as non-participants (NP).

<sup>158</sup> In women's own terms.

They would not let me in because I was pregnant and they told me that I did not deserve that house. I told them that if they didn't let me in I would wait outside and give birth there, creating a scandal.... Nobody would help. I went to a cousin, but they said they didn't want problems with my brothers. I went to my *madrina* and she said, 'No *mijita*, I don't want problems with Jorge or Antonio. No one wanted to get involved, but I didn't suffer, I think that the rage helped. I felt pure anger, rage, showing them that I could cope. But they still loved me, they didn't try to do me any harm. They were defending what they believed, that their princess had lost her crown.<sup>159</sup>

(Fernanda M. 53 P)

The attitude of family members sometimes changes after the baby is born. Flor (49 L) says that she spent the whole of the pregnancy alone, although when the baby was three months old her father came to look for her and took her home with him. Nancy (18 NP) said that her mother did not speak to her from the time she discovered that she was pregnant until the birth, when she came to collect her from the hospital. Her mother then told her that she must devote herself to the child. This was a woman's lot *cuando mete las patas* (when she puts her foot in it, i.e. gets pregnant), she said quoting her mother. I asked her whether this was how her mother described getting pregnant and she replied: *si ese es un embarazo para ella, una tiene que dedicarse a su hijo, uno quiso ser mamá que sea mamá* (Yes, that is a pregnancy for her, one has to dedicate oneself to one's child: you wanted to be a mother, then be a mother). Sometimes it is the girl's mother that receives the brunt of the anger. Irma's (38 P) father was furious with her mother when Irma became pregnant. He blamed her because she had gone out to work and left their daughter alone, when a woman's place is at home.

In most cases the pregnancy results in marriage.<sup>160</sup> Marcela's (31 P) case is typical. She became pregnant and said that they got married *obligados por la familia* (obliged to do so by the family). Her mother initially told her that she could have an abortion, but Marcela said that she wanted to keep the child. She had not thought of marrying, she said, just that she wanted to keep the child, but she still went ahead and got married. Although this pressure to marry certainly still exists, this may be changing. Some of the younger women said that, rather than feeling obliged, they chose to marry.

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<sup>159</sup> *No me admitían porque estaba embarazada. Y me decían que yo no merecía esa casa. Yo les decía de aquí no salgo, y si no tienen que esperar hasta cuando yo tenga la guagua, y si no yo me voy a parar afuera y voy a armar escándalo. Nadie me tendía el mano. Yo fui donde una prima, me dijeron que no querían tener problemas con mis hermanos. Fui donde la madrina, me dijo No mijita yo no quiero problemas con Jorge, con Antonio. Nadie quería involucrarse, yo era la mala de la película. Pero yo no sufría para nada, no me acuerdo que me haya marcado, pienso que me ayudó la soberbia en esos momentos, porque nunca me hundi. Era pura rabia, soberbia, mostrándole a ellos que me la podía. Pero ellos igual me querían, de ninguna forma trataban de hacerme daño. Estaban defendiendo lo que creían que su princesa había perdido, la corona, quizás que se imaginarían.*

<sup>160</sup> The figures in Appendix IV show that the age at the time of the first pregnancy very often corresponds with the age at marriage.

Ruth (22 NP) became pregnant and decided that she wanted to leave home and get married. In other cases, it seems that it has proved more difficult than in the past to oblige young men to marry pregnant girls, in spite of men's assurances during the sexual activity leading to conception. Consuelo (50 L) said that when her daughter Rocío (18 NP) got pregnant, her boyfriend disappeared. In some cases the father of the child refuses to recognise paternity, in many cases on his mother's advice. Thus when Teresa went to confront Gabriela's boyfriend she found herself confronted by his mother who denied that her son was the father. Unwilling to leave without at least sharing the scandal Teresa indulged in a lot of angry shouting and a well-aimed spit in the face. If the girl is fortunate her family allows her to stay with them and in a couple of exceptional cases the mother actually advised their daughter not to marry and to stay at home and have the child. Sometimes young women take the dangerous course of procuring a backstreet abortion or taking drugs to induce an abortion, usually alone, as they cannot face the reaction of their parents. Usually the relationship with their boyfriend has by this stage ended, the girl being left alone to deal with the unwanted pregnancy. (See §6.4 below).

In a few cases the woman decided alone to have a child. Carmena (65 P) said that her son's father was not involved in deciding whether to have a child, *fue mi decisión, entonces como que el no tomó parte* (it was my decision, so it was as though he took no part). She is unusual in deciding to have a child at the age of 40, without ever living with or marrying the father or any other male partner. Claudia (38 NP) became pregnant aged 19 without the father ever being aware and decided to go ahead and have the child. In one case the young woman actually took steps to prevent the father legally acknowledging paternity, not wanting him to have any more involvement with her or the child.

With marriage or pregnancy, the young woman's formal education usually comes to an end<sup>161</sup>, although a few did take up their studies again at a later stage at evening school. Almost all the women I spoke with regretted not having been able to study more. Those women that had begun to work before they got pregnant gave this up when they married and dedicated themselves to caring for their husband and children. When asked why they gave up work, women refer as much to the fact that they had to

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<sup>161</sup> Many schools still force girls to leave if they get pregnant.

look after their children as to the fact that their husbands did not want them to work outside the home. Lola (34 OP) managed to complete her studies at night school after her child was born, but then stayed at home: *mi vida fue bien sosegada, dedicada a mi marido, a mi hijo* (my life was very dull, dedicated to my husband and my son).

In some cases teenage girls deliberately got pregnant as a strategy to get away from their families, especially repressive fathers.<sup>162</sup> Victoria (34 L) felt that in some sense getting pregnant was a liberating experience for her. She had felt so *enjaulada* (imprisoned) and *accoralada* (hemmed in) at home that getting pregnant to some degree meant freedom. She realised that she was still *enjaulada*, with the difference that at least with her *guata* (enlarged tummy) she could go elsewhere and talk until midnight or later 'because there was no need to watch over the girl anymore'. It is also often suggested that young women get pregnant to force their boyfriends to commit to them by marrying. Angelica (16 NP) says that in the case of adolescent pregnancy she is 'more *machista* than feminist: I blame the woman. They get pregnant to keep the man'.

Mabel (18 NP) said that of her group of six close friends she is the only one who has not got pregnant. She blames them for having been stupid; that they knew that they should have used contraceptives. She thinks that they each became involved with men who were only interested in sex and consequently they have babies. Three of them married the child's father. One got pregnant by a man who was married, which she did not discover until she was pregnant. She said that each of them had had plans and goals for their future and they had to forget all of that because they got pregnant. One of the friends said to her: 'the only thing that makes me happy is my baby, I'm so happy', but Mabel says she knows that this is not true: 'She is fed up with her husband, the love is over and if she had her time over again I am sure she would not have got pregnant'.

Women often refer to the pleasure they derive from having something that is 'theirs'. Viviana (32 NP) echoes the words of other women when she said that when she had a baby suddenly she felt that she had something that was hers and this made her feel important. Claudia (38 NP) said that in spite of her fear of bringing up a child alone getting pregnant made her feel like a woman: *me sentía mujer, me sentía mamá* (I felt like a woman, I felt like a mother). This may reflect a lack of autonomy in other areas of life, as well as reflecting the positive affirmation deriving from the fulfilment of the

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<sup>162</sup> Or because of the refusal to accept a stepfather or their mother's new partner.

dominant gender subject position available to women: that of motherhood. Patricia (33 L) said that she was pleased to have got pregnant even though she was not married: I needed an incentive to continue living, to go forward, I felt so lonely, I wanted something to grab hold of, and my daughter was my salvation.<sup>163</sup>

### 6.3 Reproductive ‘decision-making’ after the first child

When asked if they had chosen when and how many children to have, almost all of the women would say that they had not. Rather, *fuleron llegando nomás* (they just arrived).<sup>164</sup> They may have managed to choose when to have one or sometimes two of their children through effective use of contraceptives. Those who did manage to decide when and how many children to have usually had two children, seen by many as an ideal number. Women said that they got pregnant through lack of understanding, or ignorance; failure of contraceptives or lack of knowledge of how to use them properly; inadequate access to contraceptives; problems using contraceptives,<sup>165</sup> or to please their husband.<sup>166</sup>

Maria’s (35 P) case is typical. She became pregnant two months after she was married aged eighteen. After this child was born, she immediately became pregnant again. She then went on the pill and suffered from headaches and depression, but continued to take the pill for five years in spite of this. She then tried an IUD, but this failed and she became pregnant with her third child. She then went back on the pill and began suffering from the same side effects and stopped taking them: that same week she became pregnant. She has now been sterilised. She says that she suffered during her pregnancies because they were not planned or desired. She blames her inability to control her fertility for having had a drastic effect on her marriage. Her husband reacted

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<sup>163</sup> *Yo necesitaba un incentivo para continuar viviendo y seguir adelante, yo me sentía bien sola, quería algo de que agarrarme y mi hija era mi tabla de salvación.*

<sup>164</sup> See Appendix IV to see figures for numbers of children.

<sup>165</sup> Severe headaches and depression linked with using oral contraceptives and haemorrhaging when using IUDs.

<sup>166</sup> One woman said she knew her husband wanted a daughter so she had another child as a way of paying him, saying she had always felt that her happiness had to be settled like a debt and paid for. Another woman living in particularly deprived circumstances and who said that she wanted to return to work was promised a refrigerator and a television by her husband if she gave birth to a son.



with fury each time she got pregnant, partly for economic reasons due to the pressure of having another mouth to feed, but also because of issues with regard to sexual access. Women and men in general consider sexual intercourse during pregnancy as inappropriate, many believing that it may cause damage to the unborn baby. It is common for men to take a lover when their wives are pregnant, which is what happened in Maria's case. Fabiola (40 NP) also refers to being frightened of telling her husband that she was pregnant, *porque se iba a enojar y me iba a echar la culpa a mi de todo* (because he would get angry and he was going to blame me for everything). Like several women she became pregnant when changing from one contraceptive to another. After suffering side effects whilst taking the contraceptive pill, her doctor let her rest one month and after this was going to fit her with an IUD. It was in this month that she became pregnant.

Women will say that although they now love their children, they had been *aceptados* (accepted) rather than *deseados* (desired). Marcela (31 P) did not choose when to have her children, *los tuve así no más* (I just had them), she said. The first child was born when she was still single; she then had an abortion the next time she got pregnant. The next time she got pregnant she decided to keep the child: *porque me sentía como vacía* (because I was feeling empty). Constanza (39 P) has four children, fathered by a married man with another family. She said that she did not want to have children, but as she did not know about such things and nobody explained that she could have an IUD. She did not use any protection and neither did her partner. Some women said they did not even think about planning childbirth, it was just what happened when you got married: *uno se casa y uno tiene que tener hijos...uno siente que los niños llegaron nomás...no eran deseados* (you get married and you have to have children...One feels that the children just arrived, they were not desired). Others would have preferred to wait a time to have a little more financial stability before having more children.

As a result of the lack of control over reproduction, some women reacted to new pregnancies with anxiety. Mercedes (64 P) said that she cried each time she found out that she was pregnant. Susana (48 P) said that when her period did not arrive, *para mi era un sufrimiento: 'Que hago Dios mío, que tomo?'* (For me it meant suffering: What shall I do, dear God, what shall I take?).<sup>167</sup> Isabel (29 P) said that a doctor moved her

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<sup>167</sup> In some severe cases the mother was undernourished and the child was born sick and malnourished.

IUD causing her to become pregnant with her second child. She was distraught as she and her husband were living as *allegados* (temporary lodgers) with her in-laws:

I cried a lot when I got pregnant, because in the conditions that I was living in in that house, it wasn't possible. I had to experience more suffering, seeing things I had never seen before, my mother and father-in-law suffering, I didn't want to have my second son there, I wanted to die when I got pregnant, I cried and cried.<sup>168</sup>

Isabel's is not the only case in which medical personnel had decided that a woman ought to have more children and moved or removed her IUD without her knowledge. This happened to several women. In other cases health professionals played a role in reproductive decision-making by not providing information or requiring the husband's consent before granting access to contraceptives, in others by giving vitamins in place of oral contraceptives,<sup>169</sup> or denying access to sterilisation. One woman protested when her doctor told her he required her husband's consent before providing her with contraceptives, saying why should her husband have to give his permission to allow her to use contraceptives when it was her that was going to have to look after the baby.<sup>170</sup> In contrast, in other cases they were urged not to have any more children because they were too poor.<sup>171</sup>

A few women exercised more choice in terms of when and how many children to have. Jana (38 L) says that she did not choose when to have her first child but she did choose when to have the second. Like most women she became pregnant just after she had got married. At that time she saw getting pregnant as what happened when you got married. After the birth of her first daughter, she had an IUD inserted. She said that her husband repeatedly kept asking her to remove it. She finally decided a few years later to

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<sup>168</sup> *Yo lloré mucho cuando yo quedé embarazada porque en las condiciones que yo vivían la casa, no podía. Tuve que aprender otro sufrimiento más, ver cosas que yo nunca había visto, los viejos sufrieron, yo no quería tener mi segundo hijo ahí, me quería morir cuando yo quede embarazada, lloré y lloré.*

<sup>169</sup> It should be emphasised that there was a pro-natalist policy during the Pinochet dictatorship that was behind most of these cases, but there are some post-dictatorship cases showing that this policy is still practised by some medical personnel. One distraught woman living in a single room with her violent husband and three children recalls breaking down a door in the hospital when she was told she was pregnant after having been given vitamins in place of contraceptive pills.

<sup>170</sup> Previously women required the written consent of their husbands in order to obtain contraceptives. The husband's written consent is still required if a woman wishes to be sterilised.

<sup>171</sup> One woman had to persuade the mid-wife to take out an IUD and says that she was treated as though she were stupid and ignorant. She told the mid-wife that if she was going to be hungry with an additional child that was her business and that her body was hers and she had no right to order her what to do with it.

have another child. She had an IUD put in again immediately after the birth of the second child, although her husband has always wanted them to have more children. In her view, this was not so much that he wanted to have more children, as that he wanted to put limits on her to keep her at home.

Younger women who have not yet had children, when asked about their life plans would usually say that they wanted to have two children. Angelica (16 NP) thinks that two is the ideal number. She says that the couple should decide together when and how many children they want to have: 'but more the woman, because the man goes out to work and arrives in the evening and it is the woman who stays at home with the child.' She sees the woman as having more control over her pregnancies than in the past, because there are so many contraceptives available to women, she says, but she thinks that responsibility for contraception should be shared. In spite of this, she has not taken any steps in relation to contraception, although her boyfriend says that she should *cuidarse* (i.e. use contraceptives). Her mother, she says, *me mete miedo y no me aclara nada* (fills me with fear and does not explain anything).

Although usually women say that they would have preferred to have fewer children, some would have liked to have more but their health or economic circumstances would not allow them to. Four women specifically say that they would have had more children if this had been possible. Blanca (37 L) says that she would have liked to have more children, but she feels that her situation is too precarious: she feels uncertain about the future of her relationship with her husband and the house they live in belongs to his family, which makes her feel insecure. Lola (34 OP) said that if she had a lot of money she would have ten children. Patricia (33 L) was the only woman in the sample who has been undergoing fertility treatment, because her husband has a low sperm count but wants them to have a child using donated sperm. She says that *más que na' yo me quise embarazar por mi marido* (more than anything I wanted to get pregnant for my husband). She puts down the failure of the treatment to the fact that she does not really want to get pregnant herself: it is not her decision.

#### **6.4 Contraception and responsibility for preventing pregnancy**

When asked who was responsible for preventing pregnancy almost all women would say that they alone were responsible. The husband did not involve himself. Most women

believe that it should be a shared responsibility, although a few said that the fact that they alone were responsible had meant that they had also chosen alone when to have a child. Some said that they had kept the fact of using contraceptives secret from their husbands, who were opposed to them using them. Sometimes the husband did get involved preventing the wife from using contraceptives,<sup>172</sup> by denying her the signature previously required enabling her to use contraceptives,<sup>173</sup> and still required in relation to sterilisation. A few couples decided together to use contraceptives, although in effect, they were deciding that the woman should use contraceptives, as condoms are seldom considered an option.

Older women and a few younger women said that they had been ignorant of everything but the most primitive forms of contraception. Rebeca's (31 NP) mother told her: *después que estés con el lavate bien y con una pera te tiras agua* (after you have been with him, wash yourself well and throw bowls of water between your legs). The effectiveness of this dubious technique was revealed by her next sentence: *Después de cuatro niños empecé a usar la argolla* (after four children, I started to use an IUD).

Marcela (31 P), when asked who was responsible for preventing pregnancy said:

I alone, he never concerned himself, we never talked about it; our communication was bad. He was never interested in anything to do with the family, I know other men who concern themselves and that is the ideal.<sup>174</sup>

She said that she was given condoms at the *policlínico* but her partner did not want to use them. She added that he seemed to have little interest in having children, which she saw as contradictory. Juana (39 P) said that she decided alone to have an IUD, because her husband was against using any form of contraceptive for religious reasons. She had two unplanned pregnancies, the second of which was also unwanted, but she said that she could not have an abortion because of her religion. After this she decided to use an IUD, before finally deciding to have a third child, in the hope that it would be a boy.

The most common types of contraceptives used are IUDs, followed by the contraceptive pill; another alternative is a once-monthly injection or sterilisation, although this is permitted for strictly medical reasons with the prior authorisation of the woman's husband. Fig. 1 below shows the differential use of contraceptives amongst a

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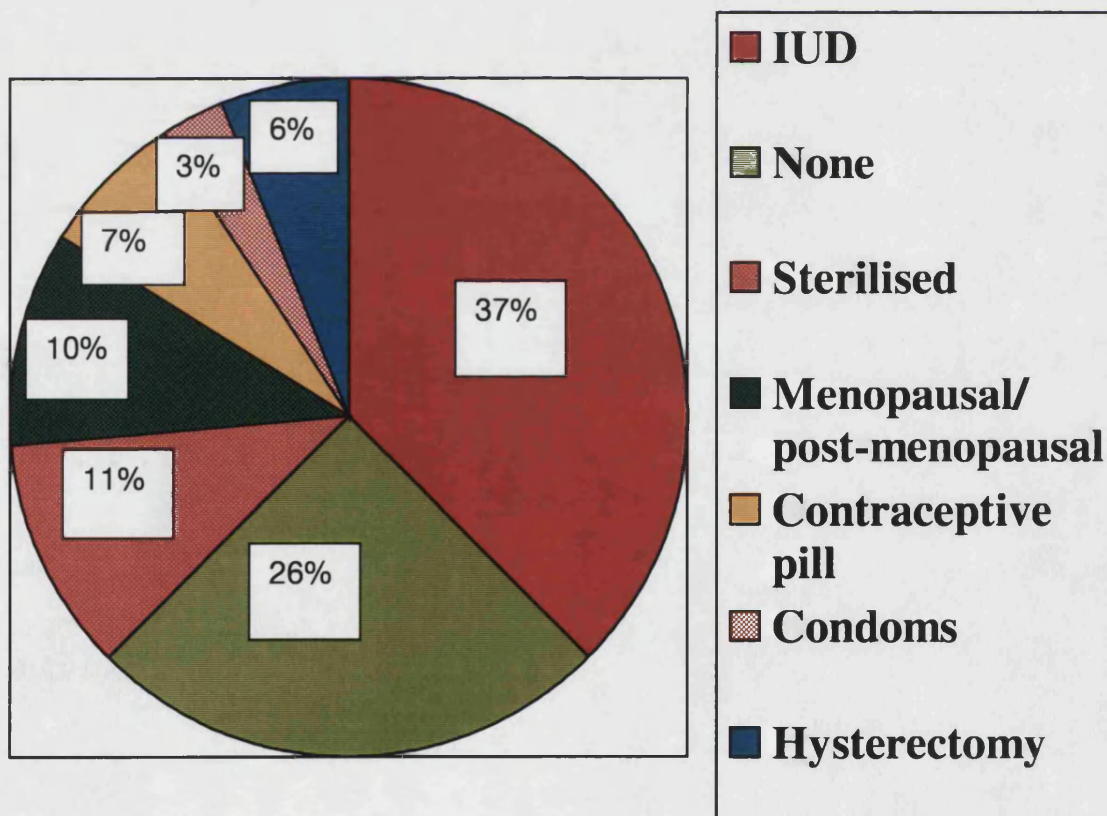
<sup>172</sup> Often on Catholic or Evangelical religious grounds.

<sup>173</sup> Some women did manage to get around this by finding a sympathetic mid-wife or by forging their husband's signature.

<sup>174</sup> *Yo sola, él nunca se preocupó, nunca lo hablamos, teníamos mala comunicación. Nunca se interesó por nada de la familia, yo se de otros hombres que se preocupan y eso es lo ideal.*

sample of 89 women. At no time did I see or hear reference to the Cap as an alternative. Condoms are not popular with men or women: only 3% of the women in the sample said that they used condoms. One woman even told her husband that the doctor had prohibited them from having sexual relations for three months to avoid having to use the condoms the doctor had given her. Where condoms have been used, it has not been on a consistent basis. Viviana (32 NP) said that her boyfriend used condoms the first two times that they had sex, but the third time he did not and she got pregnant. One younger women woman, the daughter of a woman leader, said that she would expect her boyfriend to use condoms if they have sexual relations, but this was not a view shared amongst other young women.

**Fig. IV Contraceptive usage (Total sample 89 women)**



Source: survey of 89 women in San Joaquín and adjacent *Comunas*

Those women whose bodies accept IUDs are generally content with them, although many that have IUDs fitted do not have them checked for years and are not advised that they need to. Also some women comment that they were not aware of alternative forms of contraception. None of the women I spoke with thought that natural birth control methods were sufficient, although the Catholic Church continues to promote them. One young woman who is a caretaker at the local church and assists in the church's activities says that part of her work involves preparing young couples and promoting natural birth control techniques. She said that the church requires her not to use any inter-uterine device. But she confessed that she does actually use an IUD, while at the same time teaching that these devices are in effect provoking abortions and therefore unethical. Whilst she believes that this is the case, she says that she is twenty-two years old and does not want to have any more children and is not willing to deprive herself of her sexual desires. Her young husband had wanted to continue with the natural method, but she was unwilling to do so because she did not want to risk getting pregnant again as she already had done so using this method. At her church, women are told that they cannot take Holy Communion if they are using contraceptives, but she said that she felt that each woman has her reasons for doing so anyway.

Obtaining a sterilisation is by no means straightforward. Carmen (38 L) tells of how she managed to persuade a doctor to sterilise her after the birth of her third child because all her births had been by caesarian and she could not undergo a further caesarian. She still had to lie saying that her husband was abroad and therefore could not provide his permission. The doctor told her that the only reason he would agree to it was because of the risk involved in a further caesarian. Another woman in exactly the same situation was denied a sterilisation on the basis that she was still *apta* (able/suitable) to have more children. One woman said that her husband saw it as a danger<sup>175</sup> that she should get sterilised and was also suspicious of her using contraceptives. Genoveva's (61 OP) case was rather different. She went to have an operation to have some cysts and polyps removed from her ovaries and womb. The doctor, who was a friend of her husband, said he was going to leave her as though she had never had children, saying: *éste es un regalo para Mundo* (this is a present for your husband). Genoveva said she did not realise what the present was, and because she thought that the doctor was not going to charge her husband for the operation, she did

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<sup>175</sup> In the sense of taking some of the control over her sexuality away from him.

not dare ask. He was referring both to the fact that she was being sterilised and that they were going to sew up her vagina, so that it would be as tight as before she had children. Ortensia (67 P) had ten children before her husband agreed to allow her to be sterilised. She said that she felt she had suffered alone: *sola porque a él no le importaba, parece que con mas sana la poseía el a una, a la fuerza, como animal salvaje* (alone, because it didn't matter to him if I got pregnant, it seemed that he just penetrated me more brutally, by force, like a wild animal).

There are a number of issues arising from the data that clearly limit the exercise of the right to information and access to contraceptives, as well as the use of contraceptives. In the first place there are the historical factors identified in Chapter 3. The pro-natalist policy of the military government is evidenced by the experiences of women who had their IUDs moved or removed without their knowledge or were given placebos. During this period many women lost trust in the health services (cf. Matamala *et al* 1994:5).<sup>176</sup> This accounts in part for the reluctance of many women to seek advice in relation to contraception, reflected in the high number of women who are not using contraceptives (26% of the sample). Often clinics have a limited choice of contraceptives available, and in many cases the IUD is all that is offered. The model of femininity endorsed by the Catholic Church and state continues to exclude the possibility of women having an active sexuality as a positive attribute (see Chapter 3), which means that young women do not confront the issue of contraception until it is too late. For men, contraceptives can appear threatening as they may be perceived to challenge their authority, which has involved the policing of their wives' and daughters' sexuality. The ability to control their wives' sexuality, as seen in the data in relation to domestic violence in Chapter 4, is still a key aspect of men's subject position implicit in dominant discourse. Again this inhibits contraceptive use, and is endorsed by the state in the case of sterilisation by the continued requirement of the husband's permission.<sup>177</sup> As discussed in Chapter 4, the question of abortion needs to be considered in the light of these practical and discursive issues which affect the possibility to exercise reproductive rights more generally. Chapter 4 concentrated on the operation of the law in relation to

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<sup>176</sup> See also women's experiences of pregnancy and birth in Appenix V.

<sup>177</sup> In relation to male sterilisation, according to § 397 of the Criminal Code of the Chilean Republic, it is still theoretically considered to be an illegal mutilation of the male reproductive organs. There is little Chilean material published on the subject, although a recent article argues that although there are no clear rules in relation to male sterilisation, it is permissible under law (Solimano & Casas Becerra 1998).

abortion. The following section extends beyond the direct application of the law to consider women's experiences of and opinions regarding abortion.

## 6.5 Abortion

Abortion remains an extremely sensitive issue in Chile and I am aware that many of the women I spoke with did not tell me about abortions that they had had because of the degree of shame and moral reprobation surrounding the subject. Even my closest informant in the field who was in other respects extremely open with me did not tell me until a week before I returned from fieldwork that her daughter had the previous year had an abortion. Women were always willing to talk about the subject in an abstract way and give their opinions, but many were less able to be open about their own experiences. Where they did they would avoid using the term 'abortion' and say instead: *me hice remedios* (I had treatments). Gisela (46 L) describes the grim reality of a backstreet abortion, the only type of abortion available to most women living in the *poblaciones*:

I began to look for a woman who carried out abortions. I found one through a friend of a friend. I was two months pregnant. It was during the time of the protests, one day I was protesting and the next day I went to have the abortion. In the morning before I went (to have the abortion) the police came to my house, but they were looking for someone else so they just insulted me. I went to see the woman and she put in the *sonda*<sup>178</sup> and I came back home. The woman said that I should wait another two months. She was a retired nurse, aged about 60. But I insisted that she go ahead. She gave me a long explanation about how dangerous it was and that the remains of the foetus can stay inside and that putting in the *sonda* when I was only two months pregnant meant that the foetus would probably come out whole. I had to leave it in for 24 hours, but nothing happened, not even a drop of blood appeared, so I left it in for 48 hours, when some reddish water began to come out. I went to the hospital thinking that they would perform a *raspaje*.<sup>179</sup> The nurse treated me very well but the doctor ordered treatment to prevent the 'miscarriage'. As soon as I was alone for a moment I ran out and hid in a toilet. I came out later when it was dark and outside I heard them looking for me, none of them could understand why I wasn't there. I was frightened and angry. I went back to the woman the next day and in spite of her reluctance she put in the *sonda* again. I had the *sonda* in for 3 days and I took antibiotics. Nothing happened and I took out the *sonda*. 15 days went by when one day I felt depressed and I began to get thin and could not do anything except just sit there. Then one day I felt something drop, I went to the bathroom and what came out was the whole foetus. That's when I became overcome with guilt. I washed it and looked at it. When my friend arrived I was walking around the house with the foetus in my hand. I began to cry and that is when the haemorrhage began and they took me to the hospital.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>178</sup> A metal rod which is inserted via the vagina into the womb to provoke an abortion.

<sup>179</sup> Scraping out of the contents of the womb.

<sup>180</sup> See Appendix V for original Spanish.



Pilar (67 P) had two experiences of abortion. In the first case she inserted a stalk *perejil* (parsley) into her vagina. She was taken to hospital with an infection. They asked her why she had done it and when she explained that it was because she had become pregnant with a married man who had children, they took pity on her and gave her an anaesthetic, otherwise they would have performed the *raspaje* without anaesthetic. The second time she tried to abort by drinking malt beer boiled with *perejil*, again she ended up in hospital where they performed a *raspaje* and denounced her to the authorities who sent her to prison. She said that abortions should ideally not be carried out, but *como son los hombres* (men being as they are), she accepts it.

Beatriz (55 P) had 5 children and 10 abortions, she says that after each abortion she suffered bad depressions and a deep sense of guilt; she said that she knew that it was *un ser vivo* (a live being) but she also knew that she could not support another child, 'I remember when I got pregnant thinking that I wasn't going to have this child because I couldn't have it, it was a decision that I alone had to make'. She worked to provide for her children as her husband only appeared now and then with unpredictable quantities of money. The majority of these abortions were conducted by doctors,<sup>181</sup> apart from the last abortion which was a backstreet abortion using a *sonda*. Her youngest child was still very small, she says, when she discovered that her husband was having a relationship with a young girl and that this young girl was also pregnant. She and her husband separated and she knew that she could not keep the child, *yo sabía que el peso era para mí, no para él* (I knew that I was going to have to carry the burden, not on him), she observed. She says that one cannot be meant to have all the children that God sends you, 'I don't think God has anything to do with that,' she said, quickly asking God to pardon her for what she was saying, 'the guilt is yours and yours alone'. Interestingly, when her youngest daughter became pregnant she did not want her to have an abortion because of the experiences she had had, *era mejor que tuviera la niña y no quise exponer a mi hija* (it was better that she had the child, I did not want to expose her to what I had experienced).

Victoria (34 L) admitted to having to provoke two abortions. She had become pregnant with her first child after her first sexual experience that had not even involved intercourse. She explained how sex had always been traumatic for her because of her strict Catholic upbringing. Her first child was 7 months old and she had managed to

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<sup>181</sup> When 'therapeutic abortion' was still legal, prior to 1989.

take the *gran paso de que Victor, mi marido, entrar y eyaculara*, (big step of letting her husband enter her and ejaculate) two or three times since their first child had been born when she became pregnant again. She describes her reaction:

If I had had that baby, my life really would have ended there, because it had been difficult for me to end the fifth year of my studies, and I felt a commitment to my father. I had not paid him back for what he had invested in me with my education. With great sacrifice I completed my studies at night, something which was not valued by my husband. And then I got pregnant. So I thought it was *el colmo* (the end of the world) that the same thing should happen to me again. I felt that I was never going to enjoy sex, that it was not for me, because every time I tried I got pregnant. I felt frightened. Because of the Catholic faith, I was using a Chinese calendar, but for a stable couple this is ridiculous. Then came the whole mental issue, that I was killing someone, that I was murdering someone and I lived all this alone.<sup>182</sup>

She went to a house where two women, who had carried out an abortion previously for Victoria's mother, performed the abortion which was completed without complications. She felt traumatised with guilt and the story did not end there. A couple of months later she became pregnant again. At this point she said she did not want to have anything more to do with her sexuality. She had done everything that other women had told her to do not to get pregnant (scrub the floors, do heavy work), but she got pregnant all the same. This time she had an abortion in a clinic and had an IUD fitted.

Gisela (46 L) describes the treatment she received in the Barros Luco hospital where she ended up after becoming infected after her backstreet abortion. Her story reflects that of many others.

A young doctor arrived and asked me what I had done to myself. 'Nothing', I said to him, I already knew that as long as you say nothing they have no way of proving anything, because the woman who carried out the abortion told me. I had already arranged with my sister that if I was kept in hospital she must bring me clorofenicol<sup>183</sup>, because if you don't confess to what you have done they don't give you antibiotics. The next day the doctor came again. The tension was terrible; it was torture. The doctor said to me, 'Very well, if you don't tell me what you did to yourself, I am not going to be able to treat you, I'm not going to do anything and you are going to die'. He treated me like an ignorant person. They kept me there until the next day without treating me. I was suffering haemorrhages at brief intervals; the pain in my stomach was terrible. I have a very healthy body, the haemorrhaging stopped at 1am without the doctor having done a

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<sup>182</sup> *Si yo esa guagua la tenía, mi vida ya realmente se terminaba, no había mas que mirar, porque me había costado mucho terminar el quinto año y mis estudios, porque así y todo me sentía comprometida con mi papá que no le había respondido con mi educación, o sea no había sellado la cuenta de lo que él había aportado por mi. Terminé en la noche con mucho sacrificio el maldito curso que no fué muy bien valorado por mi marido. Y allí quedé embarazada. Entonces yo encontré que ya era el colmo de que me volviera a suceder eso. Me sentía como yo no me iba a disfrutar nunca la sexualidad en el fondo, que eso no era para mí, que cada vez que lo intentaba quedaba embarazada, entonces era miedo, susto y no lo podía tener, que la cuestión de la católica, porque en el fondo funcionabas con un calendario chino que para parejas estables no las podías tener, eran leseras. Y ahí quedé embarazada y fue super fome porque ahí fue toda una cuestión mental, o sea yo estaba matando a alguien, yo estaba asesinando a alguien y me lo viví sola.*

<sup>183</sup> An antibiotic.

thing. I was lucky. At 6am the next day they carried out the *raspaje*. I swear that the doctor sought out those shifts to persecute me. I've worked in a hospital and I know a doctor does not work more than two shifts in succession, but this doctor was there three days in a row and each day he came and said to me, 'Tell me.' He would come and take my temperature which is what the nurses usually do. 'Ah, you still don't have a fever, you still don't have an infection, but it will soon show itself.' He frightened me: 'Because when the infection begins it is going to be a disaster because I won't be able to do anything and you are going to die, so tell me while there is still time, what did you do to yourself? Who did it?' I kept denying everything. He looked at me and said, 'You know that this is a crime? You are going to get infected and you are going to go to prison if you are lucky, because you may well die, so tell me who else helped you.' He kept on and on like this. The day before I was allowed to go home he brought a flask with a foetus in it. He said, 'This is yours,' I knew it wasn't because I had looked at mine so much. Just as well it wasn't otherwise it would have done my head in. I looked at it and looked away and he brought it round to the other side of the bed. The only thing I wanted to do was to cry and cry and to be with someone. I was alone, alone. It was terrible how they treated me. I always say that that doctor tortured me in the name of his precious God...After that experience I began to get involved in the cases of women who wanted to have abortions, in health workshops etc. Women began to tell me stories about abortions, because in groups women won't say if they have had abortions or if they want to have an abortion. There I began to realise how terrible the problem is.<sup>184</sup>

Gisela's experience illustrates the indirect operation of the law against abortion, which extends beyond the law courts. In this case the woman is not brought before a judge and sentenced to jail but she is nonetheless judged and sentenced, instead by a doctor. Her case also shows the way in which the legal and medical professions become conflated in the process of penalising abortion, reflecting the dominant patriarchal discourse underlying them both.

Women's views in relation to abortion are varied, ranging from those who adhere to strict Catholic precepts to those that believe that there should be a broad right to safe abortions. It is also clear that women's views often change over time as a result of experience and through participation in women's organisations. The high percentage (62%) that support the idea of a broad right to abortion reflects the presence of women who have experience of participating in women's organisations in the sample. Often women expressed conflicting views about abortion even within the course of one interview. It was very common for women when asked their opinion about abortion to initially say that they were against abortion and that it was a crime. But often it seemed as though this was what they felt they ought to say to show their religious correctness, and when questioned further they said that they could see the need for access to an abortion in certain cases and would accept a limited law allowing for abortion. Altogether 21% of the women in a sample of 89 women said they believed that abortion should be allowed in prescribed circumstances. Some felt that it should only be allowed

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<sup>184</sup> See Appendix V for original Spanish.

in cases of rape. Others said that it should also be permitted where the foetus shows indications of deformation or illness. A few referred to cases where the woman had insufficient means to bring another child into the world or adolescent pregnancies or where the woman's life was in danger, or a combination of circumstances where they thought abortion should be allowed.<sup>185</sup> Berta (38 P) is typical in saying that her Catholicism influences her views about abortion, in her view it is a crime and should only be allowed in the case of rape or where the child is going to be born deformed, but not *por irresponsibilidad* (for irresponsibility). She then says that she can appreciate that there are some cases where it is necessary, but she would only be in favour of a clear and limited abortion law. Tatiana (44 P) also initially said that abortion should only be permitted in the case of rape or where the foetus is deformed, but then expressed a different view when we subsequently began to discuss reproductive rights: *ya estoy pensando que debiera legalizarse el aborto* (I am already thinking that they should legalise abortion). Miriam (39 P) at first says that she is against abortion, but having said she did not think that women should be sent to jail for having an abortion she went on to say that: each one of us is in charge of our own body, at times it (abortion) becomes a necessity because each woman's life is so different. At times a child is on its way that is not desired and you have to take on that burden for the rest of your life.<sup>186</sup> She points out the connection with between high abortion rates and the difficulty of obtaining contraceptives. At the moment *la tramitan tanto para ponerle un tratamiento anticonceptivo* (you have to go through so much bureaucracy to get an IUD fitted).

In some cases women will say they are against abortion but make out a special case for their particular circumstances or say that they would make an exception in the case of their own daughter. Julia (33 NP) who had on one occasion tried unsuccessfully to provoke an abortion said she did not believe that there should be a right to abortion:

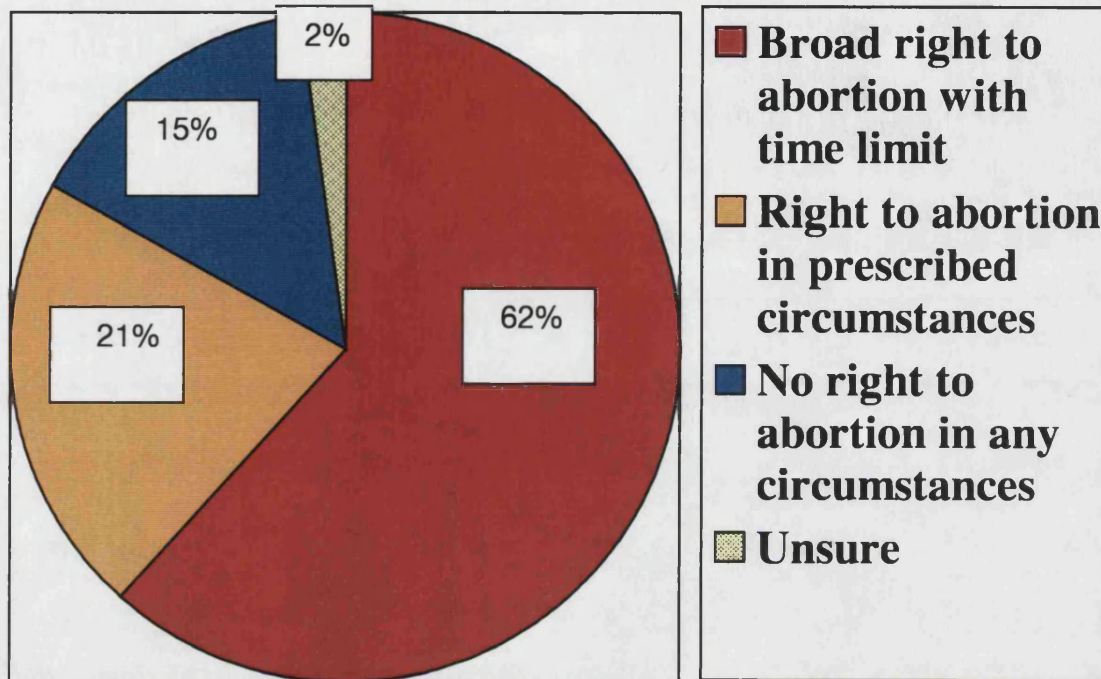
Because many women are just irresponsible, it's their problem if they don't look after themselves. In my case it was different because my husband maltreated me to make me lose the baby, as I already had five children and this pregnancy was unwanted...but when the injection didn't work I thought that if I did anything God was going to punish me because it is He who chooses when to take a life away, and I can't take a baby's life away, a human being the same as me.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>185</sup> See Appendix IV for full details of a sample of 89 women.

<sup>186</sup> *Cada una es dueña de su sexo, a veces se convierte en una necesidad porque la vida de cada mujer es tan diferente, a veces viene un hijo que no es deseado y uno tiene que cargar con el por toda una vida.*

<sup>187</sup> *Yo encuentro que no, porque a muchas les gusta el leseo, es problema de ellas si no se cuidan y quedan embarazadas. La causa mía es distinta porque a mi, mi marido me maltrataba para que yo perdiera, como ya tenía 5 niños y ya él último ya no lo quería y cuando no resultó con las inyecciones y si*

Fig.V Women's views in relation to abortion (Total sample 89 women)



Source: survey of 89 women in San Joaquín and adjacent *Comunas*

15% of the women in the sample were against any form of abortion. Flor (49 P) said she thought that abortion was *malo* (bad). She had had an abortion but felt extremely guilty for having done so. Of these 15% only a few believed it that women should be sent to jail for having abortions. Catalina (39 NP) said that she thought it was right that women, apart from girls, should be sent to jail for having an abortion, because they knew what they were doing and could have used contraceptives. In her view, they had got pregnant because they wanted to have an adventure and a good time. Mercedes (64 P) when asked what she thought about the fact that women were sent to jail for having abortions said, *Bueno, ellas matan esas guaguas* (Well, they kill those babies). But she later admitted to having had three abortions herself, because their economic

*yo hago algo dios me va a castigar porque dios es el que quita la vida y yo no puedo quitarle la vida a una guagua, un ser humano que es igual que uno.*

situation was bad. She said she had so many children and had to work, but each time she had asked God for forgiveness and she believed that she had been forgiven. Rebeca (31 NP) is also against abortion in spite of her own experience. She describes deciding to have an abortion in part because her husband was still living as though he was single, going out with other women: *me veía gorda y salía todos los fines de semana* (he would see me pregnant and fat and he went out every weekend). At New Year she was expecting to give birth at any moment. Some women came round to call for him and he went out leaving her alone. Subsequently they patched things up and she immediately became pregnant again. She decided to have an abortion. She went to a woman who inserted a *sonda*. The abortion was effective, but the *sonda* also tore her uterus. In spite of this experience Mirella believes that it is right that women should be penalised for having abortions, because she thinks that there are now so many ways of preventing pregnancy: *debería tener el derecho a vivir la guagua, porque es un ser humano* (it should have a right to live, because it is a human being), she said. She was even against a right to abortion in the case of rape: *Que culpa tiene la guagua?* (What blame does the baby have?).

Some of the women express harsh words in relation to women that they believe become pregnant through irresponsibility, and think that they should receive little sympathy. Men are rarely chastised for their irresponsible behaviour. The responsibility is seen to lie solely with the women. Claudia (38 NP) said that she saw abortion as a crime, but draws a distinction between the worthy case of a poor woman with too many children who becomes pregnant due to failure of a contraceptive and that of a *galla libertina* (libertine woman). The latter she sees as irresponsible *porque les gusta el leseo y quedan embarazadas* (because they like messing around and they get pregnant). Lola (34 OP) said that she believed that there should be a right to abortion when the conditions did not exist to be able to have another child, but in the case of *una cabra irresponsable* (an irresponsible girl) she was not sure, she did not accept abortion *cuando una mujer por calentura no se cuida y queda embarazada* (when a woman through lust does not look after herself and gets pregnant). This reflects a negative perception of women who have an active sexuality, which accords with the dominant discourses on women which designate sexual pleasure to men (see Chapters 3 and 7).

Some women were able to accommodate their belief in abortion in spite of their Catholicism. Nora (55 P) says that she takes her faith very seriously, but she believes it is wrong that because a young woman spends some time with a man her whole life can

be put in jeopardy, *ahí estoy sentida con mi Dios, que siempre le carga la cuota de la mujer* (in this sense I am fed up with my God, that he always puts more on the woman's load). Another said she did not believe that it was right that women should be punished for having an abortion, 'it would be better if they concerned themselves more with educating than punishing. As a Catholic I believe they are taking a life but if there are people who don't have the conditions to have a child, each person should be able to decide.' Constanza (39 P) says that, although she is Catholic she does not believe that abortion is a matter for the Church. She believes women should have the right to a safe abortion, *y que sean bien hechos y seamos mirados como personas igual* (and that they should be safe and that we be seen as persons too).

Those that agreed that there should be a right to abortion in most cases felt that the decision as to whether or not to have an abortion lay with the woman. Adriana (41 P) thinks that the decision should be more the woman's than the man's. She does not believe it is as important to men: they do not know *la lesión psicológica que es para una mujer llegar a eso, cada mujer carga su culpa por no sé cuanto tiempo* (the psychological wound that it (causes) a woman to reach this point, each woman carries her guilt around for I don't know how long). A few felt that it should be a joint decision. Claudia (38 NP) says that *la mujer es dueña de su cuerpo, es ella la que decide* (the woman is in charge of her body, it is her that decides), but she believes that the decision should be taken by the couple jointly.

Views amongst younger women are mixed. If anything their views are more conservative than those of older women. Out of the 17 youngest informants, 6 say that they are against abortion. Iris (18 NP) states that abortions should never be carried out: 'They don't have the right to take the life of a being on it's way into the world...They should take the life away from a woman that does that.'<sup>188</sup> Another young woman says she thinks abortion should never be allowed, even in the case of a rape: 'no-one is to blame, least of all the being to be born,' (*nadie tiene la culpa y menos él que está por nacer*).

Mabel (18NP) is also against abortion. She describes having seen a number of anti-abortion videos dealing with abortion where she saw pieces of flesh being extracted with a *sonda* and says that these images had a big impact on her. Iliana (15 NP) says

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<sup>188</sup> *Porque no tienen derecho a quitar la vida a un ser que viene. No lo aceptaría nunca creo que se debe quitar la vida a la mujer que lo hace.*

that she is against abortion, that one is 'killing a live being that wants to come into the world and she (the woman) does not want to bring it.' She says that even in the case of rape, as had occurred with one of her schoolfriends, she did not believe in having an abortion. She said that some young girls have abortions because they are afraid that their mothers will tell them off and older women have abortions because they do not have the means to support another child, but 'in the end', she said, 'it's their business.'

Ruth (22 NP) states initially that she does not approve of abortion in any circumstances, but then says that if it were her own daughter and she had been raped she would do anything in her power to procure her an abortion. She went on to say that, although she was a Catholic, she could see some circumstances where it was necessary and did not think it was right that women should be sent to jail for having an abortion, observing that nothing ever happens to the man. In the end she saw it as an individual decision, not a legal matter: 'the laws don't provide milk, clothing or education.' Magdalena (20 NP) took the view that every person has their own path and has to decide for themselves. She felt that it was a matter of conscience rather than law. If the woman is not going to be able to provide for the child it would be better not to have it, because there are already too many abandoned and beaten children who come into the world just to suffer. Angelica (16 NP) thinks that if a woman has the means to have the child she should have it, but if the family situation is bad she should be allowed to have an abortion. She thinks it is ridiculous that a woman should end up in jail for having had an abortion: *es su cuerpo ella tiene derecho a hacer lo que quiera con él* (it is her body, she has the right to do what she wants with it). She believes that things that are done to women's bodies using plastic surgery and intervening to determine the sex of a baby are far worse. She comments that for a woman to have an abortion she must have a lot of problems: *es algo raro que una mujer no quiera su hijo* (it is strange that a woman should not love her child). She believes that whether or not to have an abortion should be decided by the couple, not just the woman, but joked that the moment the child is born the father disappears: *se pregunta 'Y donde está Juanito?'* (Everyone asks 'And where is Juan?'), Jana rejoins: *Se hizo humo, je, je, je!* (He turned into smoke, ha, ha, ha).

In relation to the issue of abortion there is a marked difference between the views of 'organised' women who have experience of participating in women's groups and those who do not have this experience, or have only participated a little. Most of those who have participated have had exposure to alternative discourses in relation to



gender roles and rights and are therefore more likely to question ideological traditionalism. For the most part they believe that women should have a right to a safe abortion. Only 1 leader and none of the participants in the sample were against abortion. During the course of my own participation in the School for Women Leaders organised by the NGO Tierra Nuestra I was able to witness the process through which a couple of women who had at first been staunchly against abortion on the grounds of their Catholic beliefs, had changed their minds. Yolanda (50 L), who described herself as very religious and against abortion when I first met her, went through a process during her time at the School and through participating in the Open Forum for Reproductive and Sexual Rights, which culminated in a powerful and extremely articulate rebuttal of the views of a pastor involved in 'educating' young pregnant women at a local meeting about parental responsibility where she formed part of the panel. In my second interview with her she still said she would not have an abortion herself but felt strongly that each woman had the right to decide for herself in relation to her body, mind and soul, not the church or the state. She said that participating with other women had taught her to see things from other women's point of view and not just from her own. She has learnt to analyse the opinions she had and the views she held. Towards the end of this interview she broke down in tears and told me about an abortion that she had had twenty-seven years previously. At the time she already had four children, one of whom had suffered brain damage from meningitis, and had felt so desperate that she took this course of action. She said that it was her guilt in relation to this abortion that had made her speak out so vehemently against abortion for such a long time and dedicate herself to teaching contraceptive methods. Alba (54 L) who had been vehemently against abortion said that participating in the women's movement had made her change her mind and says that previously she had acted incorrectly and had wrongly censured women who had resorted to having abortions.

Yamilia (33 L) has mixed views. On the one hand she says that she believes that abortion is no longer necessary. She thinks that some women have abortions when they could have prevented the pregnancy. But she accepts that there are reasons for having an abortion and that doctors take advantage in these situations to treat women badly: *las castigan y las critiican* (they punish them and criticise them). She thought it was unjust that women should be arrested for having abortions. Although she would not have an abortion herself she said that she thought that legalising abortion would make it safer: *debería ser seguro así como se lo hacen las pitucas con plata para alla arriba, ellas no*

*se hacen aborto, se hacen 'operación'* (it should be safe like it is for rich women with money up there (in the wealthier districts), they don't have abortions, they have 'operations').

Carmena (65 P) who herself had four abortions when she was younger believes that women should have the right to a safe abortion: *la mujer debe decidir sobre eso...porque no todo el tiempo la mujer está con deseos de criar un niño* (women should decide in relation to that..because a woman does not always have the desire to bring up a child). She says she thinks it is especially important in the case of young women who end up completely ruining their lives and is also unable to provide a child with the care that it needs. In her own case she says that she did not have money to bring up a child and she knew that she also was not going to have the support of a partner, *me iba a tener que sacar la mugre yo para salir adelante* (I was going to have to practically kill myself working to manage), she said and this is what she eventually did when she finally decided to bring up her son on her own.

The women leaders make sophisticated analyses of the involvement of the Catholic Church and the state in relation to abortion. Clara (60 L) talks about how many women she knows, some of whom have a long trajectory of involvement in the women's movement and describe themselves as feminists and yet live in a state of guilt and anxiety for having had an abortion. She says this reflects the power of the Catholic Church's discourse on abortion, which extends to having a plaque outside many churches commemorating the murders of *seres por nacer* (beings which have been killed before being born). She herself had three abortions in one year. She said that it was unfortunate but she did not feel traumatised and guilty for having had them. Juana (39 P) also refers to the power of the Catholic Church in relation to abortion and the influence it exerts over government: *el gobierno decide por mi si yo quiero tener una guagua o no* (the government decides for me whether I want to have a baby or not). She referred to the experience of a friend who is plagued with guilt for having had an abortion, because she feels that she has committed a crime and because *la sociedad se encarga de recordartelo que cometió un crimen* (society takes it upon itself to remind you that you committed a crime). She sees it as *una injusticia tremenda* (a tremendous injustice) that women should be punished for having abortions.

Carmen (38 L) said she felt that the situation with regards abortion in Chile was a task that the women's movement must continue to work to rectify and, although

dismissive of the importance of fighting to change laws in other contexts, she said that in this case it was essential to change the law. For Luz (39 L) it is *imprescindible*, essential, that women should have a right to a safe abortion. Like other women leaders she sees the decision as being more the woman's than her partner's, saying that 'if women followed the precepts of the Church and state we would have all those children, in addition to the ones we already have and how would we feed them all when the state does not make itself responsible for this situation?' Maunuela (49 L) sees abortion as a decision for each individual to make: *tu decides con tú cuerpo que hacer, yo no acepto que decidan por mi* (you decide what to do with your own body, I don't accept other people deciding for me). Blanca (37 L) also sees this as a matter for the individual, not for the state: *el estado no puede meterse en el cuerpo de cada mujer* (the state cannot meddle with each woman's body). Angela (45 L) recounts how she had a clandestine abortion and almost died as a result. She succinctly sums up her own situation and that of other women in Chile when she asks, *De que ciudadanía me hablan, si ni de mi cuerpo soy dueña?* (What citizenship are they talking to me about, if I am not even master of my own body?).

Fig. VI Ratio of Abortions to Live Births in a sample of 89 women

Live births	Abortions <sup>189</sup>	Attempted abortions	Total women
294	77	7	89
(3.8)	(1)		

#### *Partner's involvement in and views about abortion*

Usually women confront abortion alone, but in some cases the man does involve himself, particularly if he has some interest in doing so.<sup>190</sup> Esmeralda (16 NP), who

<sup>189</sup> This represents the number of abortions that women admitted to having. Given the reluctance of women to admit to having abortions due to the degree of moral reprobation surrounding the subject, the actual number is likely to be higher.

<sup>190</sup> In Rebeca's case it was not her partner but her father who decided that she should have an abortion. In a couple of cases it was the mother who decided since she was the one who was going to have to look after the child.

became pregnant when she was 13, said that it was her boyfriend who went and bought her treatments to provoke an abortion, but they did not work. He then tried to take her to a mid-wife that was going to carry out an abortion, but Esmeralda refused. When Fabiola (40 NP) became pregnant, aged nineteen, it was her boyfriend that took her to a woman that performed abortions. She says that she was not involved in any of the decision-making in relation to the abortion, she went along with it because she was frightened about how her parents were going to react if they discovered that she was pregnant. She ended up in hospital with septicaemia and a *raspaje* was performed. In her view, abortion should be legalised and the decision in relation to abortion should be made by the couple jointly. In some cases she thinks that the man pressurises the woman to take this step, but: *es uno la que mas pierde, el hombre nada, yo me quede hasta ahora con esa sensación de culpa de haber hecho algo malo* (it is you that loses most, the man nothing. I still have the guilty sensation of having done something bad).

More often than not women make their own decision regardless of the man's views. Constanza's (39 P) partner had strong reasons for involving himself when she became pregnant, because he is married with another family. He would react by saying *Que vamos a hacer? Tenis que hacerte algo. Tome hartas pastillas para abortar* (What are we going to do? You have to do something. Take lots of pills so that you abort), but she refused to do this. Giamar (30 L) also opted not to abort although the man involved proposed that she have an abortion; he did not want to have the child. As Patricia (33 L) says it is the woman who that left with the sense of guilt: *Es uno en el fondo que tiene que tomar la ultima decisión, se acepta el embarazo o lo rechazaba pues, el hombre te induce pero la que debe tomar la decision eres tú* (In the end it is you that has to make the final decision, to accept the pregnancy or to reject it, the man may induce you but you are the one that has to take the decision).

In some cases the man is aware of what is going on but chooses not to get involved. Beatriz (55 P) says that her husband knew she was having abortions, but did not get involved: *le daba lo mismo total era mi problema* (he wasn't bothered, after all it was my problem).

Some women felt it easier to avoid problems by not involving their partners. Victoria (34 L), when asked whether she spoke about the abortions with her husband, said that she hid them from him. It did not even occur to her to talk about it, she said, because having an abortion was the worst thing that a woman could do and the last

thing she would want would be for his family to find out that she had had an abortion, *no tenía nada de cristiano* (it was wholly unChristian).<sup>191</sup> Lucía (59 P) also hid her abortions from her husband. When he found out, he accused her of being an *asesina* (murderess), of murdering his child. When Estela's (30 NP) husband discovered that she had considered having an abortion he was angry for a week, she said, *le extrañaba lo que pensaba, tenía otro concepto de mi. El miraba la vida de otra manera no como la miraba yo en ese minuto* (it was strange to him what I had been thinking, he had a different concept from me. He looked at life in a different way to how I looked at it in that moment).

In a few cases women said that their partners were supportive of their decision to abort. Clara (60 L) said that her partner paid for the abortions that she had and supported her in spite of the fact that he had wanted to have another child.

Isabel's (29 P) husband expressed a common view when he said he thought that women have abortions out of evilness. As far as he was concerned, women have plenty of information and there are many ways of preventing pregnancy. He saw the treatment women who had abortions received as a punishment to women who were unfaithful. The only concession he was willing to make was in the case of rape. His view reflects that of many men and women who see the penalisation of abortion as the just reward for women expressing uncontrolled sexuality, as this behaviour is not an acceptable part of women's *deber ser*, the subject position allocated to women in dominant discourse.

## 6.6 Motherhood

No I've never had that (maternal) instinct, that's another thing that they have put into our heads.  
Mariana (29 P)

The centrality of abnegated motherhood in dominant gender discourse resonates clearly in the reality of women's lives. Similarly the frequently reported absence of men in the area of social reproduction, reflects the mother-centred family which features in popular as well as official discourse. But, as was found in the data concerning reproductive decision-making in the previous sections, whilst normative understandings deriving from these ideologies may be seen to have a constitutive impact on women's lives, these

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<sup>191</sup> This accords with the *doble moral* which women often refer to and which Montecino (1991) has documented (See Chapter 3).

notions may also be rejected or transformed in the process of negotiating needs and rights.

The influence of dominant discourses is reflected in ideas about 'good' motherhood. Thus Marcela's (31 P) comments in relation to abortion, that a woman must have a lot of problems to have an abortion because: *es algo raro que una mujer no quiera su hijo* (it is strange that a woman should not love her child). For her the 'good' mother begins to love her child from the moment of conception. Young informants often still have quite traditional ideas about male and female roles. When asked whether her husband helps with their baby, Helena (21 NP) says that he does not know how to prepare a bottle or to quiet the baby down. Sometimes he holds the bottle, or changes the baby's clothes, *pero eso es deber mío* (but that is my responsibility), she says. He goes out at the weekends, she says, while she stays at home with the baby. Mabel (18 NP), when asked why she wanted to have children in the future replied: *porque pienso que es la realización de toda mujer ser madre* (because I think that being a mother is the realisation of every woman), although she wants to have a career, she will stop working to bring up her children. She sees this as *el rol de mama* (the role of the mother), *una madre tiene que estar con sus hijos* (a mother has to be with her children). She does not believe that the father can fulfil this role, although he can share some of the tasks:

Men are more given to work, to everything outside the house, and one can't ask too much either because it is the same with the role of mother. In fact, the man must co-operate, but it isn't the most important thing. He must be supportive, but the fundamental role is that of the mother.<sup>192</sup>

She does, however, believe that it is important for men to have children: *El hombre es más...egoista, ellos están siempre buscando ganar mas plata, tener un mejor puesto donde trabajar y ese tipo de cosas. Pero creo que es una cosa fundamental para ellos, y creo que les gusta* (men are more...selfish, they are always looking to earn more money, have a better job and that kind of thing. But I think it is fundamental for them (to have children) and I think they like it). Indeed this focus on the importance of motherhood makes life difficult for those women who cannot have children. Gloria (45 P) has suffered prejudice because she is unable to have children. She reflected on the fact that

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<sup>192</sup> *El hombre está más dado a lo que es el trabajo, todo lo que sea fuera de la casa, y no se le puede pedir tanto tampoco porque igual es como el rol de la mama. El hombre de hecho tiene que cooperar, pero no es primordial, tiene que apoyar en todo, pero el rol fundamental es la mama.*

Chilean culture makes one feel that in order to be a woman you must have children. She has had to live with people telling her scornfully that she is *mula* (barren).

Almost without exception, women say that they are responsible for child rearing. For some this starts from the moment of conception. The discussion in §6.2 in relation to first pregnancies, as well as the material in relation to abortion in this chapter and Chapter 4, shows that it is quite common for men to disappear when the woman gets pregnant. When Patricia (33 L) became pregnant by a married man, she hoped that he would assume responsibility for the child. She did not want to pressurise him to recognise the child as his legally,<sup>193</sup> but went to register the child under both her own and the father's surnames. Superficially therefore the child has both parents' names, but without the father accepting paternity this has no legal effect. She admitted that she had hoped that he would pronounce his intention of accepting paternity without her asking him, but he did not and was not willing to help her economically either. He later spoke with her sister and told her he did not want to ruin his life in the way that she had. When I asked Juana (39 P) what happened with her boyfriend after she got pregnant, she said: *No pasó nada, fue mi responsabilidad, como con la mayoría de los hombres que hay en este país* (Nothing happened, it was my responsibility, just like with the majority of men in this country). Teresa (38 L) said that when she got pregnant the first thing her boyfriend said was that he could not get married. Subsequently he did not provide in any way for the child or involve himself in the child's upbringing. She complained that she never saw any of his money: everything went to his mother. She finally left, saying that *lo único que falta es que te acuestes con tu mamá* (the only thing lacking is for you to go to bed with your mother). This example provides an illustration of the awkward articulation between two generations of mother-centred families. The man is able to provide for his mother, but not able to give to his wife.

Women repeatedly refer to their partner's absence in relation to raising their children. Nora (55 P) said that she raised her children alone, *yo nunca lo tuve a él como padre de mis hijos* (I never had him as a father of my children), she says, adding that she never had a man there that she could count on. In relation to her first two children Nubia (35 NP) said that *el papá nunca se responsabilizó de ellos* (the father never took

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<sup>193</sup> To be valid in any legal process, the father must sign accepting paternity. There is a time limit of one month after the child's birth in which the birth must be registered, after which a fine must be paid in order to be able to register the child's birth.

any responsibility for them). He recognised the elder of the two as his child, but Nubia questions what use the surname is to her son. The children do not think about him and he avoids even looking at them in the street, *se da vuelta* (he looks the other way). She says that she has never tried to get anything from him, and it would not be worth it anyway as he lives on the streets. When I asked Yamilia (33 L) about her experience of child rearing she said that she was *sola*, alone. Her mother helped her with the eldest. Her husband has never been willing to co-operate with domestic chores or with the children, *el nunca ha colaborado con nada* (he has never collaborated in anything); he never had anything to do with the children's schooling, nor did he look after them if they were unwell. Victoria (34 L) said that she was left marked by the fact that her husband did not involve himself at all in her pregnancies or childcare. She reflected upon why he had not involved himself and said that when she first got pregnant, he was studying theatre in the university, he had at one side *un proyecto de vida* (a life project), and so he saw himself affected because he had to become responsible economically. She lists the role that he had to assume, and the requirements that were made of him and the fact that he wanted to have a pretty woman - not a woman with a big stomach - as reasons why he did not want to be involved in the pregnancies.

Estela (30 NP) had also hoped that she would find a man who would provide for and share the responsibility of bringing up her children. She describes her experiences with two '*luchos*.' She had her first child as an adolescent; the man involved did not assume responsibility for the child. When I asked whether the birth of her second child had been planned, she describes how six years had passed since the birth of her first child and she felt the absence of a father for her child. She said she felt the need to have a home and a man to protect her. She met Vicente, who she saw as mature. It did not enter her mind, she said, that he would be more irresponsible than the father of her first child had been. He was very good with her son and she went to live with him. She did not know, she said, that he already had a child by another woman. Estela became pregnant with him, but when she was seven months pregnant he went to Argentina. He made sure that she was looked after economically. He returned when the child was five months old and tried to persuade her to go with him to Australia, but she did not want to leave her mother alone. She said that they went out together and she noticed that he was crying, and he told the older boy that he should look after his little brother. A couple of days later he disappeared.



Although women hope that men will be providers, in reality women often have to cope alone financially.<sup>194</sup> Monica (46 L) observes that her husband did not contribute to the household when their children were small. In fact, she says, she managed more in spite of him than because of his support. She was not allowed to go out, but she worked secretly during the day as a domestic servant. She recognises that she had to do *el doble de trabajo*, a double load of work. She felt guilty if her daughters did badly in school. Because she had left them alone, *todo era culpa mía* (everything was my fault). But by going out to work she became *capaz de rebelarme*, capable of rebelling. When she became pregnant for the third time he did not want to see her, she said. He did not want babies or anything to do with them. It transpired that because she was going out to work he believed that she had got pregnant by another man.

Carmena (65 P) was also the sole provider for her son. She says that for the father of her child, with whom she never lived or married, it is as though their son, now grown-up, does not exist. When their son was growing up: *el brillaba por su ausencia* ([the father] was noticeable for his absence). She adds that their son has no interest in having a relationship with his father either. He says to her: *Mi abuelita y tu me has sacado adelante, así que yo no tengo nada que agradecerle así es que no tengo porque ir a verlo, ni si está enfermo, mala suerte* (My grandmother and you have brought me up, I don't have anything to thank him for, so I don't have any reason to go and see him, even if he is ill: bad luck). Carmena explains her son's attitude: *El nunca estuvo cuando lo necesito, no estaba, porque los chiquillos necesitan un padre que los guíe, así que se crió mas entre mujeres* (He (the father) was never there when he needed him, because children need a father to guide them, so he was brought up amongst women). She herself has continued to maintain an intermittent relationship with him. Although he married another woman and had two daughters with her, he is now separated. In financial terms he did not in general provide for them, *de repente tenía que ir a presionarlo y ahí me daba* (sometimes I had to go and pressure him and then he would contribute something).

In Constanza's (39 P) case the father of her children is absent because he has another family. She said that the father of her children never assumed the role of father. In the past he would come to visit, usually when they were asleep and he never went out

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<sup>194</sup> In 1992 women headed 25.3% of households in Chile (Cleary 1994:8-9). This figure does not however include the many households where the husband is still a member of the household but the woman to a large degree funds for herself and the children on her own.

with them or with her, or spent any time talking with them. She said that she thought he was frightened because his wife might see him. A month or so before I interviewed Constanza, the wife of her lover of eighteen years had found out about her and the four children she had had by her husband. The result was that he had now stopped visiting or providing any economic support for the children. She said that the children no longer wanted anything to do with him: *son chicos pero igual ven como los engañò* (they are young but they can see how he cheated them). She said that at the moment her youngest daughter could not go to school because she has not got the necessary materials. She comments that it has been a great struggle bringing the children up on her own, especially in relation to her son, whom she says she cannot manage. He was *no deseado* (not wanted/planned) and *desde que estuvo en mi vientre ha sufrido* (has suffered ever since he was in my womb). Subsequently I heard that Constanza was seriously ill and was unable to work to look after the children and unable to buy medicine for herself. A group of women from the women's group she takes part in decided that they would pay the man in question a visit. He was the president of a nearby *junta de vecinos* and they decided to go and see him at work, where he would have to listen to them. They said that he was *chorro* and *prepotente* (tough and insolent) with them, so they dealt with him in the same way. They presented themselves: *somos de la coordinadora del taller* (we are from the coordination of the local women's organisation). He tried to discredit Constanza, saying that it was all her fault, because she was *cochina* and *loca* (dirty and crazy). They said that they had not come to talk about his relationship with Constanza; they were there because there were three young children that needed food and needed to go to school. They said that Constanza had participated in the group for several years and she was not alone. They made clear to him what they thought his obligations to his children were. This case history illustrates the capacity organised women have for concrete practical action to operationalize women's rights and to challenge norms which privilege the 'legitimate' family over the 'illegitimate' and which tolerate male irresponsibility.

In many cases women and men conform closely to the traditional roles of mother and provider. In these cases men provide economically but are nonetheless perceived to be 'absent' from the process of social reproduction. Tatiana's (48 P) second husband provides for her and the children<sup>195</sup> and she looks after the children: *è*

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<sup>195</sup> It is a point of conflict between them that he does not want her to work.

*tiene mucho trabajo, llega cansado, soy yo la que me preocupo de ellos, yo veo con los estudios, ropa, ir al colegio, él solo da la plata, nunca les mira un cuaderno* (he has a lot of work, he arrives tired, it is me that concerns myself with the children, with their studies, clothes, going to school, he just provides the money, he never looks at their schoolbooks).

In some cases women exercise considerable power over the father's relationship with their children. Claudia (38 NP), for instance, never let the father of her child know that the child was his. After she became pregnant she decided not to see him anymore, although she now regrets this. Berta (38 P) says that she does not receive any help or financial support from her husband because she does not want to have anything to do with him (*no quiero nada de él*). Tatiana (48 P) had a child when she was twenty-six, but decided that she could not stay with the father of the child: *era muy mujeriego, yo sufrí en mi embarazo, él tenía varias mujeres* (he was a womaniser, I suffered during my pregnancy, he had various women). She said that she wanted nothing more to do with him. She did not even want him to recognise the child as his, so she brought him up on her own. She managed by working and leaving the child with a neighbour; her mother also helped her out financially.

Other women do not exercise this degree of power, but nonetheless acknowledge that there is a pay off for the sacrifices they make in terms of the sense of importance they derive from giving birth to a child and in seeing the children as 'theirs'. Talking about her experience of motherhood, Estela (30 NP) said that she had not wanted to be a mother yet when she became pregnant. She said that she did not feel that she was a mother the moment she became pregnant, nor when she gave birth, but when the baby was brought to her breast. *Me sentí importante* (I felt important), she said, because a baby had formed itself inside her and she had brought it into the world. For Julia (42 P), being a mother is *quizás el mayor anhelo* (perhaps the greatest achievement).

Lucía (59 P) says of her husband, *no me ayudaba en nada* (he didn't help with anything). In fact, she says, she felt used by him, *asi la guata q' tuviera él me ocupaba como mujer igual, entonces yo veía q' eso era utilizar a la persona* (I had my stomach out here and he occupied me as a woman (had sex) just the same, so I saw that as using a person). She said he never had anything to do with the children, which she always refers to as *mis hijos*. Beatriz (55 P) said that her life was *bien angustiada* (very

stressful) and Maria G (64 P) repeated the words that many women used to describe their lives: *siempre yo me sacrificué* (I always sacrificed myself). As a result of these experiences these women feel that the children are theirs and refer to them as *mis hijos* (my children).<sup>196</sup> As Mercedes says: *los hijos son más míos que de él porque yo he estado en todo con ellos* (the children are more mine than his because I have been through everything with them). Women and men frequently refer to children being *muy apegados* (very glued) to their mothers. Commenting on this reality and the need for change, Julia (42 P) sees this as a two-way problem:

On the one hand, at times the mothers don't let men involve themselves in the business of the children. But on the other hand, men don't involve themselves much. They both have to change - women and men. You believe that the children just belong to you and leave the man out.<sup>197</sup>

Juana (39 P) said that responsibility for bringing up children ought to be shared but that in Chile *falta mucho para la igualdad de condiciones, para que seamos responsables los dos* (there is still a long way to go to achieve equal conditions, so that both (the mother and the father) be responsible for childcare). In the end she thinks that women are more responsible:

It is the woman that carries the baby in her stomach, the woman that has the baby, the woman is the one who worries, who has to breast-feed it. If we had to share that part: say I have the baby and he breast-feeds it, that would be good. But unfortunately, all these things happen to you as a woman.<sup>198</sup>

She acknowledged that some men do feel responsible in relation to their children. Some women did say that their husbands involved themselves in child care, but they are the exception rather than the norm. Four women make a point of acknowledging their partners' contributions. Carolinar (40 P) says that her partner always helps with their child. Since he was born he has done just about everything. She said she found this

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<sup>196</sup> Cf. Levine & Sunderland Correa (1993:97) who found that as survivors of decades of mistreatment and repression by parents, male kin and/or husbands, low-income women in Mexico gained a sense of strength from their sacrificing roles as mothers.

<sup>197</sup> *Por un lado, a veces las mamás no dejan que el hombre se meta en el asunto de los niños. Pero por otro lado, el hombre no se involucra mucho. Tienen cambiar los dos, los hombres y las mujeres. Si uno cree que los niños son de uno no más y deja a los hombres de lado.*

<sup>198</sup> *Porque la mujer es la que la lleva la guata, la mujer es la que tiene la guagua, la mujer es la que se preocupa que tiene que darle pecho. Si tuviéramos que compartir esa parte o sea yo tengo la guagua y tu le das el pecho eso sería bueno. Pero desgraciadamente todas las cosas le pasan a una.*

difficult to deal with because she was not used to it. Julia (42 P) also said that her husband helps her a great deal with the housework and looking after their daughter, *yo he podido desarrollarme plenamente, gracias a él* (I have been able to develop myself fully thanks to him). Manuela (49 L) describes the power relations in her house as *un machismo compartido*, a shared *machismo*. She makes sure her husband cooperates in the domestic chores including looking after the children. Soraya (25 OP) said that she dominates her husband more than vice versa. She says that sometimes he has to prepare their little boy's milk, or put him to bed. He also plays with him, but she is the one who disciplines him, *yo soy la que lo cria* (I'm the one who raises him), she says. Nevertheless, she describes her husband as being like the majority of men, *quieren salir con la suya*, (they want to go out and do their own thing).

Many women say when talking about their roles as mothers and *dueñas de casa* (housewives) talk about feeling depressed and *encerrada* (closed in(doors)). Women now participating in women's groups reflect upon their past lives in similar terms and the need to get other women *fuera de la casa* (out of their houses). Some women resist the idea of extending their lives beyond the four walls of their house. Lola (34 OP) describes how she became depressed after having her first child. For this reason she delayed having her second child. She was sent to a psychiatrist who treated her for a year. The psychiatrist said that she should go out and work, Lola reflected: *y yo pensaba que no tenía que trabajar que era el hombre el que trabaja, eso lo sabía de chica que la mujer se casa y se queda en la casa. Me llene con obstaculos para no salir a trabajar* (and I thought that I did not have to work, that it was the man that went out to work, that is what I had known since I was a child, that the woman gets married and stays at home. I found obstacles to avoid going out to work). I asked her what kind of obstacles and she said worrying about whom to leave her son with. She now helps to run a centre in the *población* that assists drug addicts.

Women who have a long history of participation reflect on their previous acceptance of norms that they now reject. Lucía (59 P) reflects on being a mother saying that when she was a young mother she spent her time *negociando mis derechos por los hijos* (negotiating my rights on behalf of the children), because she felt that, *si mis hijos están bien, yo estoy bien* (if my children are okay, then I am okay). They always came first she said. She was content if her husband gave something to the children. It did not matter whether he gave anything to her or not. She said that things are different now,

now that she has 'awoken' through her experiences of participation: Now I come first, second and third, no messing around now, after I woke up, my husband went to hell...Here nobody gives orders, until they put a foot down on top of me, because I am a person.<sup>199</sup> She now has a different attitude to her own needs: *vienen mis hijos y me dicen: 'Mami sabe q' no me gustaria que Ud. fuera a traer otro hombre a la casa', y quien me lo va a impedir si yo quiero a una persona* (my children come to me and say, 'Mum, I wouldn't like you to bring another man to the house', and who is going to stop me if I like a person?).

Angela (45 L) says that she played a traditional role of *buena madre* (a good mother) when she was younger. Her son has observed the changes in her as a result of her years of participation. When they were small, she dedicated her life to caring for her him and his brother and sister, as well as their father. Her son recently observed that when they were small she was *tonta*, stupid. He said he meant that she dressed like a *tonta*, she did not speak, she did not go out and she did not have friends. Now she has many friends, she is not afraid to express herself and is often out. She used to do everything for them, but now: *si quieren comer haganse la comida, si quieren tener ropa limpia, laven* (if they want to eat, then they can cook. If they want clean clothes, then they can wash them). Yolanda (50 L) observes that: *este país no asume la maternidad como un asunto de pareja* (in this country childbirth is not assumed as something to do with the couple). The cost of motherhood in Chile continues to be borne by women. For this reason she concludes: *los empresarios no las contratan porque no sirven para ganar plata* (businessmen do not contract women because they think they are no good for making money).<sup>200</sup>

## 6.7 Awareness about reproductive rights (*los derechos reproductivos*)

Most of the *mujeres organizadas* who are leaders are aware of the existence of reproductive rights, although few know about them in detail. All of them assert the importance of women having the right to decide over their bodies and the right to decide

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<sup>199</sup> *Ahora soy yo primero, segundo y tercero, nada de leseras ahora no pues, despues que desperte, mi marido se fue todo a la mugre...Aqui nadie manda q' mierda, hasta cuando me ponen el pie encima si yo soy una persona*

<sup>200</sup> Women are frequently required to submit to a pregnancy test and sometimes an AIDS test before being offered a job.

how many children to have and when. Often this is expressed as much from the perspective of children's needs as those of women, emphasising the importance of being able to plan how many children one can educate, feed, dress and give love and affection to. Women leaders see knowledge and understanding in relation both to reproduction and sexuality as both fundamental and basic.

For the most part organized women participants do not recognise the term *derechos reproductivos*, reproductive rights. However, whilst women do not generally use the language of reproductive rights, they in fact often manage the underlying concepts very well. Although Gloria (45 P) has not heard of the term, she is familiar with the ideas on which they are based. She says: this country is *muy pacato* (very prudish). She explains that in Chile what is done is what the man says: *no somos personas, lo que decimos las mujeres no es valido, y eso no debiera ser porque somos ciudadanas* (we aren't persons, what we women say isn't valid, it shouldn't be like that because we are citizens). This applies in the case of reproduction and sexuality as well as in all other areas of life. Irma (38 P) says she understands the terms as meaning *que la mujer es dueña de que si quiere tener o no quiere tener hijos. Ella decide* (that the woman is in charge of whether she wants or does not want to have children. She decides).

Although she does not recognise the term, Berta (38 P) says that she believes that they have to do with choosing how many children to have and when. She describes how she lived the situation in her family of her father deciding over her mother's body. Her father would not permit her mother to be sterilised saying that, like that, she would not serve him, that she would be a *mujer hueca* (a hollow woman). As a result *mi madre siempre estuvo puro criando* (my mother was always bringing up children), she told me. She says that she considers this right to be very important for women *porque la mujer es siempre la responsable de los hijos, el hombre solo sirve para hacer el hijo, después se olvida que los hijos son de los dos* (because it is always the woman that is responsible for the children, the man only serves to make the child, and then he forgets that the children are both of theirs). A couple of women were familiar with the term. Carolina (40 P) said that she had heard the term and that it means deciding when and how many children to have. She learnt about the term at her *taller*, women's group, although she felt that she already had the idea incorporated in her life.

Those women that had participated in the sexuality workshops (see Chapter 7) did recognise the term and had a clearer understanding of their contents. Pilar (67 P)

sees these rights as important in the context of marriage, because women may want to say to their husbands that they still do not want children, because they want to finish a course or improve their financial situation, *para darse la oportunidad de superarse como persona* (to give herself the opportunity to better oneself as a person). When asked where men fitted in she said that they too had a right to talk about it. Deciding in relation to children was a decision for the couple, she said, but *la mujer tiene la palabra final si quiere tener hijo o no* (the woman has the final word as to whether she wants to have a child or not). She says she thinks it is wonderful that women should have the possibility to plan a family because she sees it as liberating for women, who, she believes, continue to be repressed. She refers to the fact that *la mujer no pueda decir no*, women are not able to say 'no' and neither are they able to count on the co-operation of men for natural birth control methods to be effective, *porque ellos no lo aceptaban con su machismo, no esperaban* (because with their *machismo* they wouldn't accept that they had to wait). Women, she believes, have always been raped by men. She describes women doing all the work in the house, often working outside the house to help economically and then the man comes home *con sus exigencias sexuales*, with his sexual demands. For these reasons she believes that women need to be able to exercise control over their fertility.

Genoveva (61 OP) provides a sophisticated explanation of the term, connecting the notion of reproductive rights with the right to an abortion. She explains the term as an inalienable right to reproduce or not to reproduce, which she sees as a personal decision. She says that the government cannot tell you whether or not you should have a child, but then explains that in effect they do:

They tell you that you have to have this child. Although it is difficult for you to have it, they tell you not to abort. It is a punishment: you have to have a child, whether you like it or not, if you don't want to you are breaking the law. So it can't be a right, because you can't exercise it. Nature makes you conceive after a sexual relation, but see whether it is your right to have it or not, and the right to conceive and have it is your business. But you can't exercise it, so how can it be a right? You have a right to vote, but in the same way you don't have the right to not vote. It isn't a right, it is an obligation. And the fact of not having a child is not a right.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> *Te dicen que usted tiene que tener este hijo, aunque a usted le cueste tenerlo, te dicen usted no tiene que abortar, es un castigo, tienes que tener un hijo, te guste o no, si tu no quieres ya estas trasgrediendo a la ley, entonces no puede ser un derecho, porque no lo puedes ejercer. La naturaleza te hace concebir despues de una relación, pero tu ves si es tu derecho tenerlo o no tenerlo, en este momento tu no lo tienes, no tienes el derecho a decir no quiero un hijo, y el derecho a concebir y de tenerlo es cosa tuya, pero no lo puedes ejercer, entonces como va a ser un derecho, tu tienes derecho a votar, pero tampoco tienes el derecho a no votar. No es un derecho es una obligación, y el hecho de no tener un hijo no es un derecho.*



## 6.8 Conclusion

This chapter shows the influence of competing discourses on the construction of gender identities. Women's experiences and the ways in which they talk about reproduction demonstrate the power and pervasiveness of the ideological core of discourses rooted in Catholicism discussed in chapter 3 that position women in a particular way, emphasising motherhood as women's 'essential' role, together with other factors such as female domesticity and sexual chastity. This is visible in the way in which parents, particularly fathers, restrict their daughters' freedom and the way in which pregnancies in unmarried women are dealt with. It is also apparent in the severe limits placed on women's ability to plan the number and spacing of their children. In more extreme cases, the power of this discourse may be seen in the actions of medical personnel removing women's IUDs without their awareness or refusing to perform sterilisations on the basis that the woman concerned is considered 'apt' to give birth to more children. The full force of each aspect of the dominant ideological core comes into play in the case of abortion. The point being that when the state regulates women as childbearers it legislates the ideology of motherhood. The force of this ideology resonates in women's opinions about abortion, at least in their initial reaction when asked for their opinion. Most women will at first say that they think abortion is wrong, but when pressed further women will usually agree that in certain circumstances it should be allowed. The fact that most women leaders and women that have a history of participation in the women's movement believe that there should be a broad right to safe abortion reflects their adoption of alternative discourses in relation to gender and rights.

Whilst dominant discourse designates women's proper role as motherhood, women are given little control over reproduction. Until recently, the husband's signature was required if a woman wanted to obtain contraceptives and his signature is still required together with the permission of two doctors to allow a sterilisation. The way in which women talk about abortion reveals the way in which Catholic discourse, as embodied in the law against abortion, are constitutive of gender. Dominant gender ideology clearly constrains the strategies that women can adopt to negotiate their lives. Women nevertheless find ways to manoeuvre the best they can in the circumstances, such as deciding to use contraceptives in spite of their religious beliefs, in some cases

deciding to have children without getting married, sometimes deliberately getting pregnant to have something that they feel is 'theirs', working outside of the home in spite of the struggle this usually involves with their husbands. For some women, their strategy is to try to fulfil the subject position contained in dominant discourse and use this to wield as much power over their children and spouses as possible within the constraints placed upon them. But the possibilities are limited and many women's testimonials reveal a tremendous sense of powerlessness in relation to reproduction and consequent anxiety. This stems not just from the practical fact of limited access to contraceptives and adequate support to ensure that they are properly used, but, as discussed in § 6.3, from cultural and historical factors which restrict people's awareness about contraceptives and, especially in the case of younger women, inhibit women from making use of them.

Women's experiences also reveal the absence of men from social reproduction. This accords with the material on dominant discourse in chapter 3 and with the material in chapter 4 which showed how state policies and laws exercise a powerful influence in this process, reaffirming the symbols of gender that circumscribe the social role of the woman to maternity, leaving the male gender outside participation and responsibility in the areas of reproduction, biological and social.

In terms of citizenship, the data aims to identify the way in which dominant discourse emanating from the state and Catholic church and reproduced in the lives of individual men and women positions women as primarily responsible for reproduction, but with no control over it, or by extension over their own bodies. This has profound significance from the point of view of women's position as political subjects, limiting as it does the most basic right of bodily integrity, it demonstrates that women have a different relationship to the state from men. The influence of alternative discourses on the way in which women think about reproduction is also apparent in the material. Women leaders and women who have participated for some time in the women's movement have had exposure to alternative discourses, such as the discourses of NGOs and the international discourse of women's rights, which challenge dominant ideas about reproduction. They have a different kind of awareness and have developed tools to be able to tackle life differently. They are able to employ their learning and knowledge about rights to analyse their lives and women's situation more generally. In this way they are able to play a more active role in bringing about change in their lives and in the lives of the women around them, thereby influencing the process of the

construction of gender identities, in ways that disrupt state constructions and cultural stereotypes. By applying a multi-tiered approach in this way it is possible to comprehend the construction of women's citizenship at the interstices of the levels of the state, the Catholic church, women's groups and NGOs and incorporating also the influence of the international discourse of women's rights.

The material discussed in this chapter is also significant in terms of the anthropological debate about establishing universal rights. Whilst particularising the experience of Chilean *pobladoras* in detail, it also reveals the pervasive axes in women's experience, discussed earlier in Chapter 2, that make international rights in respect of reproduction both necessary and applicable. Women express that these rights are important and are able to apply the concept of reproductive rights to their own experiences, and also connect their understanding of these rights to ideas about citizenship.

## Chapter 7

### **'Body absent, body present'<sup>1</sup>: perceptions and experiences of sexuality**

It's bad for women (not to feel sexual pleasure). They get ill. But you have to respond to the traditional marriage. That is what our education, the Church, the system, tell you: that a woman is not a human being and so she cannot feel. If you begin to feel then you are a bad woman. That is how the culture has made you.

Luz (39 L)<sup>2</sup>

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The denial of women's sexuality in dominant discourse<sup>3</sup> resonates clearly in women's experiences and perceptions about their sexual lives and selves. Their experiences reflect the crucial role that control over female sexuality plays in the construction of male identity. In particular, the ideological standards that have posited liberal rules and greater permissiveness for men and conservative ones for women have meant that sexual pleasure has long been perceived as a male domain. Very often women see the practice of servicing their partners sexually as an obligation and part of their role as a 'good' wife. The idea that sex could or should be pleasurable for them is still novel for many, or something that they have learnt through taking part in workshops organised by women's organisations. The introduction of sexual rights which go hand in hand with reproductive rights needs to be understood in this context.

A further characteristic of dominant discourse which influences the possibility to operationalise sexual rights is the double moral standard, or what Montecino refers to as the 'cult of appearance' (1991:117) that exists in relation to sexuality and reproduction. This double standard rejects sexual life before marriage and discriminates against adolescent pregnancy,<sup>4</sup> although everyone is aware that these things occur. In the case of abortion, everyone knows of its existence and horrible consequences, but it is difficult to

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<sup>1</sup> *El Cuerpo ausente, el cuerpo presente.*

<sup>2</sup> *Es malo para la mujer, se enferma pero tú debes responder al matrimonio tradicional, eso te lo dice la educación, la iglesia, el sistema, ellos te dicen que la mujer no es un ser humano por lo tanto no puede sentir, si empiezas a sentir eres una mujer mala así te ha hecho la cultura.*

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 3. It is no coincidence that in the poetry of the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral women's desire to procreate is disassociated from eroticism: the woman's body is not prepared to receive a man but rather a son (Montecino 1991:55).

allude to publicly or to seek solutions to the problem. To refer to this reality would break the taboo of appearance, lifting the veils that cover what actually goes on. Similarly in the case of the fiction of nullity of marriages, everything seems as though the country preserves the indissoluble canons of marriage contract, in the sense that the word 'divorce' is not sanctioned in juridical practice or discourse. In practice, however, nullity effects the dissolution of marriage. Indeed it decrees in effect that the marriage never existed. This has led to a situation where the state has been able to lift the veil covering the reality of daily practice sufficiently to address the issue of domestic violence, but not to conceive of it in terms of gender and not to address the related issue of sexual violence. This game of double standards also has to do with a society that is not secularized, where 'custom' (or ritual) is what seals experiences and the 'law' (or the word) puts together a discourse which disguises it (Montecino 1991:119).

This Chapter looks first at women's experiences in relation to sexuality generally in the *poblaciones* and then considers how women's experiences and the ways that they begin to talk about their bodies and sexuality changes through participation in women's groups and workshops. § 7.4 considers first the experiences of women's leaders and long-term participants and then the experiences of women who have been participating for a shorter time to show the process that women move through in the course of participation in women's groups. § 7.5 takes a closer look at the workshops on sexuality to show how women assimilate new ideas including sexual rights and apply them to their own realities.

## 7.2 Growing up

Almost all of the women I spoke with claimed, when asked, that the subject of sexuality was taboo when they were growing up. Teresa (38 L) says that her mother even died of cancer because she was too embarrassed to tell anyone that she was bleeding when she was not due to be menstruating: everything to do with *sexualidad*, *lo escondian* (they hid), she told me. Similarly, almost all say they had no idea what was happening to them when they first menstruated and their bodies began to develop during puberty. Fernanda

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<sup>4</sup> A recent study into adolescent sexuality finds that the double moral standard that exists in discourses relating to sexuality in Chilean society is one of the most important factors contributing to the difficulties which they experience: the contradiction between what is said and what is done (Solange 1994:87-94).

(53 P) speaks for most when she says, *yo crecí sola* (I grew up alone). Many said they found the whole experience frightening, thinking that they were abnormal and feeling *vergüenza* (shame). Younger women still talk about finding pubic hairs unsightly and removing them, although when their breasts began to grow several express wanting everyone to know about it.<sup>5</sup>

Many women refer to the close vigilance that their parents maintained over them once they had begun to menstruate.<sup>6</sup> Victoria (34 L) records that when she began to menstruate her relationship with her father changed. He began to guard her 'jealously' and controlled her freedom closely. He threatened to put a padlock between her legs, telling her that her mother had been a virgin when he had married her and that it was important that she too should be a virgin when she got married, otherwise her husband would not want to have anything to do with her.<sup>7</sup> She said he was similarly controlling of her mother, reducing her to a child like her. Ana María (42 P) talked about how *desagradable*, unpleasant, the whole experience of beginning to menstruate had been for her. Nobody had explained anything to her and she felt *sucio*, dirty. Suddenly she was not allowed to play anymore and everything became *no se puede* (you can't). She did not feel good about being a woman, *como mujer me sentía super mal con eso* (As a woman I felt really bad). Girls were not allowed to play; to be touched by a boy *era lo más malo que había* (was the very worst thing that could happen).

Some women complained about having to witness older family members having sex when they were growing up, as a result of sharing a small living space. A more disturbing problem was, in some cases, sexual abuse. Genoveva (61 OP) recalls that her father raped her many times when she was a girl, from the age of 9 onwards. She had never spoken with anyone about it, her father having prohibited her from doing so, until she recently told her husband when they were watching a programme on television relating to girls being raped by other family members. She broke down in tears as she described how her father used to shut her in the bathroom with him. Her father demanded to see her *pañales* (sanitary towels) each month and would immediately take

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<sup>5</sup> Previously young women were made to wear a *faja*, which was bound around their chests to hide their growing breasts.

<sup>6</sup> Typically menstruation is referred to as being 'ill' or 'indisposed': *Cuando yo me enfermé, andaba indispueta*.

<sup>7</sup> Esperanza (53 L) who was married before she met her present husband says that her husband has been like *un demonio* (a devil) to her, because she was not a virgin when they met.

her to the doctor if her period was late, to see if she was pregnant or had been having sexual relations with another man, *yo tenía control total* (I was controlled totally), she says. Her father was *celoso* (jealous) in his dealings even with the postman.

As discussed in Chapter 6 the result of this lack of information is that many women became pregnant with their first sexual experience: *fue por ignorancia* they say of their first pregnancy.<sup>8</sup> Several women said that they are now making an effort to talk with their daughters and to explain things to them that they never had explained to them. Jenifer (42 NP) says that she undresses in front of her daughter and looks at herself so that her daughter sees this as natural in a way that she never did when she was growing up. Some younger women expressed that they experienced adolescence with a greater degree of awareness than their mothers did. Iliana (15 NP) says that her mother talked with her in advance about menstruation and puberty and for this reason she experienced both without too much anxiety. Magdalena (20 NP) said that in her home sexuality was something normal and natural and she felt able to discuss the subject with both of her parents. As a result she had some idea of what to expect when she began to menstruate and her body developed although she found the idea of being a woman daunting. But many women say that they were not able to talk with their children about sexuality. When asked whether she talked with her children about sexuality, Mercedes (64 P) says that she always told her daughters to *cuidarse*, to take care, and not to let any man do anything *mala*, bad. She describes how her daughters went out with their boyfriends secretly, but when her husband found out and beat them, they each left and got married. She said that she had restricted them because she was frightened that *les pasara algo* (something would happen to them). She did not even talk to them about menstruation because she felt *vergüenza*, shame, about all these things. Some of the younger women are as unaware of sexual matters as their mothers were. Iliana (15 NP) said that anything to do with sex made her nervous. She knows that she is going to have to have sex one day but it does not seem important. She said that her boyfriend had asked about the contraceptive pill just in case, but she said that she had just kept quiet. Helena (21 NP) says that the only information she received was in relation to menstruation and even then no one explained what was happening to her. This reality leads Carmena (65 P) to observe that *la gente joven de ahora no tiene idea* (young people still have no idea),

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<sup>8</sup> There is little sex education in Chile.

reflecting the fact that change is slow. They feel that they are a little freer than her generation had been, but *ni tanto tampoco, están atrasadas* (not that much, they are behind), she comments. Almost without exception women said that they believed that there should be sexual education in schools, because *en la casa se habla pura prohibición* (at home prohibition is all that is talked about), although as one woman observed at least these days young people have access to some more information from magazines and television programmes.

### 7.3 Common themes in women's notions and experiences of sexuality

Women typically equate sexuality with sexual intercourse. Indeed Genoveva (61 OP), when asked how she is living her *sexualidad* in the present, said that she did not understand the word, although she soon catches on when we refer instead to *el sexo*, sex. Later in the conversation she describes *sexualidad* saying that it is *como saber comer, olerse, saber cantar, reirse, es parte del ser humano y como se ejerce es cosa de cada una* (like knowing to eat, to smell, to sing, to laugh, it is part of being human and how it is exercised is a matter for each individual). Most of the women say that they have always felt that sex was something *sucio y pecado*, dirty and sinful.

Berta (38 P) defines *la sexualidad* as a complementary part of a couple's relationship, but feels that in reality women are often used sexually by men, who often seem to act in an instinctive way with little consideration of the woman and are not aware of the need to 'prepare a woman' for sexual relations. For Iliana (15 NP) sex has to do with having children and pleasure 'is what men feel'. She mentions that one of her friends is having sexual relations with her boyfriend because she feels obligated to do so. Angelica (16 NP) says that she tells her mother that she does not want to marry as a virgin. Her mother gets angry, she says, but she feels that she must know other men before getting married.

#### *When do women believe that their sexuality begins and ends?*

Many women associate the commencement of sexuality with the first menstruation, reflecting the fact that they see women's sexuality as being inextricably linked with reproduction. Chía (33 NP) said that she thinks sexuality in women begins



at 14 or 15, 'because girls get pregnant this young'. She thinks that sexuality ends when women stop loving men. Others put the age for commencement of 'sexuality' a little older at 17 or 18. Ana María (42 P) thinks that *la sexualidad* begins when you have *un pololeo serio*, when you start going out with someone seriously.

Most women say that sexuality ends after menopause. Nubia (35 NP) said that she did not know when sexuality commences and thought that it ended with the menopause, again seeing women's sexuality as inseparable from reproduction. For Marcela (31 P) sexuality begins in puberty and ends 'when a woman is about fifty or when she is alone.' Some say they are unsure as to when a woman's sexuality ends but they believe it is before the man. Estela (30 NP) believes that sexuality continues after menopause, although sexual desire diminishes after this. Other women believe that 'we are born with sexuality and we die with it'. Catalina (39 NP) says that she believes that a woman's sexuality begins when she decides 'to be with someone'. On further questioning she confirmed that for her the beginning of sexuality had to do with having sexual relations with a man.

### *'La culpa'*

*Culpa*, or guilt, is a word frequently used by women when talking about sex, particularly pre-marital sex. Gisela (46 L) describes the 'trauma' of spending years begging God to pardon her for having had pre-marital sexual relations and sees this guilt as a part of the reason for her not feeling anything during sex throughout fifteen years of marriage, until she read an article about female orgasm, something which she had not realised existed. She conducted an investigation amongst women in her neighbourhood and found that most of them were as ignorant of this as she had been. She said that she cried with anger for having been ignorant for so long.

Victoria (34 L) said that the importance of her virginity had been so deeply instilled in her that she felt that God was watching her when she had her first sexual relationship. She said that whenever her partner tried to get close to her she thought, 'No, I'm letting God down and he will punish me', that she would be failing God if she felt pleasure. Consequently, she controlled herself so much that she rejected her partner and even scratched him when he came too close to her. When she became pregnant immediately after her first sexual experience, she assumed that this was God's way of punishing her. She said she felt that she had let her mother down and was a failure.

Further, she said that her father called her a *puta*, whore, and told her that she had lost everything and that no-one was ever going to believe in her again. Once married she felt pressure to be good in bed as part of being a good wife, but she was unable to feel sexual pleasure as a result of her strong feelings of *culpa* and fear at getting pregnant. This fear was confirmed as real by the four unplanned pregnancies she experienced, the second following almost immediately on from the first, the third and fourth pregnancies leading to abortions. Not unsurprisingly, she continued to feel an aversion towards sex, which was not helped by a visit to a Catholic centre to discuss her problems. There she was told she should not use contraceptives and that she had to have sex with her husband, otherwise he would leave her. They sent her to a psychologist. She said she felt that she was never going to enjoy sex, that it was not for her: 'Every time I tried I got pregnant.' Now after several years of involvement in women's organisations<sup>9</sup> Victoria's concept of *Dios* has changed. She no longer believes in *un dios castigador* (a God that punishes), but rather in a God that is capable of understanding her needs. She says that she is now beginning to discover herself sexually in a new relationship.

Iris (18 NP) had just had her first sexual relationship with her boyfriend the previous day. She says that her boyfriend tells her he will always love her and that she will not suffer in any way with him. She claims to believe him, although she admitted to feeling that she had been pressured, though not coerced, into having sex with him. Like other women, she describes feeling like 'a traitor to herself and to her family' for having had pre-marital sex and holds herself solely responsible. She said it was not what she had wanted and that she wanted her mother to feel proud of her. Her boyfriend encourages her to go to a clinic and to go on the pill, but she says she does not want to do this because if she forgets to take one she may get pregnant. Many women also use the word *culpa* when talking about how their husbands made them feel. In a number of testimonials women say that their husbands blame them for having got involved with another woman. In Jenifer's (42 NP) case, her husband even said that it was her fault that he had had a child with another woman.

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<sup>9</sup> Culminating with a position at the local council's women's office.

### *Women's relationships with their bodies*<sup>10</sup>

Women's awareness of the different organs of the body is limited.<sup>11</sup> In general women are ashamed of their bodies and do not like their partners to see them naked.<sup>12</sup> When asked in which parts of the body sexuality is located they will refer to the vagina and the breasts without mentioning the clitoris. Women in this sense refer to what their partner finds sexually attractive in them, rather than where they themselves might feel sexual pleasure (cf. Lamadrid Alvarez & Muñoz Gouet 1996:76). Similarly, women often related questions about their relationship with their body to whether or not they are having a sexual relationship with their husband. Flor (49 P), when asked about her relationship with her body said that it does not exist anymore because she no longer has sexual relations with her husband.

When asked whether they touch themselves they will usually respond that they do so only to clean themselves. Two exceptions are Marcela (31 P) who says that she tries to maintain her body in good shape, and Iris (18 NP) who also says that she likes to look at her body, to know what she looks like and to touch herself. Women are generally uncomfortable with the idea of masturbating. In relation to masturbation, Jana (38 L) says that she does not know anyone who masturbates: *se ve en general como algo malo, no permitido para las mujeres* (it is seen as something bad, not permitted for women). Nora (55 P) says that she has never touched herself. Reading a book that described ways of masturbating made her feel 'choked' and she could not finish reading it. One younger woman said that she had felt curious about masturbating and had wanted to try but she was too frightened to do so. Jenifer (42 P) expressed a similar feeling of fear and said that she 'doesn't dare', that she believes that masturbation is for men and that giving pleasure just to herself seems *egoísta*, or selfish. She feels ashamed just thinking about it and says that she only touches her breasts to check for lumps and 'the rest' she only touches because she has to wash herself. Estela (30 NP) says that she has never

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<sup>10</sup> The way in which women talk about their relationships with the bodies resonates with women's experience in this country and in the USA twenty years ago, before the appearance of books such as 'Our bodies, ourselves', Boston Women's Health Book Collective 1979 (first edition 1971).

<sup>11</sup> This accords with Lamadrid Alvarez's & Muñoz Gouet's, findings on sexuality in Chile (1996: 74). For most women *pobladoras* their main source of learning about sexuality is through experience with their partners. Prior to this their knowledge of their bodies is very limited. Only younger women say that they have learnt some things from institutions such as school, the Church or family (Ibid.:76).

<sup>12</sup> This is apparent both from the interviews with women and from the way in which women talk about their bodies in the first sessions of the workshops described in § 7.6 below.

masturbated: she is too busy doing other things. She describes her relationship with her body as *lejana*, distant.

### *Experiences in relation to 'la sexualidad'*

When asked how they felt they had experienced their sexuality it was common for women to say that they did not enjoy sex. Mercedes (64 P) said that she never once felt pleasure with her husband, like other women<sup>13</sup> she had sex with her husband *por obligación*, out of obligation. Carolina (40 L) that sex *fue algo para satisfacer a él no más* (it was something to satisfy him and only him) which is how many of the women describe sex. She describes men as having sex *como un animal* (like an animal), which makes women become *frígida*, frigid.<sup>14</sup> She believes that women do have a right to pleasure and to explore and enjoy their sexuality. This includes having some sexual experience before marriage, although she fears that younger women are often used sexually because young men need a sexual release and often pressure their girlfriends into providing this when they are not usually prepared. The result is often an unwanted pregnancy, which is reflected also in the data in Chapter 6. She comments that *las lolas se entregan facilmente*, young girls give in to their boyfriends too easily, feeling pressured by their boyfriends saying to them, *si me quieres...*<sup>15</sup> (if you love me....). For her sexuality has been a process of overcoming taboos, for a long time sex meant giving affection and sexual satisfaction, but never feeling pleasure herself. In her late thirties she says that she began to enjoy sex with her present partner, but for many years she did not feel pleasure during sex: *porque ellos creen que terminando ellos creen están bien*, (because they (men) think that if they come everything is fine), *y una queda mal*, and you end up feeling in a bad way. She now thinks that both she and her husband should feel sexually satisfied.

Beatriz (55 P) said that she had enjoyed her sexual relationship with her husband until he was unfaithful to her. Since then, she was unable to relax with him again and felt less pleasure as a result. Lola (34 OP) says that she lost her virginity when she was 12 years old because she had been curious, but afterwards felt that this was not normal

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<sup>13</sup> Of the 89 women in the sample, 62% said that they had at some time had sexual relations with their partner *por obligación*. This figure includes women who say that they only ever had sex with their husbands or partners out of obligation to those who say that they used to have sex with their partners out of obligation, but they have now learnt to say 'no' or have a different sexual partner. Having sex through obligation, *chantaje* and marital rape may all be seen as part of the particular cultural complex described in Chapter 3, which denies female sexuality on the one hand and commodifies it on the other.

<sup>14</sup> Lamadrid Alvarez & Muñoz Gouet report that in a sample of women *pobladoras* in Santiago 58.8% described themselves as *frígida*.

<sup>15</sup> By contrast, some women, notably with young sons rather than daughters, refer to young girls as *chiquillas lanzadas* (brazen hussies) who present a risk to their sons.

and felt guilty. She said that she was able to exercise her sexuality more fully when she got married. Everything, she said, was then at her pace and in accordance with her desires, until her husband tried to have relations with her sister and then with his niece. Socorro (45 OP) says that she finds it difficult to concentrate and, as many other women relate, *muchas veces finjo para que mi pareja queda bien*, she often fakes pleasure so that her husband feels good.<sup>16</sup>

Genoveva (61 OP) said that in relation to *sexualidad, estoy sonada*, meaning literally 'I am screwed up'. She said that she has buried her sexuality. Apart from the abuse she experienced as a child, her husband has had several other sexual partners. She feels *engañada y utilizada* cheated, used and angry. She feels that he is no longer interested in her; she is always *dispuesta*, willing, if he wants to have relations with her, but it doesn't work the other way around. On the few occasions where she has been unwilling to have sex, he gets angry. She explains that her sexuality is *vigente pero adormecida...estoy cesante* (alive but dormant...I am unemployed) because of a lack of opportunities. The suggestion that she look beyond her house is quickly rejected: *no soy de buscar por fuera, fíjate, no o sea no me atrevo, no esta en mi* (I'm not the sort to look outside, or rather I don't dare to, I don't have it in me). She then reflects, contradicting herself, that she has had opportunities.

Claudia 38 (NP) says that she has always repressed her desires because she wants to have a relationship with someone that she loves and who loves her and not just because of *un deseo biológico* a biological desire. Later she says that she believes she has probably repressed her desires because of her son.<sup>17</sup> Laura (NP) has not had a sexual partner for many years. When asked if she sometimes feels sexual desire, she replies: *No, no me dan* (no, I don't feel desire), or like receiving some *cariñito* (caress/affection), or going out with someone, again she replies, *No, no siento nada* (no, I don't feel anything).

Diana (46 L) said that she felt that in her experience men were selfish sexually and were basically interested in satisfying their sexual desire and nothing more. She was told early on by her husband that she was useless in bed. This she continued to believe for 20 years until a recent experience with another more sexually-experienced man. She

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<sup>16</sup> Lamadrid Alvarez & Muñoz Gouet's findings suggest that women are often willing to accept being a source of pleasure for their partner even if the sexual relation is not satisfactory for them (1996:77).

<sup>17</sup>She is a single working parent.

now declares that if a woman has a husband who is *inútil*, useless in bed, she should look for a lover.

The inability to have any control over reproduction is also mentioned by several women as a cause for not experiencing pleasure: they were so worried about getting pregnant, or about their husbands looking for other women that if they become pregnant, they could not feel relaxed during sex. It is generally believed that having sex with a woman when she is pregnant may damage the unborn child. Rosario (49 L) talks of her distress at her husband's wanting to have anal sex with her while she was pregnant. She finally told him to go and find other women to have sex with. She said that they did briefly have an enjoyable time sexually when their children had all left home. She could no longer get pregnant and he was drinking less than usual. Fernanda (53 P) reflects that because she got pregnant so young (16), and then had two other children in quick succession, she was not able to *vivir la sexualidad*, live her sexuality until she was in her late twenties. She emphasises the importance of young women being given access to more information, which she feels is still not happening. Several women also say that they are so concerned with looking after their children that they do not have space for themselves, to be able to enjoy a sexual relationship. In Verónica's (22 NP) case, she found the time after she had her baby difficult, because they put in too many stitches and she felt nervous for some time about having sex with her husband. She complained that no one talks to you or prepares you for such things.

Men are described as being unaffectionate. Women express that this is what they lack more than anything: *yo siempre me sentía utilizada por él siempre que se acercaba era para tener relaciones, nunca para demostrarme afecto o cariño* (Fabiola 40 NP) (I always felt used by him, whenever he drew close it was to have sex, never to show affection). Some say that they only experience affection from their husbands in old age.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from problems of communication, women often cited lack of privacy as an obstacle to developing a pleasurable sexual relationship. In many cases couples shared

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<sup>18</sup> This reflects a general tendency to perceive male sexuality as having to do with a physical demand or need, whereas for women it has to do more with receiving affection and with reproduction (cf. Lamadrid Alvarez & Muñoz Gouet 1996:79).

their room with small children,<sup>19</sup> or were separated from them by the thinnest of walls. Emotional privacy is also cited in some cases as being a problem, especially when a couple live with the man's mother. Jenifer (42 NP) said that her mother-in-law would never leave her and her husband in peace and would always find some reason to interrupt them.<sup>20</sup>

### *Marital rape<sup>21</sup> and saying 'no'*

A significant number of women say that their husbands have at some time raped them.<sup>22</sup> Nora (55 P) says that her husband killed her sexuality: *me mató esa parte* (he killed that part of me). She says that she was always raped by him and had to do anything that he wanted under threat of violence, at times he held a knife to her throat. She finally left him after over 20 years of marriage and now has a partner she describes as very kind but with whom she is unable to experience sexual pleasure because of the traumatic years with her husband. She says that she pretends to feel pleasure with her present partner to avoid hurting him. She now feels guilty for being *fría*, cold, and feels she cannot say no to sex because she never really wants to have sex. Nubia (35 NP) says that the father of her first two children used to beat her and then be affectionate and have sex with her. At other times she said he took her by force.

Julieta (32 NP), the daughter of a *dirigenta*, describes the struggle she had convincing her parents that she could no longer continue her relationship with her husband. They had always taken his side. Her mother's eyes were finally opened to the reality of the situation when Julieta said she wanted her husband to leave, saying:

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<sup>19</sup> Iliana said that she and her husband actually shared their bed with two of their babies. She describes her husband getting on top of her, while her baby cried beside them wanting *teta*. He would satisfy himself and then she would hurry to attend the baby.

<sup>20</sup> Berta said that her husband and his mother were more like a husband and wife than she and her husband ever were and that they had a sexual relationship, although she did not wish to go into details. Several other women have indicated that their husbands have had some kind of sexual relationship with their mothers.

<sup>21</sup> The word women use for rape is *violación*, although in relation to their husbands they will often say *me tomó a la fuerza*, he took me by force. For details of the law in relation to rape see Chapter 4.

<sup>22</sup> It would have been desirable to have accurate figures in relation to marital rape. Unfortunately the extent of this problem was something that materialized in the course of research and there is no extant Chilean literature on this issue. Although, as explained, I did not ask each woman that I interviewed about marital rape, 9 out of the sample of 89 women volunteered this information without me asking about it



I can't even look at him anymore. I don't feel what I felt for him before. How can you feel love for a man who rapes you by force and beats you and after beating you tells you 'I love you'? And then feel yourself being touched by the same hands that moments before have beaten the living daylights out of you and even tried to strangle you.

Of those that have not experienced rape many talk about sex as an obligation, saying that their husbands are always satisfied while they themselves felt nothing. Sex is referred to as *las tareas*, the same expression used to refer to children's homework. Chía (33 NP) said she felt nothing at all during sexual relations with her husband, but still continues to have sex with him 'to avoid him getting angry'. She says that he has on occasions raped her.<sup>23</sup> Previously she had felt something emotionally for him, but even then she had felt little physically. Ruth (22 NP) says that she would have sex with her husband to avoid him getting angry and at times felt that she had been raped. She said that she thought that few women dared to say 'no' to their husbands because they were frightened of being abandoned. She referred to a general 'absence of pleasure' amongst women, who have sexual relations because they feel obliged to do so. Esmeralda (16 NP) tells me that she did not feel pleasure when she had sex with the father of her child, from whom she is now separated. She also said that on occasions when she did not want to have sex with him, he raped her.

Diana (46 L), when asked if she had relations with her husband when he wanted replied, 'Of course, if he wanted to have sex we had to have sex, he took all the decisions and if I denied him he would accuse me of having a lover', (*Obvio que si pues, si él queria había que tenerlas, él toma las decisiones y si te niegas es porque tienes un amante*). Irma (38 P) made a distinction between having sex because she wanted to and having sex out of obligation. When asked whether her sexual relations with her husband had been pleasurable, she said that they were when she had felt desire. But when she had sex *por cumplir*, to comply, it was not the same. This happened often, she explained, and she would have sex to avoid problems, as on some occasions he had beaten her when she had refused.

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directly; 4 women recounted how they had been raped by their fathers. Again, this is an issue that I did not ask every woman about and so I cannot derive any more precise statistics on this matter.

<sup>23</sup> She is also nervous that he might rape their daughters.

Some women are beginning to feel that they can say no. Jenifer (38 P) says that perhaps she was *fome* (a bore) in bed but a man cannot oblige her to do anything in bed that she does not feel comfortable with. Magdalena (20 NP) although she has not yet had sex with her boyfriend, said she was confident about her ability to say no and that he would accept this. Gladys (41 P) also said that if she did not want to have sexual relations, she said no and that was final. She was aware however that most women did not find it so easy.

One of the youngest women I spoke with said that she has gradually learnt how to say no. She said that previously she was frightened that her husband would leave her and look for another woman, if she refused him.

The problem of saying no also extends beyond the home. A number of women who have waged employment outside the home said that they had been pressured to have sexual relations with their bosses. One said that she had lost her job for refusing to do so. Alba (54 L) tells a typical tale when she says that she was working as a domestic servant when one of the sons of her *patrona* tried to have sex with her. When she went to the *patrona* (who had always warned her that men were bad) and told her what had happened she was accused of being a liar and was forced to leave and find work elsewhere.

### *Negotiation and 'Chantaje'*

Beatriz (55 P) smiled knowingly when I asked her whether she had ever used *chantaje*.<sup>24</sup> She said that she had used sex in this way to obtain things and believed that all women did it – 'it may not be just, but it is very female' (*no es justo pero es bien femenino*). Esméralda (16 NP), one of the youngest women I spoke with, also admits to having used sex to obtain things. Consuelo (50 L) talks about negotiation in relation to *el comercio sexual* (the business of sex). Indeed only nine of the women I spoke with said that they had not used *chantaje*. Lola (34 OP) says that she uses sex to punish and

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<sup>24</sup> The word literally translates as 'blackmail', but is used to mean a form of manipulation using sex.

at other times had sex to avoid fights. She refers to this in terms of providing her husband with his *cuota* of sex and sees this as a form of manipulation.

Socorro (45 P) refers to using her *recursos de mujer*, women's resources, and says that this is fundamental in order to obtain things. For Berta (38 P) 'after sex is the moment to ask for things.' She saw it as quite normal for women to go to bed with a man to obtain something. Nubia (35 NP) said that she used sex to obtain things and sometimes drugs. She added that sex for her had never been about pleasure.

Jenifer (42 NP) describes punishing her husband if he arrived home late by denying him sex. Looking back she said she thought this was very negative behaviour and that in the end she was punishing herself as much as him. Carmena (65 P), who has never been married, said that *chantaje* was something that married women, who have their husbands around all the time, do *para lograr cosas*, to get things. Paradoxically, women often refer to the idea that men think that 'everything can be sorted out in bed.'

### *Homosexuality*

In general women are intolerant of male homosexuality, it is considered abnormal or problematic, and most deny the existence of female homosexuality. Carolina (40 P) is the mother of a young boy who is suspected of being homosexual. The doctor took a liberal approach saying that homosexuality has always existed, but Carolina is determined that he just needs to reaffirm his personality when he is with older boys. To help him do this she plans to take him to a psychologist for some *orientación*, as she does not want to resort to hitting him to keep him 'out of danger's way'. She said that the assistant in the *policlínico* blamed her for her son's behaviour, telling her that the child spent too much time in the street.

Ana María (42 P), referring to her brother Jorge who was homosexual, displays a mixture of compassion and prejudice. She said that the fact that he was homosexual was *grave para la sociedad y también para la familia* (serious for society and for the family). She said that she thought she had always known that he was homosexual but had chosen to pretend that it was not true until after she was married when she came across his diary and discovered that he was in love with another man. She told her mother that they had to love him as he was, even though *hacía cosas no muy buenas*, (he did things that were not good); Ana María said that her sister Antonieta was *el*

*colmo de la bondad* (the epitome of goodness) and Jorge was *el colmo de la maldad* (the epitome of badness/evil). But she also speaks with tenderness about how popular he was. She said that her father said that their mother had been overprotective of him and that this was why he was as he was. Jorge said that his father had raped him when he was younger and that was why he was homosexual. Ana María denied the truth of this, saying she knew her father. She thought it was hereditary, because she had a cousin and an uncle who were both homosexual. She describes how her brother closed himself in his own world and reached the stage where he would not get out of bed. She said that maybe it was due to an impossible love. After six months in bed he became like a child again and then he died of an undiagnosed illness, which sounded very much like Aids. When asked what her views about homosexuality are now, Ana María said that every individual *debe asumir la sexualidad como la sienta* (should assume their sexuality as they feel it). If nature *se equivoca* (made a mistake) that is like a part of life, 'it can't be that we only see men and women as valid', she says. 'There is also this other life; we can't continue thinking about the bad luck of these people, I know that they have their world and it is worthy of respect'.

### *Aids*

Almost without exception, when asked what precaution women take against Aids they say that they just have one partner. When then asked if they trusted their partner some said yes, others said *tengo que confiar en el pues*, 'well I have to trust him, don't I' (Lola (34 OP)), and some said that they did not trust their husbands but they did not know what they could do about it. It was obvious in most cases that this was a question that they had not previously asked themselves. Fernanda (53 P) said that she had made an effort to advise her grown up children about Aids, but that she had never considered that she herself could be at risk. She said that she was going to ask her husband to start using condoms, although she said that they trusted each other. Genoveva (61 OP) says that she knows her husband had other sexual partners, but she does nothing to protect herself. She has told him that *con lo puto que soy*<sup>25</sup>, *esperate que note va a dar y lo malo es que me lo vas a pegar a mi* (as the prostitute that you are, you

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<sup>25</sup> *Soy* is often used in place of *eres* in Chilean Spanish.

are going to get infected and the bad thing is that you are going to infect me). He thinks that she is exaggerating.

Nubia (35 NP) used to be a drug addict and her partner still consumes *pasta base*.<sup>26</sup> When asked how she protects herself from Aids she says that she tries to avoid having sexual relations, although she is aware that this is not sufficient. Iliana (15 NP) said that she has no idea how one gets infected with Aids, although she did know that you can prevent yourself from being infected by using condoms. She says that none of the teachers have talked about Aids at her school. Ruth (22 NP) begins by saying that she trusts her partner, but then says 'of course men will be men' and acknowledges that her young taxi-driver husband works at night and is probably presented with many opportunities. Julia (42 P) had no doubt that her husband was unfaithful to her. When I asked her how she protects herself against Aids she said by asking her partner who he has been with and whether that person *está bien*, is all right. She says that she does not trust him; he is *mentiroso*, always telling lies.

A few of the younger informants had learnt about Aids at school. Angelica (16 NP) says that she had learnt about how Aids is spread and how to prevent it, although she was told that a condom is not very safe.

### *Awareness of sexual rights*

Women without experience of participating in women's groups, or with limited experience, were not familiar with the expression 'sexual rights' but were nevertheless able to conceive of what they referred to. Lola (30 P), when asked what she thought the phrase *derechos sexuales* (sexual rights) refers to, said that it had to do with the fact that 'you get raped at home and you should have sex when you want to.' She added that she thought this right should also extend to having sex with whom you want to. Nubia (35 NP), when asked what the term meant to her, said that she feels that she should be able to decide over her body, but she does not have the confidence to do so. Helena (22 NP), related her experience with her husband to illustrate what she understood sexual rights to refer to. She explained that she is gradually learning to say no to her husband if she does not want to have sex. She says that she spoke with her husband and 'now he

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<sup>26</sup> A substance similar to crack cocaine.

understands that I have a right to say no, that I have a right not to feel desire, but that I also have a right to take the initiative myself and he also has a right to say no.<sup>27</sup> Previously she often felt obligated to have sex when she did not really want to.

#### **7.4 The effect of participation in women's groups on women's sexual lives**

Women who have spent some time participating in women's groups generally talk about and experience their sexuality in different ways from those who have little or no experience of this kind. There is a notable difference also in the way that these women talk about sex and sexuality now, as compared with their experiences before their participation with other women. Those women who have reached the status of group leader, or *dirigenta*, and who have had most direct contact with NGOs tend to be the most articulate and confident in expressing themselves on this subject. Some even find fault with NGOs for their failure to give adequate attention to the theme. Often the priorities of the NGO most closely involved with a particular group of women, or even of specific individuals from an NGO, do not include matters relating to sexuality or women's control over their bodies. Women leaders own priorities sometimes reflect those of the NGO, depending on the degree of loyalty they have to the NGO or individual concerned. There is some resistance amongst some NGO professionals as to the importance of these themes. And there is conflict within NGOs, between NGOs and between local women leaders in relation to the themes of sexuality and reproduction.

In a conversation with Marina (59 L), a leader with one of the longest trajectories of involvement in the women's movement, we talked about her frustration at the lack of interest in the Co-ordination she is involved in in relation to sexuality and women's relationships with their bodies. She thought that this was partly to do with *Tierra Nuestra's* lack of emphasis on this subject. Jana (38 L) observes that the Co-ordination in San Joaquín has only recently, after 8 years of working on women's issues, begun to consider the theme of sexuality. She finds it almost incomprehensible that with all the experience they have as popular feminists and the education they received in the

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<sup>27</sup> *Ahora entiende que yo tenga derechos a decir no, a no tener deseos, pero también tengo derecho a llevar yo la iniciativa y ahí él también tiene derecho a decir no.*

School for Women Leaders they had not raised the theme of sexuality, 'we haven't even got in touch with our own bodies.' For her being aware of one's own body and deciding in relation to it as well as experiencing pleasure is fundamental to her understanding of emancipation. Clearly the theme produces conflicts and Marina says that it is in this area that she finds herself at odds with some political leaders and NGO professionals.

#### *Dirigentas and long-term participants*

Blanca (37 L), president of an association of women's groups, when asked at what age sexuality begins, says that she thinks it can begin early if practised responsibly. For her sexuality means 'the stimulation that occurs between a man and a woman, embraces, affection' and arriving at a 'good finish' (*la estimulación entre un hombre y una mujer, abrazos, cariño y llegar a un buen punto final*). She does not think of a woman having sexuality alone, *no creo que pueda sola*, but in relation with a man.

When asked about reproductive and sexual rights, she said that she believed these were two separate things. She then said she thought reproduction and sexuality were the same thing, but scratching her head then said she felt she needed to think about this in more detail. Blanca says that attending a workshop on sexuality she learnt that she had a clitoris and became more in touch with her body, although she had experienced sexual pleasure with her husband prior to this. She says she is an expert in *chantaje sexual*, and refers to how she manipulated her husband so she could attend a weekend workshop without problems. *Yo negocié mediante al sexo mi participación* (I negotiated my participation by means of sex), she says, reflecting her conscious use of sex as a strategy for negotiating her needs. She says that her husband, in spite of his political participation and awareness in other respects, is *machista*. It is as if it dominates him, she says. She seems to accept that he will not change very much in this respect and that she must therefore deal with him to some degree on this basis.

Luz (39 L), another *dirigenta*, is similarly cynical, saying that the idea that a woman is at a man's service is something that she uses as *una estrategia política*, a political strategy, in her relationship with her husband. She said that,

Often sex is not pleasurable, but sometimes this is because you don't want it to be pleasurable. You are at his service because if you satisfy him you are the best woman, you have him in your hands and you wouldn't want to lose this. If you want to obtain something, be it more money or

permission to go out to get what you want, you start with sex. That is power and a great number of women have this. It is a silent power, but it is still power.<sup>28</sup>

For Luz, choosing to have sexual relations without them being pleasurable and keeping her husband satisfied sexually is a political strategy.<sup>29</sup> She describes it as *una rebeldía interior, de ejercer tu poder*, an interior rebellion, [a way] of exercising your power. She goes on to qualify this technique by saying that using this strategy too much will eventually make you ill, that one can end up punishing oneself and ‘eliminating’ oneself, describing this in terms of a kind of self-inflicted violence. She finishes by conceding that ‘it is not the best form of power, but it is power nonetheless.’ For this reason she sees it as key for women to develop their sexuality. She says that *la educación, la iglesia, el sistema* (the education, the church, the system) teach women that they are not human beings and therefore they cannot feel. If you start to feel you are a bad woman, ‘that is how this culture has made us’ (*así te ha hecho la cultura*). She continues:

This culture says that in order to keep their men satisfied women must have sex even if they are tired, even exhausted. This means learning not to listen to your body; not feeling that your body wants to rest. In other words this is a mechanical use of the body because you have to respond even if you don't want to.<sup>30</sup>

She talks about how much she has been able to learn by participating and conversing with other women leaders, finding ways of trying to change sexual relations. She believes women have to be more *audaz*, bold, with their bodies, in the way they dress and express themselves and the way they look at the opposite sex. But in reality she feels that women are not *audaz* with their partners. They are repressed. She refers to sex as an art of hell and of happiness (*Es un arte que es de infierno y es de alegría*).

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<sup>28</sup> *Muchas veces no es placentera y a veces es porque tú no quieres que sea placentera pero tú estas al servicio de él porque si tú lo satisfaces a él tú eres la mejor mujer, lo tienes a él y tú no quieres romper ese vínculo, si tú quieres conseguir algo, sea más dinero, permiso pa salir lo consigues empezando por la relación sexual, eso es poder y una gran cantidad de mujeres lo tenemos, es un poder silencioso, pero es poder igual.*

<sup>29</sup> Luz's strategy is an elaborated and theorized version of the *chantaje* that other women use (see § 7.3 above).

<sup>30</sup> *Hay una cultura que te dice que para mantener al hombre satisfecho, hay que tener relaciones aunque tú estés cansada, agotada, la cosa es no sentir tú cuerpo, no sentir que tú cuerpo quiere descansar, expresarse de otra manera esa es una forma de uso mecánico porque tú tienes que responder aunque no estés de acuerdo.*



Luz sees sex as problematic for men as well as for women, saying that young men are pressured to respond to *cada faldita* (every little skirt) who ‘pulls at his underpants’, to demonstrate their *hombria*, or manliness, regardless of whether or not he actually likes the girl. She says that young women are now starting to act more like men. They are more *polvorita* (sexually-driven), seeking new experiences and telling their friends how many men they have slept with. She thinks this is good, but feels they are often doing it for the wrong reasons. It can be ‘a mistaken equality’, if they are not feeling what their bodies really want.

Juana (39 P), who has been participating for many years, said that attending workshops about Aids brought her into contact with homosexuals and lesbians. She had learnt that *la sexualidad* is chosen by each individual *como le parezca mejor*, on the basis of what seemed best for them. She says that her relationship with her body is good and that she finds sexual relations pleasurable. *Quedo muy satisfecha* - she feels very satisfied. She says that she has not always experienced sex in this way. Rather, she learnt and over time developed her capacity to feel. In relation to young people, Juana says that at 15 *los cabros*, young people, want to have their first sexual experience. She believes that this is reality and they should thus have more information and access to contraceptives.

Fernanda (55 P) understands *la sexualidad* as beginning at birth and lasting *hasta que la persona fallece*, until the person dies. She says that this was something she learnt in workshops, saying that previously she had not thought this way. Previously, she never considered that an older woman would have *sexualidad*, and less still *el sexo*, sex. *Me costaba aceptarlo*, she found it all difficult to accept. She still sees *sexualidad* as something that has to do with having a partner, not just with oneself. When asked about masturbation, she said, *Nunca. Si alguna vez se toca el tema y siempre lo echo a un lado*, (Never. If the theme has come up, I always put it to one side). She says that she finds it difficult to accept.

In relation to taking the blame if one's husband seeks sexual fulfilment with another woman, organised women make a more informed analysis of the situation. Yamilia (33 L) questions how her husband would react if she started going and doing what he does, if she were to go off and look for a lover every time they had a problem. She has forgiven his infidelity for many years. *El siempre me ha engañado* (he has always tricked me/been unfaithful), she says, saying that he is a bus driver and that

drivers are renowned for having lots of women. This time, she says, is the last time she is going to forgive him. She has a greater sense of her own value and is not willing to go on being treated like this.

When asked about *chantaje*, Yamilia says it is something she has only begun to use recently, *lo chantajeo a mi gusto* (she manipulates him as she pleases). Her husband accepts this at the time but gets annoyed afterwards. She then says *el no me chantajeo*, that her husband never manipulates her in this way, 'not even with money. He always gives me enough.' In spite of his unfaithfulness and her ability to analyse his behaviour and even to employ strategies to manage the situation, Yamilia still feels some sense of guilt.

Although Yamilia is a *dirigenta*, and has been involved in the popular women's movement for some time as well as having participated in the School for Women Leaders, when asked about sexuality she says that she is *ignorante* and *reservada*. But she does say that she now has a more pleasurable relationship with her body, although she still does not like her husband to see her naked. She says that the workshop on power was an important experience for her. She feels that the present rupture in her relationship with her husband has to do with the new awareness she has since the workshop, which has had ramifications in every part of her life and especially with her partner, including sexually. Before she said she was *apática*, apathetic, but she has changed. When asked about sexual rights, Yamilia said that it was difficult to get your husband to understand the right to have or not to have sex. She said she felt that he has often raped her and asked how a woman can bring an end to *esa dominación en la cama* (that domination in bed).

In general, organised women seem to have less difficulty saying 'no' to their partners if they do not want to have sexual relations with them, but Yamilia and several others still talk about feeling raped and occasionally having sex out of a sense of obligation. Yolanda (50 L) describes having gone for almost a year without having any sexual intercourse with her husband. On one occasion recently they had got close when her husband suddenly got on top of her and said, 'now I am going to enjoy you (*ahora te voy a disfrutar*) and she pulled away horrified, she wept as she recounted the event. Constanza (39 P) describes how her husband used to *tirarse encima mio* (throw himself on top of her) whenever he felt like it. She has learnt from her work with other women and from her sympathetic doctor to lay down her limits and he no longer rapes her. She

says she hardly ever has sexual relations with her alcoholic husband, only when she wants to and says she has hardly ever experienced pleasure.

Angela's (45 L) liberation has been dramatic and involved a final and decisive split with her husband, whom she describes as having raped her for years before they separated. She says that she appropriated her body when she told her husband *este poto es mío y no quiero que me lo toques mas* (my arse is mine and I don't want you to touch it again.) She never again had sexual relations with him. Referring to her experience before making this decision, she poignantly describes how when you are in bed with your husband you are alone. 'The church is not there, nor is your mother. You are alone with him and you don't know if he loves you or hates you.' She said she felt like, *una puta privada*, a private slut. When they separated beds she slept with a knife by her to defend herself if he tried to rape her. She describes herself as taking her freedom and shaking off the shackles that had tied her down for so long. In spite of the criticisms she has to deal with, she 'opted to find out what pleasure was and to experience pleasure.'

She talked about the cost of being consistent with your beliefs saying that men are going to end up more alone than women, *pero en la cama, si, vamos a estar solas* (but in bed, yes, we are going to be alone.) But she prefers this loneliness whilst enjoying sex, *esa cosita rica*, that lovely thing, outside away from her house.

When I asked Manuela (49 L), another *dirigenta* how she would describe her experience of her sexuality, she said that at first it had been difficult, but after attending a course on *sexualidad* she began to learn that it was something that should be pleasurable. Before she had seen it as an obligation and that pleasure was only for men. Now she sees pleasure as a right. She now knows how to ask and how to say 'no' and describes herself as *realizada* (realised) sexually. She sees it as very important for women to be *dueñas* (proprietors/owners) of their bodies. She believes that women should learn about sexual and reproductive rights from when they are at school. Unlike some of the other *dirigentas* she does not approve of using *chantaje*. She said that she uses it and she thinks that all women do, but she now feels that this is being more of a prostitute than those women who use sex as *un medio de trabajo*, a way of earning a living.

Clara (60 L), a *dirigenta* in San Joaquín, says that she believes that the relationship between men and women in bed is *fregada* (a complicated mess). Women cannot, she says, talk openly about sexual matters with men. She describes how in most

relationships if a woman refuses sex this almost inevitably leads to a fight, or the man looking for another woman and the man telling her this *en forma brusca, grosera, violenta y ofensiva* (in the most rude, coarse, violent and offensive way). She says this has happened to her, although she jokes saying that it is rare for her not to want to have sex. Her first sexual relationship was with her son's father. She said that, like a good Chilean, he would get on top of her, ejaculate and turn over and start to snore. This experience was, she said, *enfermisa*, illness-inducing. She described on one occasion getting up after her partner had turned over, getting dressed and telling him she was going out to have sex with the first man she met, because nothing was happening with him. On this occasion and on others she has sought sexual satisfaction elsewhere and has found it in a number of affairs. She is now married to another man, but their marriage has never been consummated; her husband shares a bed with his mother who lives with them. He refused to see a psychologist with her after his mother told him he was better off leaving things as they were.

Patricia (33 L) says that she used to think that women's sexuality began when they began to have sexual relations, but now, after the workshop on sexuality, she believes that it begins from the moment you are born. In her case, she feels dissatisfied in her sexual relationship with her husband because he has never really been interested in having sex. On some occasions he has even chucked her out of their bed. She says that she used to cry because of this, but now she has adapted and she talks about her *sexualidad* in the past tense. She is frightened of one day falling in love with a man who is better in bed, because she says she would run away and leave everything *botado*. She says she thinks it is necessary to *enamorarse* (fall in love) to have a fulfilling sexual relationship. Otherwise a sexual relationship is *muy vacía* (empty).<sup>31</sup>

Elena (49 L), another *dirigenta* in San Joaquin, says that she is very satisfied in her sexual relationship with her husband. She says it is the part of their relationship that has maintained their marriage. In other ways she is dissatisfied with the relationship. Like other women, she talks in terms of 'a process', including having worked on the theme in workshops with other women. Developing her sexuality has involved learning to be able to forget problems in the relationship and angers and frustrations and being

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<sup>31</sup> Patricia's friends believe that her husband is in fact homosexual and that he married to disguise this. They say that he had hormonal problems, which they say is why he is infertile and he is often hysterical.

able to *tirar* (hurl oneself/have sex) as men do and *desahogar* (let herself go). She said that the use of fantasies is important to her. She started having fantasies when she was still a girl but always felt *culpable* and *vergonzosa* (guilty and ashamed) about it. Now she sees fantasies as normal and she has developed her ability to use fantasies to heighten her sexual pleasure. On one occasion I was out drinking with her and Jana (38 L) and they both had hysterics saying how their husbands both thought that they were such good lovers, when in fact it was they who were satisfying themselves through the use of erotic fantasies, with a little help from their husbands. Neither of them have spoken about their use of fantasies with their husbands, saying that they would not understand and would just be hurt and angry.

Elena describes herself as *pilla*, intelligent, because she always asks for all the things she wants while she is having sex with her husband and he says 'yes' to get her to shut up.' She says that the technique works extremely well - 'He'll give me anything I want,' she says. She also says that she uses sex as a *chantaje emocional* to punish her husband if she is annoyed with him. He suffers and gets angry with her. She says that she tells him when she wants to have sex (*cuando tengo necesidades*) and if he does not want to or falls asleep, she gets angry too and tells him the next day: 'Hey, I wanted to have sex and you didn't, you fell asleep. What's up with you? I need to be with you.' And he says, 'Oh yes, later,' and laughs.

Elena says that she feels *poderosa*, powerful, and that she *maneja eso*, manages this to her advantage. She says that she has observed many changes in her *sexualidad* since she reached 40, because she feels more secure in herself. Her oldest daughter has left home and married and her mother died, so she is able to have more intimacy with her husband. She said she was more repressed and shy in the past. Her involvement in women's organisations has enabled her to learn how to express what she feels. Everything she has learnt she has learnt from other women, she says, not from her mother. When asked about her relationship with her body she says it is very good. She feels she has become uninhibited. 'I love my body, with my colour I think it is pretty. Now I find myself attractive, fat tummy and all. I love all of myself.'

### *Participants*

Isabel (29 P) is a participant in the women's group 'Millaray.' She describes her relationship with her body as *buena*, saying that it has been *todo un proceso* (a whole

process). She recalls as a child that her father used to beat her mother so that she would have sex with him. Isabel (29 P) began to try to protect her mother by turning on the light when she heard her father moving from his bed and waited until she or her father could no longer fight off sleep. This experience left her so marked that when her husband tried to touch her she felt that it was her father and she felt an unbearable sense of anger and rejection. Before she met her husband she says that she had sworn not to fall in love with a man and that she deliberately set out to 'laugh at' or make a fool of men as a way of getting revenge on her father. She would have several boyfriends at once, never letting them have any kind of sexual contact with her. She says that 'before' (meaning both before her marriage and before her involvement in a women's group), she was *fría*, cold, she didn't feel anything. She compares herself to her younger sister who she describes as having been *bien calientucha para sus cosas* and *de alta temperatura* (hot in her relations with men).

Isabel says that her husband has been patient with her. He never made her feel obliged to have sex with him. If he had, says Isabel, they would never have reached the stage they are at now. He would get angry but then he would talk to her. With her husband she says she has learnt what affection is, as well as 'sexual desire and excitement'. Her doctor also helped in this process by talking with her and giving her the drug *la yumbina*.<sup>32</sup> In this way, she says, she has learnt to *sentir* (feel) *la sexualidad*. Later, through her experience in the women's group *Millaray*, she learnt more. When asked whether she experiences orgasms, she answered 'I do now. Before I wasn't bothered. It was just him (that had orgasms). Now it is important. Now I give myself permission to enjoy myself...Now I know myself as I know my body.' She now says she thinks it all comes down to *la cosa mental, psíquico* (It is all psychological).

Sandra (59 P) has been participating in women's groups for some time, but until recently these have all been the more traditional *centros de madres*. She is very self-critical when talking about sexuality. She says she is *fría*, cold, and her body is *feo y lacia*, ugly and flabby. She says that her husband is *bueno para las relaciones sexuales* and at night he tells her she has to pay him for all the things he has done during the day. In this case, it is the man using the *chantaje sexual*. She says that she and her husband *lo pasamos bien*, have a good time. However, she goes on to say that she suffers from

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<sup>32</sup> A sexual stimulant.

having a dry vagina and uses a cream but still feels discomfort. When asked whether they have tried making love in a way which does not involve penetration and would perhaps be more pleasurable for her, she answers that she prefers penetration because 'he likes it that way.' She says that she has learnt to be able to say 'no' and he respects this, whereas before he would say he was going to look for another woman, which on many occasions he did. She adds, that he has never hit her.

Sandra says that through her participation with other women she has become aware that things are not as they should be in her relationship with her husband. She now recognises that if she does not want to have sex, she does not want to 'and that is final.' In the past she says she pretended to feel pleasure to keep her husband happy and to be left in peace, but 'these were lies.' Again she refers to being *fría* and says it is 'such hard work' for her *pobre* husband to give her pleasure. He tells her to relax, she says, and 'he is right because sometimes I am with him and thinking about the jumper I haven't finished.' She describes herself as *fome*, a bore in bed, and says that her daughter-in-law is the same. She has been married to her son for 8 years and he knows she does not feel pleasure, she tells me, saying she is also *fome* and *fría*. Her daughter has even had a scan to see what is wrong with her, since at times her head aches so badly. She says that like her husband, her son 'charges' her for the things he has done in the day – 'You have to pay me for the installation of the telephone', he tells his wife. Sandra says that she is 'still paying (her) debts.' She cannot bring herself to criticise her son however, finding it easier to see her daughter-in-law as the problem, just as she blames herself in her own relationship with her husband.

When asked when she thinks that a woman's sexuality ends she says that if it were not for her husband, her *sexualidad* would already have ended. If her husband dies, she says, she will not have anymore desires. She will not look for anyone else, *no quiero que nadie más me penetre* (I don't want anyone else to penetrate me). As she tells me this, her anger becomes apparent and she describes how she goes to the bathroom after having sex with her husband to wash herself and she feels angry because of the pain she feels and asks herself: *hasta cuando se le ira a parar el pajaro a este viejo?* (How much longer is this old man's penis going to stand up?)

Lucía (59 P) accepted it as 'normal' that her husband climbed on top of her each night, ejaculated and then turned over and went to sleep, *hasta cuando yo descubri q' yo era un ser humana*, until, she said, she discovered that she too was a human being. She

said that, in terms of pleasure, she had perhaps felt some sensations of happiness and well being when they had first got married. But these feelings were minimal. When she began to participate, first in the Communist Party and then in the women's movement, she began to see that she was being *utilizada*, used. *El me ocupababa como mujer* (he occupied me as a woman), she said. Finally she refused to have sex with him and they fought. She tried to get him to go to the doctor to talk. They wrote to him twice, but he refused to go. She tried to talk with him and *lo chantajeaba para ver si el reaccionaba y pensaba q' yo tambien era una persona q' necesitaba a el* (I used *chantaje* to see if he would react and realise that I am also a person and that I needed him). She described using *chantaje* as a *comercio sexual*, a form of sexual commerce. She recalled their negotiations:

Husband: *Negra*, are you going to go to bed with me?

Lucía: If you are going to give me what I ask for.

Husband: Now you're going to start being a *huevo*<sup>33</sup>... Well, what do you want?

Lucía: First, I want a school apron for Gladys, my eldest daughter.

Husband: An apron? But why don't you make it?

Lucía: I can't, I haven't got time...

Husband: Okay, we'll go and buy the apron.

Lucía: No, give me the money first. Where is the money?

Husband: Yes, yes, I've got it *Negra*, yes. I'm going to give it to you.<sup>34</sup>

Her strategies all failed and they separated, but continued living under the same roof until he died, 5 years ago. She has never had a sexual relationship with anyone else. This was something that affects her psyche. It is something that is always going around in her head. Her daughter tells her she should look for a man, but Lucía says that she is *machista*, in the sense that she would not approach a man. He would have to approach her. As a result of what she has learned in workshops with other women, she feels she is now able to communicate better with her children about sexual matters. When her eldest son began to have sexual relations, he confided in her and she explained to him

<sup>33</sup> This common term of affection loosely translates as 'stupid', the male equivalent is *huevo*.

<sup>34</sup> *Negra, vai acostarte conmigo?*

*Pero, si me si me vai a dar lo q' yo te pido.*

*Claro ya va a empezar la huevo. Ya, que es lo qu quieres?*

*Mira, primero q' nada quiero un delantar para la Gladys, para mi hija mayor.*

*Un delantar pero porq' no se lo haces tu porq' no puedo yo, no tengo tiempo.....bueno ya vamos a comprar el delantar.*

*No po' a mi me da la plata primero, donde está la plata?*

*Si, la tengo Negra, si te la voy a dartela.*



everything she knew. She regretted the fact that she had not been better prepared to talk with her daughters when they were growing up, the only thing she had said was that they could get pregnant if they had relations with a man. The idea that her daughters should *pasarla bien* (enjoy themselves) never entered her mind. She said that they speak very openly with their own small daughters, unlike her who had been brought up so *cartuchona* (prim/naive).

Organised women have more 'liberal' views about homosexuality and lesbianism, although many continue to have prejudices against lesbian women. Juana (39 P) said that through participating in workshops concerning Aids she had met many homosexuals and lesbians and had learnt that they are *seres humanos*, human beings, just like anybody else. For her it was *normal*. For Rosario (49 L), opting for relations with other woman is preferable in her mind in many ways to relationships with men, in spite of having to lead a 'subterranean' existence, but she is not herself sexually attracted to women. Yolanda (50 L) confided that she had recently gone to a party held by a group of lesbian women and had felt jealous watching two women together. She wondered if she herself may be lesbian and wanted to explore but did not know how to. Several other *dirigentas* also expressed curiosity and confusion about lesbianism and were often embarrassed talking about it. Jana (38 L) confessed to feeling attracted to women but did not know what to do about it. She had spent her life being conditioned as and acting as a heterosexual woman.

There are also tensions within the women's movement between lesbian and heterosexual women. This was very apparent at the Seventh Latin American Feminist Conference, which I attended in 1996. Luz (39 L) observed similar tensions at the Third Latin American Feminist Conference in 1993, where she describes the rift between lesbian and heterosexual women. She described it as a *mercocha* (tangled mess) saying that the lesbian women were flirtatious, open, friendly and 'we were more prejudiced, to the degree that we wouldn't even greet them for fear that they would think you were a lesbian.' She says that she respected their decision and she learnt on this occasion that lesbians are doubly discriminated against for being women and for being lesbians, 'whilst we are discriminated against doubly for being women and for being *pobladoras*. The lesbian women's proposal concerned the ability to exercise their sexuality as a right, says Luz, 'whilst we were not against men, our problems were distinct, but our

objectives were unclear and we didn't know how to discuss or defend our proposals - it all became chaos. We didn't reach any agreement and the conference was a failure, but we did have a big party afterwards and everyone danced together.'

In relation to Aids, organised women are not much more careful than non-organised women. When I asked Alba (54 L) if she did anything to protect herself from Aids, she said *No po'* even though she knows her husband is unfaithful. Clara (60 L), pragmatic as ever, says that 'paying for drinks and a motel and, on top of that, condoms works out to be too expensive.'

Both women leaders and participants often express a desire to have a lover or lovers. Some even said they thought that this should be *un derecho*, a right. Diana (46 L) declares that women who are dissatisfied with their husbands should either teach their husbands or look for a lover. She believes that pleasure is a right 'as important as having access to education or a home. Organised women are more likely to use the term *derecho*, or right, when talking about sexuality. When I asked Manuela (49 L) if she saw pleasure as a right, she said, *Si, lo veo como un derecho, antes era una obligación*; she has gone from seeing pleasure as an obligation to seeing it as a right. When I asked Fernanda (53 P) whether she saw being able to enjoy one's sexuality as *un derecho*, a right, she replied, *es una necesidad*, it is a need. I asked her what the difference was between *un derecho* and *una necesidad*. She explained that *un derecho* is something that *nadie me lo puede quitar*, no one can take away from me, she sees it as a *derecho* to have a partner, but *la necesidad para estar bien con una misma, como persona, como ser humano, necesita la sexualidad, hay momentos que tiene que luchar por ese derecho*, (the need to feel good in yourself, as a person, as a human being, requires sexuality, (but) there are moments when you have to fight for this right). When I ask if she thinks this is a need that should be a right, she replies that it still does not appear to be a right, when a young woman's parents treat her as *pecaminosa*, sinful, if she exercises her sexuality, *entiende que es un derecho?*, will she understand that it is a right? Jana (38 L) and Clara (60 L) agree that sexual rights should include the right to a lover. Clara says *yo tengo mi consolador por ahí, aunque sea mal visto* (I have my consolator (ie. a lover), although it is frowned upon).

## 7.5 Case studies of sexuality workshops

As well as collecting data in the form of semi-structured interviews, I also attended a number of workshops concerning sexuality. Four Case Studies of these workshops are printed in full in Appendix VI. Case Study I concerns a one-off workshop presented by two women leaders to a *taller*, women's group, of about 20 women. Case Study II includes a series of seven workshops given by a *matrona*, midwife, who is also director of a local clinic in San Joaquín and who has contacts with the Open Forum for Health and Reproductive Rights.<sup>35</sup> There were about 35 participants. Case Study III concerns two workshops on sexuality that formed part of the curriculum of the School for Women Leaders. The presenters are both local women leaders and around 20 women took part. The final Case Study looks at a workshop offered by an anthropologist employed to give it by the local council in San Joaquín. There were 28 participants.

This section draws upon the material in these Case Studies to make some observations about the process that women go through in the course of these workshops. Women start out expressing the common themes identified in § 7.3 above, but during the progress of the workshops they begin to talk about sexuality in different ways. One can also observe the different way in which women leaders in the groups talk about their bodies as compared with the other participants. In Case Study I the participants at the beginning were uncertain about labelling various body parts and were embarrassed about their bodies to the extent that they would say that they did not look at themselves or touch themselves. All the women in Case Study II, when asked to draw themselves on the first day that they menstruated, drew themselves fully clothed. In Case Study II at the second workshop women made collages out of cuttings from magazines to show what they understood *sexualidad* to mean. Many of them selected pictures of babies or pregnant women, which reflected their tendency to see sexuality as inseparable from reproduction. *La sexualidad* is often equated with sexual intercourse with a man in the language women use to talk about sexuality. One chose a picture of a bride saying that this depicted the beginning of *sexualidad* at the moment of getting married. Others chose images that suggested shame and embarrassment. An image of a woman in a

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<sup>35</sup> The theme of sexuality was considered so important to women in the Coordination of *pobladoras* in San Joaquín, that as well as presenting their own workshops on the theme they applied for funding from the Ministry of Health to arrange a series of workshops presented by professionals.

nightgown, which one woman felt represented the commencement of menstruation, was chosen to express her understanding of *sexualidad*. Underneath the image she had written, 'My first period – a taboo'. Their perceptions often reveal their strong identification as mothers, which permits them to talk in terms of reproduction, but not in terms of *sexualidad* as a notion that embraces pleasure and sensuality. This accords with the argument that the dominant discourse centred on motherhood involves a denial of female sexuality (See Chapter 3, §3.3). Typically women selected pictures representing the role of men as *el hombre protector* (man the protector) and of women as *la mujer bonita* (the pretty woman).

At the end of the workshops women's notions about *la sexualidad* had changed. At the day-long workshop that took place at the end of the workshops conducted by the *matrona*, or midwife, in Case Study II, the women split into groups to evaluate the workshops. In response to the question: - what is *sexualidad*? They responded: recognition of the body and contact with it; knowing our bodies; I would like to receive more affection from him, but he doesn't respond; it has to do with our bodies and feelings; it is ours, it is everything; the recognition of our body; it is everything combined together, a feeling, something physical, psychological and emotional, involving the whole body, skin, smells; it is the personal development of a woman in relation to her sex; for many it is something learnt aged 30 or more; the right to know about your body and to decide in relation to it; affection, kisses, caresses. Women's awareness about their bodies also changes, although quite a few describe their bodies in negative terms. Responses to the question: - How is your relationship with your body now? included - at times my relationship with my body is good, I like myself, but I also feel tired and mistreated; it is good, I look at myself in the mirror and touch all of my body, now I know myself well; I don't feel ashamed [anymore], after this workshop on sexuality I no longer turn off the light; I am aware my body is tired, it aches, I want to be caressed by someone; all my life I have been a *mujer objeto* (an object), now after this workshop I like to look at myself and touch myself. Women also reported that the workshops made them realise that there was a shared experience amongst them in relation to their bodies and feelings. This is reflected in the tendency to use the second person plural at the end of the workshops: 'We learned to know our bodies and to value ourselves as women' say one group in Case Study II.

Although in Case Study II some women selected romantic pictures of couple to represent their understanding of *sexualidad*, it is apparent in other parts of the same case study and in the other case studies that the women feel that their concept of *sexualidad* is different from that depicted on television and in magazines, which they see as overly-eroticised and exploitative of women's bodies.

Another common theme is that women feel that their partners are not affectionate: - 'I don't like my husband. He is very *salvaje* (savage/wild)', says one. Others refer to sex as an obligation or refer to mistreatment or aggression, which accords with the high incidence of marital rape. Learning to say 'no' is also something women acknowledge in the evaluation of the workshops in Case Study II. One group of women says, 'Before we all found it difficult to say 'no' when we did not want to have sexual relations, we felt obliged. But now [we say] NO'.

Case Studies I, II and III all reveal that women are very receptive to the idea of linking their perceptions and experiences to rights. The women, when introduced to the list of reproductive and sexual rights produced by the Open Forum for Health and Reproductive Rights (see Appendix VII) in Case Study II, could all relate to the contents of '*derecho 16*' concerning voluntary sexual relations, including in the context of the marriage. Several spoke up about their experiences, saying that they used to or still did have sexual relations when they did not want to. When introduced to a reproductive right concerning abortion, Alicia (29 P), having listened carefully to what the *matrona* said, concluded that basically women do not have any right to decide over their bodies. In relation to *derecho 23*, concerning competent and respectful health personnel, the women were quick to joke about the contents of this right saying ironically that this was, of course, just how things were. They mimicked the way that the personnel actually treat them, telling them to hurry from one queue to another. In relation to being offered information about all the different methods of contraception they joked about being offered '*un T Cobre o un Cobre T*', a Copper T or a T of Copper. They also recognised the importance of transmitting their newly acquired knowledge to their daughters, even if they felt it was too late for they themselves to benefit from these rights. Maria (35 P) observed that although she felt that she had not had the benefit of these kind of rights, she had daughters and, for this reason, she felt it was important to learn about such things.

## 7.6 Conclusion

The idea that sexuality can be a source of pleasure and satisfaction for women is a relatively new one amongst women *pobladoras*. Women's sexuality has been closely tied to a powerful discourse that emphasises their maternal role and the denial of sexual feelings or desire. As a result women have seen their sexuality as being at the service of their husband's or partner's pleasure rather than their own, and as being defined by their partner's needs rather than their own. In this sense women's sexuality has been limited to an extension of their maternal role, through which they offer their husbands a further source of nurture and affection. This limited exercise of sexuality also defines women as 'decent' as opposed to those 'indecent' women who would use their bodies without inhibitions as sexual objects (cf. Lamadrid Alvarez & Muñoz Gouet 1996:81). This connects with the attempt to overcome the tension between virginity and motherhood and the opposed poles of Eve and Mary in dominant Catholic discourse identified by Montecino (See Chapter 3). The abnegation of the suffering mother, which serves to resolve these tensions, extends to the denial of sexual pleasure.<sup>36</sup> This denial of sexuality also represents the female counterpart of the male that controls female sexuality in the honour/shame complex, which also forms a part of this discursive matrix. It is not surprising, therefore, that guilt should appear as a powerful theme in the way in which women talk about their sexuality and that women should conceive of sexuality as sinful and dirty. Far from being something which they have a right to enjoy, sexual pleasure has long been deemed something that men alone enjoy. Within these limits women have nonetheless developed strategies to derive some advantages from this situation, in particular the use of *chantaje* as a means of getting some of their needs met in return for servicing their partners sexual needs.

Against this backdrop, data obtained from interviews with women and from sexuality workshops organised by local women, shows how new ideas about sexuality are being introduced. The data reflects that women are receptive to these new notions. As well as finding them liberating, they are able to connect them with their own experiences, in effect creating their own concept of sexuality. This links in with the

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<sup>36</sup> The studies reviewed by Lamadrid Alvarez & Muñoz Gouet suggest that poverty reinforces these social representations. In addition, as they point out, living in precarious economic conditions is not conducive to the development of sensuality (1996:80).

processes of social change and transformation discussed in Chapter 5. Women's willingness to adopt and shape a new understanding of sexuality may be understood as part of a broader process involving the destigmatising of women's bodies and the deconstruction of the myths surrounding motherhood. Given the pervasiveness of certain aspects of dominant discourse in relation to gender (see Chapters 3 and 4) the challenges involved in this process should not, however, be underestimated.

The data shows the contested nature of women's daily lives and the difference that the acquisition of new ideas about rights and autonomy can make. While dominant discourses emanating from the Church and state have a powerful effect on the constitution of gender categories, the data shows the ways in which individuals and groups can take an active role in the process of the construction of gender identities and of citizenship. Together with the material in the previous chapter on women's reproductive histories and experiences and the case studies in Appendix VI, women's experiences in relation to sexuality clearly reveals them to be different kinds of citizens from men. Unlike the abstract individual *qua* citizen, women enter public space as embodied individuals and their citizenship can be jeopardised by sexual violence and its threat (cf. Lister 1997:71). Women who have for cultural reasons been severely restricted in their ability to develop their own sexuality are particularly vulnerable to this kind of violence. By beginning to take control over their sexuality and their reproductive capacity women are able to start to renegotiate their relationship not only with their partners but also with society as a whole.

Within this context, discourses of rights and citizenship may be seen to provide strategic tools that women can appeal to in the course of making sense of and negotiating their daily lives. From the point of view of establishing rights that are internationally applicable, this clearly shows that whilst absolute universals cannot be found, it is clearly possible and desirable to seek common denominators across cultures. Women are able to contextualise notions of reproductive and sexual rights and apply them to their own situations. In this way, the influence of human rights discourse may be seen as an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process, rather than simply the execution of an already specified 'plan of action' with expected 'outcomes' (Long 1992:35).

## Chapter 8

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### Conclusion

This thesis has set out to show how rights discourses, including human rights, can play a transformative role in the content and practice of citizenship. The extension of the concept of citizen to incorporate new areas of rights such as reproductive and sexual rights creates the potential for women to use these discursive and practical tools to challenge traditional gender discourses that discriminate against them and inhibit the exercise of their citizenship. It is argued that human rights have come to form part of a network of perspectives which are shared and exchanged between North and South, and are thus open to interpretation, negotiation and accommodation at the national and local as well as international levels. By addressing the issues of gender, citizenship and human rights from the perspective of local cultural practice in the everyday life of women in the *poblaciones* of Santiago, this thesis exemplifies how modern anthropology can engage in the process of securing the conditions for the effective exercise of citizenship. This involves analysing the cultural factors affecting the operation of laws, but also subjecting the law itself to critical reflection in a way that allows us to comprehend its constitutive influence on gender identity.

In this thesis I have addressed issues concerning gender and human rights, and their relevance for understanding notions of citizenship, from the perspective of local cultural practice in the everyday life of women in the *poblaciones* of Santiago. The data seeks to document the particular realities affecting women *pobladoras* ability to operationalise their rights. I have demonstrated that the applicability of human rights standards depends upon commonality rather than sameness, thereby contributing to the universalism/relativism debate by showing that it is possible to have universal laws, without assuming universal experience. The theoretical approach I have adopted combines a post-modernist position moderated by standpoint theory, which stresses knowledge based upon experience, and used this to form the basis for an anthropological study examining the cultural factors influencing the operationalisation of international rights in a particular local setting. The study shows that women's experience is situational and specific, in a way which acknowledges the range of cultural, religious, economic and social concerns and interests that shade theoretical categories, without denying many areas of commonality which enable an international level to



women's citizenship. The thesis plots the configuration of women *pobladoras* particular experience in Chile to reveal these common denominators, by demonstrating that the new discourse of reproductive and sexual rights is relevant to their lives. In the process of applying these new concepts women interpret them and accommodate them to their own experiences. At the same time I have argued that it is necessary to understand the cultural specificity of their experience in order to comprehend the effect this has on women's ability to operationalise such rights and the influence that legal categories have on the construction of gender identity. The data demonstrates the need to not merely eradicate gender bias but to seek to transform legal categories and structures.

Having demonstrated that the way is open for anthropology to engage in the area of international rights, it is not suggested that all the theoretical issues have been resolved. The framework advanced in this thesis which draws together feminist legal theory and feminist anthropological theory is based on commonalities and points of convergence, but many questions relating to the problem of how to deal with difference remain open and problematic. Third world feminists emphasise the complex interaction of gender, race, class, colonialism and global capitalism, which calls for an ongoing and openly contested politics of voice and representation (Gunew & Yeatman 1993; Chinkin & Astor forthcoming:23). Thus while it may be possible to maintain a unified perspective at the level of theory, as is required for international law to be operative, this unified perspective should be considered to be open to contestation. Achieving this involves being able to deal with difference without slipping into a disempowering relativism. A difficult task when the possibilities for extensive continuous dialogue at all levels are limited.

A positive result of the ongoing debate about universalism and relativism is the emerging recognition of the need to attempt to understand how powerful practices such as the law are implicated in the establishment of some and the suppression of other values and ways of life (Lacey 1998:228). Anthropology has an important role to play in this process. Whilst the ideal of a just sensitivity to all relevant differences and particularities may be impossible to incorporate in legal frameworks as Lacey (1998) argues, it is nevertheless of crucial importance to continue to recognise the specific cultural referents which inform both the content and practice of law to provide the tools for an ongoing contestation of legal categories and structures.

The thesis has focused on citizenship as process, conceiving of it as a multi-tiered concept with strategic uses. This approach gives due accord to women's agency, rather

than seeing women merely as victims of discriminatory and oppressive male-dominated political, economic and social institutions and throws light on the complex power relations. It emphasises the need to look at questions relating to power and individual-state relations, as well as locating the individual in terms of family and community context. Questions relating to gender and citizenship are approached by looking at the three spheres of the state, civil society and the domain of the family and kinship (Yuval-Davis 1997a:13), and the influence of the international level on these other spheres.

I have argued that women's rights are operationalised and reconceptualised in the context of the tensions between these different levels. Chapter 3 sets out two predominant competing discourses which it is argued inform the construction of gendered citizenship in Chilean society. The first is rooted in Catholicism and, it is argued, provides the basis of a dominant 'ideological core' in Chilean society: the second is centred around the discourse of international human rights law and local discourses on gender and rights, which challenge dominant ideas about gender. Chapter 4 analyses the state from a gendered perspective to show its constitutive role in relations of power and the construction of gender identities, positioning women as different kinds of citizen from men. It is argued that the discourses emanating from the state have tended to be closely interconnected with the gender ideology promoted by the Catholic Church, forming part of the dominant 'ideological core' which emphasises motherhood as women's proper role. Chapter 5 concentrates on the community level between the public and the private where women have created a culture of citizenship, which, it is argued, disrupts state constructions and cultural stereotypes. The ethnographic material in Chapters 6 and 7, which draws also on women's experiences at the level of the family, shows the interplay of these different levels in the construction of citizenship and demonstrates how the influences of powerful cultural discourses affect women's ability to operationalise their rights. Revealing connections between women's experiences and what goes on in the public realm in terms of discourse and practice shows that the private *casa* cannot be separated off completely from the public *calle*. Inequalities in public and community life are shown to be intricately tied to inequalities in the family or household and at the same time inequalities in state discourse and practice reproduce inequalities in gender relations at the family level. Adopting this approach the thesis has sought to shed light on some of the major issues which are involved in the complex relationships between individuals, collectivities and the state, and the ways gender relations affect and are affected by them (Yuval-Davis 1997a: 6).

The reasons for feminism's lack of engagement with the state are both theoretical and empirical. Much work on the state has been concerned with Western liberal democracy, some of which is not directly applicable to Latin America. The influence of French structuralism with its emphasis on decentralised power has also meant that there has been a greater focus on forms of power, rather than on the state itself as a locus of power (Molyneux 1998). This thesis takes the view that the state and its institutions are important repositories of power. As Molyneux (1998) argues, even the shrunken states of neoliberalism, which govern at a distance through normative policies, may be considered to be important concentrations of power. Terms of belonging are still to a large degree defined, or at least enforced, by the state. This is the argument put forward in relation to the Chilean State in Chapter 4. Whilst the power of state discourse and practice is emphasised, it is argued nevertheless that the relationship between the state and gender relations is not fixed and immutable (cf. Waylen 1996:17), but rather interactive. In the process of rebuilding the links between civil society and the state in Chile there are spaces for manoeuvre in which individuals and groups can take an active role in the process of the construction of gender identities and of citizenship. Seen from this perspective women's activities can have a bottom up effect on gender, disrupting state constructions and cultural stereotypes.

In this context citizenship and rights discourses may be seen to be of strategic use, providing alternative conceptions of gender and a basis for individuals to be able to negotiate and operationalise their rights. Conceiving of citizenship in a broad strategic way also enables a deeper understanding of women's participation and its transformative effect. The emphasis on the relationship of the individual with society as a whole and not just the state, embraces the need to look at people's participation in civil society and not only their dealings with state institutions, but also with NGOs and local groups. In Chile, the withdrawal of foreign aid means that NGOs and women's groups will be increasingly forced to look to the state for funding. The culture(s) of citizenship they have created amongst themselves is crucial to their ability to establish a new relationship to the state, based on rights, autonomy and equality rather than subordination, control and dependency (Valdés & Weinstein 1989; Icken Safa 1995). In effect women are constructing their own notions of citizenship, drawing on rights discourses in the process.

At the level of commonality, women enter public space as embodied individuals; their citizenship can be jeopardised by sexual violence and its threat as well as by

policies and cultural beliefs and practices in relation to reproduction. This thesis has sought to spell out the particular ways in which this occurs in the *poblaciones* of southern Santiago, describing the ways in which women's citizenship is limited by cultural ideas about gender. Chapters 3 and 4 depicted the dominant ideological core containing specific ideas about gender roles. For women the ideal focuses around motherhood and self-abnegation. For men the role of *proveedor* is prominent, combined with a discourse of *machismo* that emphasises control over female sexuality and which draws also on popular mythology regarding the wandering philandering *lacho*. It was argued that these dominant discourses are embedded in laws and policies at the level of the state as well as informing the construction of gender identity at the level of family and kinship.

Against this backdrop, data obtained from interviews with women and from sexuality workshops organised by local women, shows this reality is changing with the introduction of new ideas about reproduction and sexuality. The data in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, whilst revealing the influence of dominant discourses on women's identities and lives reflects that women are receptive to alternative discourses on rights including the new discourse of human rights relating to women, which challenges dominant ideas about reproduction and sexuality. As well as finding them liberating, they are able to connect and apply them to their own experiences.

In this way, alternative discourses on gender and rights, including the international discourse on reproductive and sexual rights, may be seen to provide a moral resource that women can draw upon to assert their citizenship at the private and community levels and in dealings with the state. These practices contribute to the disruption of dominant ideas about gender which, this thesis has argued, have a constitutive influence on the formation of gender identities. The way in which women apply and adapt alternative discourses about gender and rights to their lives can therefore be seen to contribute to the (re)construction of gender identities.

The thesis has emphasised the importance of enabling conditions, both in terms of structure and agency, to facilitate the operationalisation of rights. It establishes that needs of empowerment, which may also acquire the quality of rights (Habermas 1994:14), are central to the exercise of reproductive and sexual rights. Indeed, in the human rights framework, individuals have claims against the regime they find themselves under for provision of the necessary conditions of agency. It is suggested that the ultimate test of a state may be seen as its success in contributing to the

realisation of agency for those within its jurisdiction (Parry 1991: 176). Supporting women's autonomous empowerment within civil society would be a positive step in this direction (in accordance with Chapter 4, Platform for Action, Beijing 1995). From women's perspective, the problem is that of seeking out institutional frameworks which will best achieve the objective of securing the conditions for agency (Waylen 1998).

For women *pobladoras* the issue of class is also central in terms of operationalising rights. This issue is also highlighted by Matear (1997) and Schild (1997). Both argue that with the increasing institutionalisation of women's issues in a capitalist, liberal democratic context, the political integration of some women is happening at the cost of the marginalisation of others. This problem is connected with recent history, with the division documented by Gaviola *et al* (1994) of the women's movement in the late 1980s, brought about by the creation of two co-ordinating bodies with very different goals. The *Concertación de Mujeres por la Democracia* was made up of feminists belonging to the parties of the centre and left which formed the *Concertación por la Democracia*, which later formed the first civilian government after 1989. The *Coordinación de Organizaciones Sociales de Mujeres*, on the other hand, brought together feminists who chose a strategy of action beyond parties and the state, in the name of preserving the autonomy of the women's movement. Broadly these categories conform to the division between the *institutionalistas* or *políticas* and the *autónomas* described in Chapter 3. The latter focus on furthering women's emancipation through transforming women into autonomous actors in civil society and the former group focuses on transforming the state by struggling for women's greater equality within party politics and the state. The question being debated at present is whether these two approaches are compatible or mutually exclusive. At present dialogue between these two groups is difficult (see Chapter 3, § 3.4). Some NGO members and popular women's leaders in the autonomous sector of the movement believe that the state is co-opting its ideas and initiatives.

It is true that with the project of gender mainstreaming now in the hands of SERNAM, the state may be seen to draw heavily on the experiences and discourses of the women's movement in its integrative projects. Schild, who, similar to the argument in this thesis, conceives of the relation between the state and civil society as interactive, argues that while the state structures relationships between civil society and public authority, this structuring increasingly relies on important cultural resources from civil

society itself (Schild 1997: 607). This in part explains the often-contradictory nature of state policies concerning gender observed in Chapter 4, as some arms of the state continue to endorse traditional gender discourses, whilst others, such as SERNAM, incorporate alternative ideas, some of which derive from civil society. Increasingly, public and social policies are legitimised in terms of a discourse of modernity pivoting on the key terms of autonomy, accountability and responsibility (Schild 1997: 606). Schild, like Matear (1997), argues that the clientelisation of some poor and working-class women, carried out by others in the name of advancing the cause of women, is in effect undermining the possibility of poor and working-class women coming together to articulate their own needs. Vargas (1998) sees the effects of neo-liberalism engendering a growing identification of citizenship with access to the market.

Women's perception in the *poblaciones* is that SERNAM is something *ajeno*, or distant from their lives. The withdrawal of much international aid or the redirection of such aid to government agencies exacerbates this situation, undermining the support that women's groups received from NGOs. However, the data presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 identifies that clientelisation is not the necessary and inevitable result of this process. The capacity for women to organise and negotiate should not be underestimated.

Georgina Waylen (1998) is more positive about the process of institutionalisation. She believes that the Chilean case demonstrates that women activists inside and outside political parties can more effectively influence in a more institutionalised system on the basis that it is clearer where the pressure points are. She argues that in Chile the slower transition process enabled more influence by women, especially the undertaking to set up SERNAM, created in accordance with the demands of the *Concertación de Mujeres por la Democracia*. For her, the consolidation of more equitable gender systems is more likely if organised women are engaging with institutionalised systems. What Waylen fails to document is the lack of engagement between SERNAM and women's grass-root organisations (See Chapter 3). There is a need for channels to be opened up for dialogue between SERNAM and popular women. There seems to be a reluctance to take initiatives in this respect, with each side seeming to feel that the other has the responsibility for initiating communication. It also relates to SERNAM's limited mandate, described in Chapter 3, which restricts its role to that of formulating women-oriented policy. The director of the programme against domestic violence at SERNAM, feels that SERNAM has distanced itself from the women's movement and regrets the fact that, although SERNAM has had no formal mandate to

work with women's organisations or NGOs, there is no effective interlocutor between SERNAM and the NGOs. Significantly, the Equal Opportunities Plan did not involve consultation with women's organisations.

I would argue in favour of a strategic vision that acknowledges the need to pursue both strategies, optimising the potential to pursue women's needs and rights by institutional means and at the same time strengthening spaces for autonomy. This thesis underlines the need for the work of autonomous organisations to continue in order that women can be empowered to operationalise their rights effectively at the level of the family and community as well as in relation to the state and its institutions. This argument is based on the view that autonomy is not the end result, rather the end result is becoming a subject. This is most powerfully exemplified by the conscious negotiation position adopted by women leaders in relation to the Health and the People project. It is important to recognise that while the state may be able to support initiatives that aim to empower citizens, it cannot empower citizens itself.

Schild and others are right to point up the danger of the state co-opting feminist ideas and strategies. In particular there is a risk that the discourse of citizenship be adopted by the state as a 'powerful mechanism of integration' and used to form the basis of an 'economic liberalism' which is reconnecting the fabric of state-civil relations in a different way (Schild 1997: 605-606). Rights discourses can easily be co-opted and manipulated. But the idea of co-optation is complicated. Modern processes of policy-making consist in so many actions and counter-actions, influences and counter-influences, that it is difficult to identify the initial or the ultimate decision-makers. These factors highlight the importance of the ongoing project of developing 'subversive female citizens' (Dore 1998). Women cannot ever hope to negotiate with the state from a position of equal bargaining power. But, in a situation where dichotomies are increasingly breaking down between state and non-state, there is a need for women to have the tactical tools to maximise the possibilities open to them in the process of rebuilding the links between civil society and the state and to ensure that their needs are not forgotten in the quest to enforce rights.

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**Appendix I**

**Questionnaire**

- 1) What is your age?
- 2) Level of formal education?
- 3) Present civil status?
- 4) Principal activity at present?
- 5) Are you the head of household? If not, what is your relationship to the head of household?
- 6) How many people are there in your household?
- 7) How many rooms does your house have? What utilities does it have?

**Household economy**

- 1) What is the approximate monthly income of the household?
- 2) What are the approximate monthly expenses of the household?

**Health**

- 1) What kind of health cover do you have?
- 2) Who is responsible for dealing with health problems in the family when they occur?
- 3) Tell me about your last experience at the clinic?
- 4) What do you see as the main health problems in your *población*?
- 5) Have there been any talks at your clinic? What did you think of them?
- 6) In case of serious health problems, have you ever been to hospital? What was the experience like?

**Reproductive health**

- 1) Who is responsible for contraception in your marriage/partnership?
- 3) At what time of the month are women most fertile?
- 4) Do you use contraceptives? What kind? What have your experiences been?
- 5) Did you choose the number and spacing of your children?
- 6) What do you do to protect yourself from AIDS?
- 7) Have you ever found yourself in the situation of needing an abortion? What happened?
- 8) What does the term 'reproductive rights' mean to you?
- 9) How were your experiences of pregnancy and birth?
- 10) What have been your experiences of menopause?
- 11) Do you know what cervical smear test are for? When was the last time you had one?

**Sexuality**

- 1) How was sexuality dealt with in your family when you were growing up? How is your relation with your body and how are you living your sexuality?
- 2) What were your experiences of puberty and growing up?
- 3) When do you believe that women's sexuality begins? And ends?
- 4) Have you ever used *chantaje* in your relationship?
- 5) What does the term 'sexual rights' mean to you?



**Marriage**

- 1) How has the relationship with your partner been?
- 2) Does your marriage meet your needs?
- 3) Who is responsible for what in the marriage?

**Religion**

Do you profess a religion?

**Participation in local groups**

Do you participate in any local organisations? Which? If not, are there any you would like to participate in? Are there any organisations that represent the community in dealings with authority/state institutions? Do you think the organisation you participate in is important? Why? How, if at all has it changed your life? History of participation?

**Local government**

- 1) Have you had reason to go to the local council at any time?
- 2) When you go to the local council, with whom do you talk?
- 3) What does the local council do?
- 4) Do you or anyone else in the family receive any state benefits or pensions?
- 5) What does the word 'citizenship' mean to you?

**Legal system and police**

- 1) Have you ever had to make use of the legal system? How was the experience?
- 2) Who did you come into contact with?
- 3) How do you perceive the legal system? Is it there to respond to your needs, if necessary?
- 4) Have you had any dealings with the police? How was that experience?

**The government and parliament**

- 1) Does what the government does affect your life?
- 2) What things would you like to see the government do?
- 3) How did you choose who to vote for in the last elections?
- 4) Does what goes on in parliament affect your life?

## Appendix IIA

### **The law penalising abortion**

Abortion is dealt with in Article 342ff of the Chilean Penal Code in the section dealing with crimes against the order of the family and public morals.<sup>1</sup> It states as follows: -

#### 1. *Abortion*

Art.342: He who maliciously causes an abortion will be punished:

1. With a severe sentence (minimum grade) if violence is used on the pregnant woman
2. With a minor sentence (maximum grade) if, although no violence is used; the abortion is carried out without the consent of the pregnant woman.
3. With a minor sentence (medium grade) if the woman consents.

Art.344: A woman that provokes an abortion or consents to an abortion being carried out on her by another person will be punished with a minor sentence (maximum grade). If she does it to hide her dishonour, she will receive a minor sentence (medium grade).

Art.345: A doctor or nurse who, abusing his/her office, causes or assists in an abortion will incur respectively the sentences indicated in Article 342, increased by a grade.

*Ley 18.826* is the law that removed all right to therapeutic abortion. It states: - Any action aimed at provoking an abortion is not permitted.

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<sup>1</sup> *Republica de Chile. Código Penal, duodécima edición, Editorial Jurídico de Chile. 1992. p.123 Crímenes y simples delitos contra el orden de las familias y contra la moralidad pública.*

**Appendix IIB Domestic violence cases** <sup>2</sup>

Case	Complainant's age and gender		Defendant's age and gender		Relationship between C and D	Complainant's occupation	Number of children	Details of complaint	Remedy sought	Outcome	Alcohol/Drugs
1	35	F	39	M	Married	Housewife	Not stated	Psychological violence and abandoning home	Not stated	D and C agree not to harm one another	—
2	47	F	31	M	Not stated	Housewife	3	She accuses him of beating her, he accuses her of insulting him	D ordered to leave the home	He agrees to leave and pay maintenance	—
3	49	F	48	M	Married	Trader	6	She accuses him of beating her and one of their daughters who has a mental deficiency. Complains he does not provide economic support	D ordered to leave the home	Pending conciliatory hearing	D alcohol problem
4	54	F	58	M	Married	Housewife	9	Since beginning of marriage victim of violence and mistreatment	D be seen by a specialist and precautionary measures to protect the family	Pending conciliatory hearing	D alcohol problem
5	47	F	21	M	Mother and son	Housewife	N/A	Son beat mother	Protection	Pending conciliatory hearing	—
6	21	F	22	M	Married	Housewife	7 months pregnant	Hospitalised twice for physical violence	D be stopped from bothering her	D at first denies violence, both admit aggression. Agree to remain separate for now, then will get back together or seek legal separation	—
7	42	F	50	M	Married	Housewife	3	Whenever there are problems he begins to harm her physically and psychologically. Allegedly uses all his pension to buy alcohol	That the violence be ended	D ordered to undergo treatment for alcoholism and to maintenance	D alcohol problem
8	34	F	37	M	Married	Domestic servant	At least 1 child	Since beginning of marriage permanent physical and psychological violence, a product of D's drug addiction. Threatens to kill her/kidnap 2 yr. old daughter	D be prevented from entering the home and prohibited from going to daughter's nursery school	Did not manage to serve notice on D because he had been fired from work	D a drug addict
9	29	M	31	F	Married	Not stated	2	Wife will not leave him alone to live in peace with his parents	D be ordered to stay away from him	She is ordered to stay away from his parents home	

<sup>2</sup> There was insufficient data to include information on level of education or the Defendant's occupation. In almost all cases where this data was available they, together with the information that is included in this chart indicated lower socio-economic status.

10	32	F	32	M	Cohabiting	Housewife	5	Whenever drugged or drunk he becomes violent and threatens to kill C and children	D be ordered to leave	She came alone to conciliatory hearing, said that D is in prison for not paying a fine, that violence had ceased and things have improved. Case closed	D drug and alcohol problem
11	62	F	34	M	Mother in law (on behalf of daughter diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia)	Housewife (daughter)	2	Son in law beats daughter when drunk. Psychological violence: he ignores her, undervalues her and will not allow her to work, although she is a qualified nursery teacher	D be ordered to stop harming daughter	Judge orders D to undergo therapy/familial orientation	D alcohol problem
12	47	F	21	M	Mother and son	Domestic servant	N/A	Son pushed mother downstairs	Son be ordered to leave	D said he hit mother because she hit his pregnant wife. Agreed he would leave the house and they agree not to harm each other	-
13	32	F	49	M	Married	Housewife	5	D is physically violent, takes off his clothes and defecates in front of them. Sexual abuse and psychological violence	D be ordered to leave the home, precautionary protective measures, maintenance	D does not deny violence but says claims are exaggerated. He agrees not to harm C or the children, says he will look for somewhere else to live but does not know how long this will take	D alcohol problem
14	29	F	32	M	Separated	Domestic servant	3	Physical violence	D be ordered to leave C alone. Maintenance	D agrees not to harm her anymore	-
15	24	F	26	M	Separated	Housewife	3	Physical and psychological violence. He forces his way into the home and tries to hurt her sexually	D be ordered to leave C alone	Agree not to harm each other. Will continue to live separately and apply for an annulment. He can see the children when he wants to	-
16	25	F	28	M	Married	Housewife	3	Physical violence, he kicks and punches her. She has moved away with the children	D be ordered to leave C alone	Parties agree not to harm each other. Will continue to live separately. Agree a regimen of visits and maintenance	-

17	13	F	17	M	Sister and brother		N/A	D hit her and mother with a stick	Not stated	Mother came alone to conciliatory hearing to withdraw action, said that things are better now	-
18	23	F	29	M	Married	Housewife	1	She sustained injuries after an argument.	D be ordered not to harm C	D and C come together to conciliatory hearing and agree to withdraw from action, they have talked through their problems and are trying to sort them out	-
19	24	F	25	M	Married	Housewife	2	D attacked her in street when she was with the children		Did not arrive at conciliatory hearing	
20	19	F	21	M	Married	Shop assistant	-	D violent during arguments. D does not like her working outside the home	D be ordered not to harm C	C withdrew action at conciliatory hearing. The couple are now living alone instead of with is parents and things are better	
21	49	F	47	M	Cohabiting	Not stated	2 (from C's previous marriage)	D physically and psychologically violent	Not specified	D has left the house voluntarily and now wants to return, takes C presents and treats her well. C is thinking about it. Undertake not to harm each other	
22	27	F	25	M	Separated	Housewife	1	D physically violent	D be ordered not to go to the house or harm her	D promises not to harm her or to go to the house	
23	17	M	22	M	Brothers	Not stated	N/A	D physically violent	D be ordered not to be violent to C	Case dismissed because of lack of witnesses to prove violence	
24	26	F	28	M	Married	Accountant	-	D attacked C with a kitchen knife during a fight regarding his "poor behaviour as a husband"	C seeks "sanctions of law" and that D be prohibited from home for 180 days	Judge orders D to attend 3 months family therapy and prohibited from home for 60 days	
25	24	F	26	M	Married	Not stated	-	D beats C and mother in law	C wants to separate and that D be prevented from hitting her anymore	Judge found that there was no proof of violence as C did not provide witnesses	D has alcohol problem
26	67	F	72	M	Married	Housewife	-	C subject to psychological abuse throughout marriage: insults and swearing	Not specified	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing. Case closed	

27	30	F	33	M	Married	Administrative assistant	2	Psychological violence directed at C and children: insults and swearing	Not specified	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing	
28	58	F	39	M	Mother and son	Not specified	N/A	D is without work and attacks C physically and psychologically. D threatens C with a knife and threatens to burn the house down	D be ordered to leave the house	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing	D has alcohol problem
29	35	F	49	M	Cohabiting	Housewife	-	D prohibits her from going out and meeting friends with aggression and threats	D be ordered to stop violence	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing	
30	23	F	23	M	Married	Housewife	1	C sustained injuries after an argument	Not specified	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing. Letter sent from court	
31	59	F	64	M	Married	Housewife	5	C arrived from a workshop late at night. When she entered the bathroom he beat her	To find a solution to the conflict	C says that D does not like her to go out participate in workshops and be sociable. She always says where she is, whereas he comes and goes as he pleases without saying where he is. D denies violence but admits insulting her. C brings no proof therefore judge cannot sentence	
32	44	M	29 23	F M	Cohabits	Labourer	-	C involved in an argument with partner and son who started to hit him, he sustained light injuries	Not specified	Son and partner do not come to conciliatory hearing	
33	22	F	24	M	Married	Housewife/ Domestic servant	1	C asked for money for milk for daughter and he attacked her and kicked her	D be ordered not to harm C	D admitted violence. Couple living separately, he has daughter with him and parents will she is working. Agreed regimen of visits and maintenance. Parties agree not to harm each other	
34	28	F	30	M	Married	Housewife	-	D proposed sex, C refused because she was menstruating. D began to hit her	D be ordered not to harm C	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing	

35	34	F	35	M	Married	Machine operator, textile factory	-	Long history of violence. D tried to strangle C because of jealousy when she began to work	D be ordered not to harm C	Judge ordered D to undergo therapy. C subsequently reports things are now going well	
36	42	F	42	M	Married	Trader	3	C victim of physical and psychological violence for 10 years, undermining her as a mother and woman. Recent incident daughter prevented D from getting a knife	D be ordered not to harm C or youngest child	C came to withdraw action, they have sorted out problems	
37	23	F	26	M	Married	Housewife	2	C sustained injuries to face and teeth after an argument about his absence from the home	Not specified	C came initially to change date of conciliatory hearing saying D willing to undergo treatment. C and D then appear together to withdraw action. C says she is very possessive of D and did not like the attention he receives from family and friends	
38	25	M	26	F	Married	Mechanic	-	D beats and insults C and rings his work to get him fired, she is jealous of him working with other women	Not specified	Do not appear at conciliatory hearing	
39	25	F	24	M	Married	Paramedic	-	D jealous of wife working with other men, death threats	Not specified	D and C now living separately, agree not to harm each other	
40	34	F	39	M	Married	Housewife	3	Physical and psychological maltreatment on the part of D toward C and children throughout 15 years of marriage. He recently punched her in the face	Wants D removed from the home	D had moved and she does not have his address, therefore has to withdraw action	D alcohol problem
41	33	F	32	M	Married	Housewife	3	C sustained injuries from D during a fight	D to be prevented from harming her	C and D agree not to harm each other, things have improved. D is buying children clothes and giving them money. C told to return if D does not comply	

42	33	F	44	M	Cohabiting	Housewife	-	She sustained injuries after fight when she asked for money for food	Not specified	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing	
43	48	F	26	M	Woman and daughter's partner	Housewife	N/A	C looks after granddaughter so daughter can work, D is abusive towards daughter and C	D to be prevented from coming to the house	C came to court to withdraw action, daughter has moved out	
44	64	F	65 19	M M	Woman and husband and son	Housewife	4	Husband and son rowing and violent	Ds to be sent for treatment	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing	Ds have alcohol problem
45	25	F	39	M	Married	Housewife	2	C suffers constant physical and psychological violence in front of the children	D to be removed from the home	Judge finds no grounds to sentence as C does not bring witnesses	
46	35	F	40	M	Separated	Waitress	2	Separated due to maltreatment. D brings women and friends to the house and insults her	D to be prevented from coming to the home and a solution found to situation	Unable to notify D	
47	41	F	45	M	Married	Domestic servant	5	For years C and the children have suffered maltreatment and verbal aggression, but increased in recent months. D threatened to kill C, cut her face or set fire to the house	D be prohibited from the home for 60 days	Judge prohibits D from the home for 60 days and orders D to undergo therapy	
48	49	F	52	M	Married	Housewife	6	D threw a plate of food at her and beat her.	D be prevented from harming C	Judge orders 3 months therapy and treatment for alcoholism	D has alcohol problem
49	35	F	35	M	Married	Domestic servant	3	Problem of psychological violence for last 2 years	Not specified	C and D agree not to hurt each other, continue living together	
50	35	F	37	M	Married	-	-	D beats C and 13 yr. old son	Not specified	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing. Case closed	
51	31	F	33	M	Married	-	2	D beats her and threatens to cut her with a letter opener	D be removed from the home	D and C say that they have overcome problems. D says he was jealous, he thought C was going to be unfaithful	
52	27	F	28	M	Married	-	1	D expelled C from the house, threatened to kill her, cut her face and take away their 8 yr. old child	A solution to the problems	D and C agree that the problems were a result of psychological problems and immaturity and they are going to give each other another chance	



53	31	F	35	M	Married	Housewife	3	D arrived home drunk, started to insult C and tried to hit her. D invited their 13-yr. old daughter to go to bed with him. Threatened to kill C if he found her with another man	D to be removed from the house	Pending	
54	58	F	59	M	Married	Housewife	-	D beat her because he was drunk and took her by the neck	D to be prevented from harming her	D said it was the first time things had arrived at violence. S said the only reason he had not hurt her before was because she had escaped. Clerk tells them they must attend therapy. D says he works and does not have time. Agree not to harm each other, if D repeats violence C should return to make another demand	D has alcohol problem
55	30	F	32	M	-	-	-	D is alcoholic and often violent. Works sporadically	An end to the violence	D acknowledged violence and committed himself not to continue but had continued. Judge ordered D to comply and to leave the home for 60 days	D has alcohol problem
56	24	F	27	M	-	Housewife	1	D picked her up by the hair and flung her against the wall because he was jealous	A solution to the problem	Court unable to notify D, although C came to court to exhort them to do so. Case closed	
57	20	F	30	M	Married	Shop assistant	1	D beat her saying that she had touched the leg of a colleague	Protection	C and D separated and in process of annulment. She will file for maintenance, he for regimen of visits. Agree not to harm each other	

58	24	F	24	M	Married	-	1	D attacked C during an argument about providing for child. D says that C attacked him, scratching him and grabbing his neck, which is why he responded with violence. D said C often treated him this way because he gives her little money	-	D and C say things are going better. They are living separately but are going to get back together. Commit themselves not to harm each other	
59	22	F	25	M	Married	Housewife	1	D beat C	D be prevented from harming her	C withdraws action, says they have resolved their conflicts	
60	19	F	23	M	Separated	Housewife	1	D became violent during an argument	Not specified	D asked C to forgive him. Still separated, C takes baby to see him. C did not provide evidence of violence so Judge found there was not a case for domestic violence	
61	29	F	23	M	Cohabiting (C separated from H)	Trader	1	C physically and verbally abused by D. He has tried to violently take daughter and says that if C does not do as he says he will injure her	Not specified	C says they are not living together but he continues to molest her in the street physically and verbally. D did not appear and she did not return. Case closed	
62	20	F	21	M	Married	-	-	D becomes violent and aggressive when he drinks	Not specified	D agrees to undergo treatment for alcoholism	D has alcohol problem
63	33	F	38	M	Separated	Trader	3	D continues to molest her, she quotes him: - 'Fucking bitch I am going to kill you, ask for money from the arseholes that fuck you. Don't think that I'm going to give you money for those kids and if they are very needy send them out to rob'. 'Fucking bitch, who fucks with everyone and why won't you do it with me?' He forced her to have sex with him in front of the children. D has already been detained for aggression against C and the children. 17-yr old son becoming alcoholic	D be ordered not to molest C any more	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing. Case closed	D has alcohol problem

64	29	F	33	M	Married	Domestic work	1	C suffers physical and psychological violence from D. He hit her when she asked him why he had not gone to work. She has moved out	A resolution to the problems	D said he hit C because she arrived home very late. Agreed to live separately for 60 days and to avoid physical and psychological violence. Agreed maintenance and visits	
65	20	F	20	M	Married	-	-	D became violent during arguments	Not specified	Agree that they will live separately until they can afford to have a home of their own and they can be better off economically	
66	32	F	36	M	Separated	Housewife	3	D was a womaniser and alcoholic. He left after a fight and was threatening and insulting her over the phone	D be ordered to leave C alone	Agree not to harm each other physically or mentally. Agree maintenance and regimen of visits. She will seek therapeutic treatment	D has alcohol problem
67	33	F	33	M	Married	Housewife	3	D a drug addict and physically and psychologically abusive	D to be prohibited from home	Agree to separate for 6 months, visiting agreed. C and children to undergo psychotherapeutic treatment. D to undergo same and treatment for drug addiction	D has drug problem
68	42	F	44	M	Married	-	-	D alcoholic. C suffering from psychological violence	D to be made to leave	D agreed to leave home for 60 days and both to undergo psychotherapeutic treatment	D has alcohol problem
69	25	F	26	M	Separated after cohabiting	Office junior	1 (+1 from previous marriage)	D causes scandals and becomes violent whenever under the influence of alcohol and does not assume his role of provider, even when he is working	D to be prevented from coming to the house	D agreed not to come to house where she and children are staying, agreed regimen of visits and maintenance	D has alcohol problem
70	63	F	31	F	Mother and daughter	Housewife	-	C suffers physical and psychological violence from daughter	D be ordered to stop violence	Agree not to harm each other, both to undergo therapy and daughter to leave in 2 months	

71	38	M	36	F	Married	Housewife	2	C says D maltreating daughters. She went out with a friend and said she did not have time to attend to him or the daughters and went to bed without saying where she had been	D be ordered to stop maltreatment	Court fails to notify D and C finally desists	
72	41	F	43	M	Married	Housewife	2	After an argument D hit wife and teenage daughter, both sustained injuries	D be ordered not to harm C or daughter	D left and court could not manage to notify him. Letter sent asking her to return to court. Case closed	
73	31	F	30	M	Married	Housewife	3	Constant psychological mistreatment of C by D	Not specified	Judge orders D to undergo psychological treatment. Report says that he went once and no more	D has drug problem
74	21	F	22	M	Married	Housewife	2	D violent to C trying to get access to daughter. D and C live with their respective parents because of economic problems. C says D smelt of alcohol and pulled her hair and grabbed her wrists. C says D becomes aggressive when asked for money	Not specified	D says he only took C's arm to calm her down. D was angry because he had arranged to see younger daughter and she was not there. Agree not to harm each other. D to give C money each month for daughters, they are going to rent a place together and make a new start	Alcohol involved
75	20	F	27	M	Cohabit	Housewife	3	D has always been aggressive and abuses her verbally in front of children: - 'Fucking tart'. 'I maintain you, your family dumped you'. 'Your mother's cunt!'	D be removed from the home	D and C have separated, things have improved. Agree not to harm each other, he will file an application for a regimen of visits	
76	33	F	36	M	Married	Housewife	4	Fight because D would not get up to go to work. C said D was irresponsible, did not provide for the children. D hits and kicks her.	Not specified	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing	

77	44	F	37	M	Cohabit	-	2	D annoyed at C going out with friends, says she does not attend to him as she should, lead to fight and physical violence	D be ordered not to harm C	C came to withdraw action, said they had sorted out the problems	
78	69	M	28	M	Father and son	-	N/A	D threatens C permanently to give him money to provide for drugs	D be ordered not to molest C	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing	D has a drug problem
79	35	F	36	M	Married	Housewife	2	C has been the victim of physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence during 14 years of marriage. C took action against D last year after a serious beating. D was ordered to undergo treatment but did not go. C fears for her life	D be prohibited from the home. Arrange maintenance. Establish a regimen for care and maintenance of the children	Agree to go together for psychotherapeutic treatment	
80	42	F	39	M	Married	Auxiliary nurse	3	D is a drug addict. C subject to physical and psychological maltreatment	D be ordered definitively from home	D and C agree to separate. C will initiate proceedings for legal separation	D has a drug problem
81	29	F	30	M	Married	Housewife	2	D physically violent during an argument about C going out. D was jealous	D be ordered not to harm C	Agree not to harm each other and to undergo psychotherapeutic treatment	
82	45	F	41	M	Married	Housewife	2	D beat children in family argument	D be ordered not to beat children	Children say they shouted at D because it is always him first and last for everything. Family agree to go for therapy	
83	41	M	40	F	Married	-	2	Husband taking action against wife and children.	D be ordered to cease violent behaviour	D denies any violence. Agree that C will leave and undergo treatment. C attends once then fails to attend. Report on file says wife has been the victim years of psychological and sexual violence, she is receiving therapy	
84	31	F	34	M	Married	Housewife	2	D beat C after argument about not providing for C and children, failing to fulfil his function as a father	Not specified	Agree to undergo psychological therapy	
85	36	F	40	M	Married	-	3	C suffered injuries from D and was forced out of the home after an argument	C wants to return home	Judge orders police to accompany C's return home, which they did	

86	21	F	20	M	Cohabiting	-	1	C severely injured after being beaten by D. History of violent incidents	Protection of C and child	Judge orders D to attend a therapeutic programme. Report on file states D has not attended therapy. Case closed
87	32	F	31	M	Cohabiting	Housewife, additional domestic work	2	D gets angry and reacts violently if C tells him to go and look for work	End to violence	Judge orders D to attend a therapeutic programme. Report on file states D has not attended therapy. Case closed
88	35	F	38	M	Married	Dental assistant	3	D violent throughout 18 yr. marriage. Beats her head to avoid evidence. Recently attacked her, grabbing her throat and shaking her, turned off lights and disconnected telephone. Threatens that if she looks for another man he will kill her. Swears and insults her and children	Protection of C and children	Judge orders D to attend a psychotherapeutic programme
89	38	F	45	M	Married	Housewife	6	D beats C in front of children. D accuses C of being a prostitute, going out to meet men. He won't let her sleep in the bed, saying that he owns everything. Refuses to pay bills	Not specified	Agree he will give her money. Agree to undergo psychotherapeutic treatment
90	26	F	28	M	Lived together 1 year and had a child	Shop assistant	1	D forced C and baby out of home. D calls C at her mother's house to taunt and insult her	D be prohibited from coming to mother's house and telephoning	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing
91	46	F	49	M	Married	Housewife	-	D violent throughout marriage. C kept quiet to maintain marriage until most serious attack and death threats. D constantly accusing her of seeing other men	D be prohibited from the home, provisions for maintenance	C appears at conciliatory hearing, says they have sorted things out and will give things another go and will go for therapy

92	52	F	56	M	Married	Secretary	2	20 years of physical and psychological violence. D drinks and gets aggressive	Not specified	C living at son's house, says she will return if D agrees to undergo treatment for alcoholism. D acknowledges bad treatment. D undertakes not to hurt C and agrees to go for treatment	
93	54	F	57	M	Married	Trader	3	C has suffered psychological violence throughout marriage. D works sporadically, C provides everything: bought house, educated children. C says D takes advantage of the money she brings in	D be removed from the house	Agree that D will leave the home. They will both go for therapy	
94	56	F	34	F	Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law	Housewife	N/A	D treats C badly, brings around male friends and does not work or contribute financially	Not specified	D agrees to leave house	
95	32	F	38	F	Separated after living together 5 years	Housewife	1	D beat C repeatedly out of jealousy; accused her of being a prostitute. They have been separated for 2 years. D comes to see her drunk asking to come back and tries to hit her when she says no	D be prevented from molesting C	Pending	D has alcohol problem
96	23	F	24	F	Married	Housewife	1	D and C live with D's parents. D hits C saying for not doing the housework. D also gets angry and violent if C asks for money, but tells her she should not go out to work. D's mother also told her she should not work while child is so small. C had demanded before, but suspended demand to give D a chance. C staying with her sister	A resolution to problems	Judge orders D to undergo psychotherapeutic treatment	

97	29	F	29	M	Married	Cleaner	1	D accuses C of being a prostitute, seeing other men and leaving daughter alone, and beats her. C fears for her own safety and that of the child	D not be permitted to come near C or daughter	Judge ordered D not to enter house or go near child for 60 days. Also ordered psychological examination of D to determine whether he is alcoholic, a drug addict and characteristics of personality. On basis of this orders psychotherapeutic treatment	D alcohol problem
98	26	F	30	M	Married, recently separated	Paid employment	2	C victim of physical and psychological abuse. C obtained order for maintenance and regimen of visits, which D does not comply with. D forces his way into house saying it is to see the children and calls her a whore, saying in front of them that if it were not for them he would kill her	D be prevented from entering the home, school of the children and her workplace	Medical report recommends psychotherapeutic treatment for D, C and elder child and suspension of D's visits until positive change perceived. Judge orders D to attend 3 months psychological treatment	
99	28	M	27	F	Married	Taxi driver	2	C victim of punches, kicks and insults from D for 3 years, that undermine him as a man and father	An end to the violence	Did not appear at conciliatory hearing. Court sent further letter with new date	
100	36	F	45	M	Married	Nanny	4	C victim of psychological violence	Psychological treatment	D and C agree to attend psychotherapeutic sessions	



101	42	F	26	M	Woman and daughter's partner	-	N/A	C makes claim in respect of maltreatment of grandson by daughter's partner. D beats daughter in front of grandson. Father also makes declaration that he wants son out of the house	C wants custody of grandson	Medical report confirms grandson suffering from violence and psychological damage, comments child is product of an undesired teenage pregnancy. D ordered to undergo 4 months psychotherapeutic treatment and child to stay with grandmother for 60 days. Mother of child recommended to undergo treatment too. Father ordered to undergo treatment for alcoholism. Note on file states that D has not complied with order to attend for treatment	
102	31	F	34	M	Cohabit	Housewife	3	C bringing case because of physical and psychological violence towards the children. D beats her too, but that does not matter. He does not want to work, occasionally earns money which he spends on drink. D threatens to burn down the house	D to be removed from the home	C told she must bring witnesses. C says that everything happens inside behind closed doors. C told to make another application and bring witnesses. C says this is the 2 <sup>nd</sup> time, she cannot continue	D has alcohol problem
103	24	F	25	M	Married	Housewife (trained accounts assistant)	1	D beats C for not attending him properly and insults her in front of child. D does is not leaving her money, she is depending on her father	D to attend psychological treatment	C arrives without witnesses. C says witnesses are all D's friends apart from her mother, who has to stay with child to enable C to come to court. C told to make another application	
104	60	M	22 27	M M	Father and sons	Retired	N/A	C receiving physical and verbal maltreatment from sons	Ds be ordered to leave house	Pending	

105	19	F	29	M	Married	Housewife	1	C suffered 3 years constant aggression, verbal menaces and sexual attacks from D	Solution to situation	Court unable to serve notice on D	D has alcohol problem
106	37	F	39	M	Married	Factory worker	1	C suffered physical and psychological violence throughout 16 years of marriage	D to be removed from the home	Judge orders D to undergo psychotherapeutic treatment	
107	40	F	44	M	Married	Housewife	2	C victim throughout marriage of physical and psychological violence. D will not let her work mending shoes at home, will not allow her to go out or receive visitors. C has spent 1 yr. in group therapy	D be removed from the home	Court has previously prohibited D from home for 60 days Agree to continue living together, she will attend to household chores, and he will treat her with respect and will not prohibit her from leaving the house to visit relatives. Subsequent action reveal that D has not complied, C seeking again to have D removed from home	

**Appendix III Reproductive histories**

	Name	Age	Marital Status and age at marriage	Occupation	Partner's occupation	Formal Education	Monthly Household Income <sup>3</sup>	No. household members	Social class <sup>4</sup>	Contraceptive use	Children	Live births and miscarriages	Age at first pregnancy	Experience of abortion	In favour of right to abortion	Leader/ Participant in women's organisation
1	Elena	49	Married 17	Occasional domestic work	Ticket collector at stadium	Completed secondary education after she got married	CH\$100,000	3	Lower	IUD	2	2	16	No	Yes	Leader
2	Clara	60	Married (not to the father of her child)	Previously auxiliary nurse, now housewife	Driver	Incomplete secondary	-	6	Poor	Injection	1	1	27	3	Yes	Leader
3	Teresa	38	Cohabited then separated	Training, worked previously in shops	-	Primary	CH\$90,000 (from son)	3	Lower	IUD	3	3	16	1	Yes	Leader
4	Monica	46	Married 15	Market trader	Construction worker	Primary	CH\$150,000	7	Lower	Sterilised	5	7 1 miscarriage	15	No	Yes	Leader
5	Yolanda	50	Married 19	Housewife	Carpenter	Secondary	CH\$120,000	5	Popular	Hysterectomy	3	4	19	1	Yes	Leader
6	Esperanza	53	Married 1 previous annulment 18	Worked in a factory, husband made her give it up	Office junior	1 year primary	CH\$80,000	6	Lower	IUD	4	4	18	1	Yes	Leader
7	Jana	38	Married 21	Workshops for PRODEMU	Long distance lorry driver	Secondary	CH\$300,000	7	Lower	IUD	2	2 1 miscarriage	22	No	Yes	Leader
8	Cecilia	31	Married 20	Housewife	Metal worker	Secondary	CH\$180,000	4	Working	IUD	2	2	21	No	Yes	Leader
9	Alba	54	Married 19	Housewife, previously domestic worker	Works in a laundry	Incomplete primary	CH\$90,000	3	Lower	IUD	3	3	19	No	Yes	Leader
10	Consuelo	50	Married 21	Housewife	Office job	Incomplete primary	CH\$100,000	4	Lower	IUD	3	3	21	No	Yes, limited to rape and deformed foetus	Leader
11	Carmen	38	Cohabiting Separated from H	Domestic worker	-	Secondary	CH\$90,000	5	Lower	Sterilised	3	3	15	1 attempted	Yes	Leader

<sup>3</sup> Women invariably say that they do not know how much their husbands earn. These figures reflect the joint finances that are made available for household expenditure.

<sup>4</sup> This is the class that women describe themselves as being members of.

12	Rosa	32	Married 19	Domestic worker	Job at conference centre	Incomplete secondary	CH\$200,000	5	Working	IUD	3	3	20	1	Yes	Leader
13	Manuela	49	Married 26	Small tailoring business	Electrician	Incomplete primary	CH\$140,000	6	Lower	IUD caused prolapsed womb	2	2 8 miscarriages	23	1	Yes	Leader
14	Rosario	49	Married 20	Hairdresser	Job in dairy	Completed secondary after married	CH\$150,000	4	Lower	Hysterectomy	3	3	21	1	Yes	Leader
15	Angela	45	Separated	Housewife, sells some crocheted items	Small businessman	Primary	CH\$40,000	2	Working	IUD	3	3	17	1	Yes	Leader
16	Luz	39	Married 21	Housewife	Market trader	Incomplete secondary	CH\$100,000	4	Lower	IUD	2	2	21	1	Yes	Leader
17	Luisa	50	Cohabiting Widowed 21	Housewife	Auxiliary in Laboratory	Primary	CH\$150,000	6	The most marginal	Post-menopausal	2	2	22	No	Unsure, maybe where the family is already large or the woman's life is in danger	Leader
18	Blanca	37	Married 22	Domestic worker	Worker for local authority	Incomplete primary	CH\$160,000	4	Working	IUD	2	2	22	1	Yes	Leader
19	Yamilia	33	Married 19	Housewife	Driver	Incomplete primary	CH\$180,000	6	Neither lower or middle	Sterilised Pill previously	4	6	19	No	Yes, but limited to rape and risk to woman's life, maybe extreme poverty	Leader
20	Marina	59	Married 15	Workshop facilitator	Retired	Incomplete primary	CH\$60,000	2	Working	Post-menopausal	5	5	15	2	Yes	Leader
21	Patricia	33	Married 22	Housewife	Driver	Incomplete primary	CH\$120,000	3	Lower	None	1	1 5 miscarriages (IVF)	18	1 attempted	Yes	Leader
22	Martha	48	Married 22	Tailor	Mechanic	Primary	CH\$180,000	6	Poor	IUD	4	4	22	1 attempted	Yes	Leader
23	Giamar	30	Single	Nursery school head	-	University, trained as nursery teacher	CH\$230,000	6	Lower middle	Contraceptive pill	1	2	26	1	Yes	Leader
24	Gisela	46	Married 22	Occasional workshops, sells handicraft items	Carpenter	Secondary	CH\$80,000	2	Lower	IUD	2	3	22	1	Yes	Leader

25	Victoria	34	Separated 21	Works in the Women's Office of the Council	Small businessman	Incomplete secondary	CH\$350,000	4	Middle	IUD	3	5	21	2	Yes	Leader
26	Diana	46	Separated 17	Job with an NGO	-	Incomplete primary	CH\$120,000	3	Working	None	4	5	17	1	Yes	Leader
27	Sandra	59	Married 19	Aerobics classes for aged	Retired	Incomplete secondary	CH\$100,000	2	Lower	Hysterectomy IUD Primitive methods	2	2	19	2	No	Participant
28	Adriana	41	Cohabiting 2 Annulments 19	Shop assistant	Construction worker	Completed secondary education	CH\$160,000	-	Middle	Sterilised	3	4	19	1	Yes	Participant (voluntary health promoter)
29	Isabel	29	Married	Housewife	Petrol station attendant	Incomplete primary	CH\$70,000	4	Lower	Contraceptive pill	2	2	-	No	Only in the case of rape	Participant
30	Soraya	26	Married 23	Housewife, piecework at home for factory	Gardener	Primary Qualified tailor	CH\$180,000	6	Middle	IUD	2	2	21	No	Within a month, if the women does not have the means to support the child	Participant
31	Ana María	42	Married 18	Housewife	Factory worker	Incomplete primary	CH\$100,000	2	Lower middle	IUD	1	2	18	No	Yes	Participant (voluntary health promoter)
32	Carmena	65	Single	No paid employment	-	Primary	CH\$30,000	7	Poor	Post- menopausal	1	1	17	5	Yes	Participant
33	Alicia	29	Married 20	Housewife	-	Primary	CH\$140,000	4	Lower middle	Post- menopausal	6	6	20	7	Yes	Participant
34	Lucía	59	Widow 16	Housewife	-	Incomplete primary	CH\$40,000	-	Lower	Post- menopausal	10	12	16	2	Yes	Participant
35	Maria	35	Married 18	Housewife Occasional work as a trader	Factory sub- manager	Incomplete secondary	CH\$250,000	6	Lower	Sterilised after falling pregnant using	4	4	18	1	Yes	Participant
36	Mercedes	64	Widow First marriage aged 12	Housewife	-	Incomplete primary	CH\$35,000	2	Poor	Post- menopausal	10	15	12	3	No	Participant
37	Ortensia	67	Married 27	Housewife	Occasional jobs	1 year primary	CH\$55,000	3	Lower	Sterilised	10	10	27	No	Yes	Participant
38	Flor	49	Married, separated under same roof	Household cook, previously domestic worker	Retired	1 year primary	CH\$70,000	11	Lower	None	8	10	14	2	Only if woman's life is in danger	Participant
39	Pilar	67	Married 18	Domestic worker	-	None	CH\$50,000	3	Lower	Post- menopausal	3	7 1 miscarriage	16	4 (Im- prisoned)	Yes	Participant

40	Marcela	31	Separated 18	Not working at present	-	Primary	No income, staying with family	6	Poor	None	2	2	18	No	Yes, in the case of rape or woman's life in danger	Participant
41	Carolina	40	Long term partner Separated 22	Waitress	Miner	Secondary	CH\$80,000	3 (with- in larger househo- ld of 6 more)	Prole- tariat	IUD	2	3	22	1	Yes	Participant
42	Gloria	45	Cohabiting Separated 20	President, <i>Junta de vecinos</i>	Construction worker	Secondary	CH\$90,000	2	Middle	None	None	None	-	No	Yes	Participant
43	Susana	48	Separated	Secretary, <i>Junta de vecinos</i> , part-time Domestic worker	-	Incomplete primary	CH\$160,000	10	Lower middle	Hysterectomy	3	4	-	1	Yes, in the case of rape, the woman's life is in danger or the foetus is deformed	Participant
44	Tatiana	48	Married 33	Sporadic jobs, Avon saleswoman	Office equipment Salesman	Primary	CH\$20,000 No idea of H's salary, he buys shopping and pays bills	4	Working	Condoms	2	2	27	No	Yes	Participant (Voluntary health promoter)
45	Fernanda	53	Married 19	Market trader	Factory worker	Incomplete primary	CH\$120,000	2	Working	IUD	3	3	16	No	Yes	Participant
46	Juana	39	Cohabiting Separated	Piecework at home for shoe factory	Factory worker	Primary	CH\$300,000	4	Working	IUD	3	4	20	1	Yes	Participant
47	Nieves	53	Single	Handicraft sales	-	Incomplete primary	CH\$100,000	2	Middle	None	1	2	16	1	Unsure	Participant
48	Mariana	29	Cohabiting Separated 20	Administrative assistant in local authority	-	Incomplete secondary	CH\$160,000	3	Lower	IUD and condoms	1	1	20	1 attempted	Yes	Participant
49	Lola	34	Married 22	Voluntary work in a centre for drug addicts	Taxi driver	Secondary Trained as pharmaceutical assistant	CH\$85,000	4	Working	IUD	2	3	19	1	Yes	Occasional participant
50	Gabriela	40	Separated 16	Sells jewellery, Hairdressing	Telephone repairs	Incomplete primary	CH\$200,000	4	Lower middle	Sterilised IUD and pill - problems	4	8 1 miscarriage	16	3	Yes	Occasional participant
51	Genoveva	61	Married 20	-	-	Secondary	-	2	-	Sterilised	3	5	20	2	Yes	Occasional participant

52	Irma	38	Cohabiting	Domestic worker, training to be a waitress	Trader (in prison for domestic violence)	Primary	CH\$70,000	5	Middle	IUD	3	3	22	No	Yes	Participant
53	Sonia	44	Married	Housewife, sells Avon products and jewellery	Production worker	Incomplete secondary	CH\$150,000	4	Lower middle	Sterilised	2	2	21	No	Yes	Participant
54	Constanza	39	Partner has other family Separated 20	Out of work, waitress/ domestic worker	-	Primary	Depends what partner gives her	6	Working	IUD	4	4	20	1 attempted	Yes	Participant
55	Silvia	50	Married 1 <sup>st</sup> marriage annulled 18	Housewife	Driver	Incomplete secondary	CH\$200,000	3	Middle	Post-menopausal	2	3	17	1	Yes	Participant
56	Nora	55	Cohabiting Separated from H 17	Kiosk owner	Small businessman	-	-	4	Working	In menopause	3	3	17	-	Yes	Participant
57	Beatriz	55	Separated 19	Paid to care for grandchildren	-	Secondary	CH\$200,000	7	Working	None	5	16	18	11	Yes	Participant
58	Gladys	41	Separated 18	Housewife, looking for work	Factory manager	Incomplete secondary	CH\$180,000	3	Lower middle	None Bad reactions to pill and IUD	3	4	18	1	Only in the case of rape or deformed foetus	Participant
59	Berta	38	Separated Widowed from 1 <sup>st</sup> marriage 18	Housewife	-	Secondary, trained as commercial secretary	CH\$150,000	4	Working	Hysterectomy (cancer) IUD previously	3	3	17	No	Yes, in the case of rape or if the woman's life is in danger	Participant
60	Julia	42	Married 21	Housewife	Bus driver	Secondary	CH\$180,000	5	Middle	IUD	3	3	20	No	In the case of rape or adolescent pregnancy	Participant
61	Miriam	39	Separated	-	-	Primary	CH\$120,000	3	Working	Sterilised IUD	3	5 1 miscarriage	-	1	Yes	Participant
62	Socorro	45	Married 19	Housewife	Policeman	Incomplete secondary	CH\$80,000 (H pays bills)	5	Working	Contraceptive pill	2	4	19	1	Yes	Occasional participant
63	Chía	33	Married 27 (cohabited since 17)	Occasional domestic work	Building work	Incomplete primary	CH\$130,000	9	Poor	IUD	6	6	17	1 attempted	No	Non-participant

64	Fabiola	40	Separated 20	Works in a clothes factory	-	Incomplete secondary	CH\$65,000	3	Lower	None since birth of last child IUD previously	2	4 1 miscarriage	16	1	Yes, in the case of rape, deformed foetus or mother's life endangered	Non- participant
65	Catalina	39	Separated 17	Domestic worker	-	Incomplete primary	CH\$120,000	3	Middle	None Had IUD removed because painful	2	3 1 miscarriage	17	No	No	Non- participant
66	Rebeca	31	Separated 17	Occasional domestic work	-	Incomplete secondary	-	6	Working	None	4	6	17	2	No	Non- participant
67	Laura	28	Single	Occasional domestic/textile work	-	Primary	CH\$60,000	5	-	None	0	1	-	1	Yes	Non- participant
68	Jenifer	42	Separated under same roof 23	Catering	Mechanic	Incomplete secondary (about to complete)	CH\$250,000	5	-	Contraceptive pill	2	5	24	No	Yes	Non- participant
69	Claudia	38	Single	Computer data input	-	Incomplete secondary Course as bilingual secretary	CH\$135,000	4	Working	IUD	1	1	19	No	No	Non- participant
70	Viviana	32	Single, lives with mother ( above) and family	Shop assistant	-	Secondary, trained in catering	CH\$140,000	4	-	None	1	2	29	1	Only in the case of rape	Non- participant
71	Nubia	35	Cohabiting	Housewife	Street vendor	Incomplete secondary	CH\$90,000	4	Lower	IUD	4	4	15	No	No	Non- participant
72	Estela	30	Single	Factory worker	-	Incomplete secondary	CH\$85,000	4	Lower	Contraceptive pill	2	2	19	No	Only in the case of rape or deformed foetus	Non- participant
73	Doris (grand- daughter of 33 above)	15	Single	-	-	Incomplete secondary	-	-	-	None	1	1	15	No	No	Non- participant
74	Helena	21	Cohabiting	Housewife	-	Incomplete secondary	-	-	-	Contraceptive pill (IUD fell out)	1	1	16	No	No	Non- participant
75	Ruth	22	Married 18	Part-time caretaker	Taxi driver	Incomplete secondary	CH\$150,000 (H pays bills)	4	Middle	IUD	2	2	18	No	Yes	Non- participant
76	Lina (daughter of 8 above)	16	Single, lives with parents	Student	-	At secondary school	CH\$300,000	7	Lower middle	None	0	1	15	1	Yes	Occasional participant



77	Margarita (daughter of 1 above)	25	Married 21	Not working at present	Telephone technician	Secondary	CH\$120,000	4		IUD	2	3 1 miscarriage	21	-	Yes	Occasional participant
78	Magdalena	20	Single, lives with parents	Student	-	At university	Father on strike, usually CH\$120,000		Working	Condoms	0	-	-	No	Yes	Non-participant
79	Iris	18	Single, lives with parents	Looking for work	-	Secondary	CH\$120,000	5	Lower	None	0	-	-	No	No	Non-participant
80	Angelica	16	Single, lives with parents	-	-	At secondary school	CH\$160,000	5	Lower middle	None	0	-	-	No	Yes, if the woman does not have the means to look after it	Non-participant
81	Iliana (daughter of 53 above)	15	Single, lives with mother	-	-	At secondary school	Depends what father gives mother	6	Lower	None	0	-	-	No	No	Non-participant
82	Esmeralda	16	Single, lives with aunt (15 above)	-	-	Incomplete secondary	CH\$140,000	6	Lower	IUD	2	2	13	1 attempted	Only in the case of rape	Non-participant
83	Veronica	22	Married 18	Housewife	Technical drawer	Secondary Trained as nursery nurse	CH\$150,000	3 (9 in wider household)	Lower middle	IUD	1	1	17	No	Only in the case of rape	Non-participant
84	Mabel	18	Single, lives with aunt and family (x above)	Student, housework, part-time promotion work	-	Secondary, applying for university	CH\$150,000	3	Lower middle	Condoms	0	0	-	No	No	Non-participant
85	Olga	19	Married 18	Housewife	Factory worker	Incomplete secondary	CH\$140,000	4	Poor	IUD	1	1	17	No	No	Non-participant
86	Nancy	18	Cohabiting	Housewife	-	Secondary	-	3 (6 in wider household)	Lower	IUD	1	1	14	No	In the case of rape or where the foetus is deformed	Non-participant
87	Rosalba	19	Single, lives with parents	Factory worker	-	Secondary	CH\$200,000	5	Lower	None	0	0	-	No	In the case of rape or where foetus is deformed or woman's life is at risk	Non-participant
88	Lucero	17	Single, lives with parents	Student	-	At secondary school	CH\$150,000	4	Poor	None	0	0	-	No	In the case of rape or where the foetus is deformed	Non-participant

89	Rocio	19	Single, lives with parents	Shop Assistant	-	Secondary	CH\$220,000	5	Working	None	1	1	18	No	In the case of rape or where foetus is deformed or woman's life is at risk	Non- participant
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#### Appendix IV

##### **Original Spanish of Elena's description in Chapter 1 of the history of her población**

*Mis papás eran nortinos los dos, mi mamá era de Antofagasta de una oficina salitrera. Mi papá era de Iquique, y se vinieron los dos con su familia en enganche, se llaman enganches cuando las salitreras quebraron. Se fueron los gringos americanos y no habia necesidad de salir ya porque salió el salitre sintético, entonces no ocupaban el salitre y dejaron las salitreras abandonadas, se terminó el trabajo, entonces a toda esa gente el gobierno la enganchó, les dió pasajes para que se vinieran con todas sus cosas a Santiago. Esa fue una crisis que hubo en Chile en el 30 y tanto, fue grande la crisis económica, entonces ellos se vinieron en esos enganches. Mi papá conoció a mi mamá y se casaron y ahí después al año nací yo. Al nacer yo, mi papá trabajaba en el telégrafo, era empleado, a él le ofrecieron trasladarlo al sur, y se fue al sur con mi mamá y yo de 1 año, y viajamos. Duró poquito, duró hasta que yo tenía 5 años, y ahí mi mamá se vino conmigo porque mi a mi mamá le hacia mal el clima. Entonces nos vinimos y después mi papá vino a buscar a mi mamá y mi mamá no se quiso ir con él, entonces él se buscó una señora allá. Y empezó a tener familia allá y de ahí que nosotros quedamos aquí en Santiago con mis tíos. Llegamos a la casa de mi tía Tila en Gran Avenida y mi otra tía que vivía acá en La Legua dijo a mi mamá: 'Mira, tu tienes dos niños, así es que tienes que pensar en que algún día tienes que vivir sola, y tener tu casa. Yo donde vivo, en La Legua, hay un comité de allegados, y tienes que irte ahí a inscribirte para que tu tengas tu casa con tus chiquillos.' Y la inscribió y empezó a venir mi mamá todos los domingos a reunión, y un día dijo: "Ya, tenemos que irnos donde tu tía, porque un día en la noche nos vamos a tomar la calle'. Entonces nos trajo donde mi tía y ahí nos quedamos una noche, y un día dijeron. 'Ya, ahora hay que ir a tomarse la calle', oscuro, a media noche, todas teníamos que salir con un colchón, con una frazada, así es que nos vinimos todos y nos botamos a la calle, todas las mamás con los niños, con los hombres, éramos hartos, y nos ayudó el curita, el padre Marotto, él nos ayudó. Ahí empezamos a vivir en la calle, y ahí nos vinieron a ver toda la gente, las autoridades, los periodistas y se empezaron a movilizar hasta que nos entregaron estos sitios, y nosotros todos cooperamos para construir la población, estas casas. Como esta población como llegó aquí, tenemos una historia en común todas, nos conocemos desde chicas, entonces nos vemos como una familia, por ejemplo, corremos una lista cuando*

*alguien se muere y ayudamos a la persona con plata, y viene la vecina, por ejemplo, trae un poco de azucar, otra trae un poco de café y vienen al velorio y se amanecen en el velorio y después van todos al entierro en una micro, eso es una cosa así. Por ejemplo fuimos a un casamiento que hubo aquí, vinieron todas las vecinas antes a arreglar el auto de la novia, todas ayudando a poner las cintas, las flores, opinando, cualquier cosa que pase nos ayudamos. Los que llegan de afuera les da envidia la convivencia, la gente se siente apoyada por todos, todos sufrimos con todos.*

## Original Spanish of abortion case study from Chapter 6 (Gisela 46 L)

*Yo decidí el aborto y el aceptó. Empecé a buscar a una mujer que hiciera abortos, que contacte por una amiga de una amiga. La señora que conocía se había muerto y otra estaba presa. Así que primero participe en una protesta y al otro día fui a ponerme la sonda.*

*Yo participé quemando un neumático. Al otro día antes de ir a lo de la sonda llegaron los pacos, pero buscaban a otra persona y solo me insultaron. Mi marido Leo mueblista no estaba. Tenía dos meses de embarazo, me puse la sonda y volví a la casa. Me decía la señora que esperáramos dos meses y medio porque tenía muy poco, ella era una auxiliar de enfermería retirada, de 60 años. Me dijo ten cuidado esto es peligroso te pueden quedar los restos y si te la pones la sonda a los dos meses y medio te sale el feto completo, me dio toda una explicación que es verdad, yo ahora sé todo eso. Me tenía que sacar la sonda a las 24 horas. La tuve 48h. No pasaba nada no salía una gota de sangre nada. Estaba hinchada pero era el malestar. Finalmente me salía algo de agua rosada. Me alegré, le tuve que decir a mi cuñada que está en contra del aborto, otra tragedia aparte. Me quería llevar a la posta, ya bueno le dije, porque yo pensé que estaba todo listo, me saqué la sonda y la escondí y me fui a la posta Hospital del Salvador. Cuando llegué había una enfermera super buena y me atendió super bien. No le dije lo que pasaba que no sabía. Que no había menstruado no más. Bueno yo pensaba que iba lista para un "raspaje" y no. Te vamos a hacer un tratamiento para que sujetes me dijo el médico porque estas con síntomas de pérdida, o sea no estaba perdiendo todavía. Me dijo que la enfermera me iba poner un suero y a dar más cosas. Vuelves en dos días mas te vamos a dar reposo absoluto. Yo me dije ay lo van a sujetar. La enfermera llega detrás del médico y yo me bajo de la camilla y salgo arrancando y me perdí adentro del hospital. Me escondí en un baño, cuando estaba oscuro salí, afuera andaban preguntando por una tal rosa que había llegado con síntomas de pérdida. Nadie entendía porque no estaba. Mi cuñada no se había ido yo estaba sustada y tenía rabia, me sentía confusa en un torbellino, pérdida, escapándome, fue terrible. Volví al otro día donde la señora y a pesar de sus negativas me volvió a poner la sonda. Todo esto en tiempos de represión, a tal punto que decía que si me llevaban presa prefería perder la guagua en la tortura. Estuve tres días con la sonda puesta, yo tomando antibióticos, porque una matrona me había dicho antes de hacerte algo toma cloramfenicol 500 mm. uno cada 8 horas. No pasó nada y me saqué la sonda, pasaron*

*como 15 días. Ya habían pasado 30 días desde la primera aplicación de la sonda y un día me dio una depresión y me puse flaca y no hacía nada, sentada. Un día estoy sentada y siento algo que cae, pensé que era la menstruación, fui al baño y lo que cayó fue el feto completo y me vienen las culpas, y no sabía que iba a pasar. Yo lo lavé y lo miraba y lo movía y me dio un sentimiento de culpa espantoso, todavía me dan nervios cuando me acuerdo. Estaba sola y caminaba en el baño. Una amiga pasó por la ventana me vio y golpeó la puerta, la dejé entrar y le dije que me había resultado, me puse a llorar y en ese momento comienza la hemorragia, me llevaron a la posta con mi marido.*

*Llego el médico y me dice, “Ya que te hiciste?” Un medico joven. Nada doctor. Yo ya sabia que si uno no dice que se hizo algo no se puede comprobar. Y eso es verdad. Ni un médico lo puede comprobar a menos que uno hable. Y eso la señora me lo había enseñado y era cierto, yo había reunido datos en forma dicimulada para que no me pillaran y me dijeran cosas. Así que al médico le nege todo. Con Ana me había puesto de acuerdo un mes antes, que si me dejaban adentro, en cualquier cosa que me llevara me pusiera los cloranfenicol, porque como uno no confiesa que se hizo algo no le ponen antibióticos y uno tiene que llevar. Al otro día me fueron a ver al hospital, la tensión era grande, fue una tortura, el medico me dice ‘bueno si tu no me dices lo que te hiciste yo no te voy a poder atender’. Punto uno, mentira numero uno, porque na que ver que uno hable o no, si ha otros medicos. Me tuvieron hasta el otro día sin atenderme. Tenía hemorragia a intervalos breves. A las seis de la mañana despues me hicieron el raspaje. Yo había llegado a las ocho de la noche. Yo en ese sentido encuentro que mi cuerpo es super sano, super bueno mi cuerpo. A la una A.M. se me desato la hemorragia y el médico ahí sin hacer nada, por horas. ‘Ya pos me decia, dime porque yo no voy a hacer nada y te vas a morir’ Y me trataba como a una ignorante. ‘Si no me dices que te hiciste como voy a saber que darte...’ Gente ignorante puede creer una cosa así. Pero yo estaba aterrada y yo ya veía que me iba a morir. Tenía un terror espandoso y me dolía el estomago cuando me venían las hemorragias. Sentía que se me iba todo... hasta que el tipo se digno a ponerme la anestesia. Salí del raspaje y en la sala de recuperación yo te aseguro que el médico pidió los turnos para perseguirme. Yo he trabajado en hospital y yo se que un medico más de dos turnos seguidos no está, después cambian, pero este tipo estuvo tres días y los tres días iba para allá y me decia*

*'dime', iba el a tomarme la temperatura, y eso lo hacen las enfermeras. 'Ah-decia-todavía no haces fiebre, todavía no tienes infección pero ya se va a declarar.' Me asustaba. 'Porque cuando se declare la infección va ha ser la feroz de grande que yo ahí no voy a poder hacer nada y te vas a morir no más, así que dime que todavía estas a tiempo que te hiciste' 'quien te lo hizo.' Y yo siempre negando. No le sé el nombre. Nunca lo pude saber porque no me sentía capaz de preguntar. Me miraba y me decía 'sabes que esto es un crimen?' 'Te vas a infectar y vas a ir presa si tienes suerte porque a lo mejor te mueres, así que dime quien más te ayudó.' Insistía, insistía.*

*Un día antes que me dieran de alta me llevo un feto en un frasco chico. Me decía 'este es el tuyo'. Yo sabia que no era porque yo lo habia mirado tanto. Menos mal porque sino yo me hubiera cagado más de la siquis. Yo lo miraba y me daba vueltas para otro lado lo único que tenía eran ganas de llorar y llorar, de estar con alguien, mi hermana, mi amiga, estaba sola, sola. Una mujer que estaba ahí incluso le pegaban cachetadas en la cara, como cuando uno le pega a un niño, le pegaban en el poto. Fue terrible como me trataron. Yo siempre digo ese medico me torturó en nombre de su famoso dios... yo después de esa experiencia comencé a meterme con mujeres que querían hacerse abortos, en ese tiempo comenzó todo, talleres de salud para las mujeres, como lavarse el poto para que no les salgan hongos, como secarselo, cuestiones super simples que la gente no sabe. Les enseñaba del aparato reproductivo etc.*

*Ahi comenzaban a salir historias que me contaban a mi no mas. Porque en grupos las mujeres no cuentan si se han hecho un aborto o si se quieren hacer un aborto. Ahí me dí cuenta de lo terrible que es el problema.*

## Appendix V

### Women talking about pregnancy, childbirth and reproductive health

Ortensia (67 P) suffered a prelapsad womb after giving birth to ten children. She also put this down to the fact that *tanto que yo me apretaba siempre la guatita por la parte de abajo, de la vagina, para indisponernme* (she was always tightening the lower part of her stomach and vagina to try to provoke a miscarriage).

Juana (39 P) had cancer of the uterus just after the birth of her son. She said that she was treated well in the Barros Luco hospital. She said that she still has inflammation in her uterus but she does not believe that her IUD has caused this.

Patricia (33 L) had cancer of the uterus and was told that it would be good to get pregnant. Her husband also wanted a child, but they had not been able to conceive after trying for seven years. They said that she should try for another two years with the help of fertility treatment, after which time they would perform a hysterectomy. She received sperm from a donor, but said that she was frightened by the feeling of having another man's child inside her. That was part of why she rejected it, as well as the fact that in the circumstances she herself did not want to have a child; it was her husband that wanted it: *el ponía el dinero y yo el cuerpo* (he put in the money and I volunteered my body). Patricia (33 L) said she was careful to have a smear test every year.

When Julia (42 P) had her youngest daughter she was told that she was going to have a *menopausia precoz*, premature menopause, which is indeed what happened and she suffered bad symptoms (dizziness and depressions). She is taking hormones.

Mercedes (64 P) said that she had her menopause when she was forty-five. She had never had a smear test, *de tonta* (out of foolishness), *por no subirme a la camilla y para las patas pa' arriba* (not wanting to get up and put my legs up in the air). Genoveva (41 OP) had a *menopausia precoz* (premature menopause).

Ortensia (67 P) said that her menopause was not problematic. She had headaches but she put this down to bad diet. She also suffered with rheumatism and arthritis, particularly in her feet, which she felt was caused by her having been a street vendor for many years.

Carolina (40 P) had a smear test every year, *yo corro a hacermelo, es mas exijo que me lo hagan* (I run to have it done, it's more that I ask for it than that they do it). As a result, she had a cyst, detected and operated upon.



Estela (30 NP) said that she had a smear test every year. Lola (34 OP) said the same. Claudia (38 NP) the same again. She mentioned the fact that in the *policlinico* they were free. Gaby also had a smear test just over a year ago.

Manuela (49 L) has had 10 pregnancies, 2 of which ended in miscarriages. She has had osteoporosis and arthritis in all the joints in her body, as a result of decalcification. She said that she did not take calcium or vitamins or drink extra milk. She had also suffered from irritable colon and heart failure but has no health provision.

Rosario (49 L) also has no health provision. She described the attention in the *consultorio* as '*como las pelotas*' (terrible). She said that the paramedics treated people the worst: 'they tell you off, they get angry, they shout at you.' She thought that it was denigrating having to arrive at 6am. It was dangerous being on the streets at that time and cold. When asked in what way she thought the attention should be improved she said that she thought that the women personnel should have more *identidad de clase* (identification with their class). They too are from the *poblacion*, she observed. They should treat you as their equals with respect. She said that the gynaecological treatment was better and that the *matrona* explained things if you asked. She had never been asked her opinion in the *consultorio*. She was aware that they gave talks in the *consultorio* on hypertension, but she didn't go. She described herself as having good health, although in fact she is diabetic and suffers from asthma and with her nerves. She often missed activities because she was unwell and did not work because her health would not permit it. She said that each individual was responsible for their own health problems but she was asked more often than anyone else in the household.

Lola (34 OP) observed that the further south from the centre of Santiago you lived, the southern part of Santiago being poorer, the worse the attention was. For this reason she, like many others, used a false address so that she could attend a public clinic in the centre. Gaby also perceived a variability in the quality of treatment, saying: *segun como te ven te tratan: si te ven pobre mas mal te tratan* (they treat you according to how you look: if you look poor they treat you badly).

Teresa (38 L) said that she found the treatment from the professionals at the *consultorio* she attends very good, although the auxiliary staff treated people badly. Nora, describing the attention she received when she went into the Barros Luco hospital, also complained that the auxiliary staff treated her badly. The *matrona* pinched her because she had cramps, although the doctor was *bien humano*. In the *consultorio*, she found the attention poor, saying that the staff treated you as ignorant, believing that

*por no pagar no tenemos derecho a preguntar* (because you are not paying you have no right to ask questions) and that if you demanded your rights you ran the risk of being thrown out.

Fernanda (53 P) has no health provision. She observed that the Ministry of Health said that health was a right, but that you even had to pay to have a smear test done. To obtain free health treatment one had to have a *tarjeta de indigente*, which are only given to those who are out of work and/or who live in a house without a bathroom and without running water. She said that they tried to treat themselves at home, and when she had to, she saw a *matrona* at the *consultorio* who was a friend of hers.

In relation to her first pregnancy Monica (46 L) said that the attention she received at the *consultorio* in La Legua was *dura*, hard. When the *matrona* she saw her in the queue for pregnant women, she said to her: *Y esta cabra chica que esta haciendo aqui en la cola?* (And this young kid what is she doing in the queue?). She felt humiliated by this and on every other occasion she went for check ups. For her other pregnancies she attended the *consultorio* in San Joaquin and described the attention as good. She went to *charlas*, talks, preparing one for childbirth and also providing information about contraceptives.

Jana (38 L) said that the whole experience of giving birth was *feo* (ugly), because everything was dirty. When she was giving birth she was told not to scream. After giving birth she was placed with her baby in a bed with another woman and her baby and was unable to wash herself. She felt that she had to *entregar* (hand over) her body to the hospital personnel and felt frightened that she would be thrown out if she so much as complained. She had *Fonasa*, health provision. Genoveva (61 OP) also had to share a bed with another woman after giving birth.

Claudia (38 NP) said that, because she tried to deny to herself that she was pregnant, she did not go for a check up but after the child was born, she decided to go. First she went to a neighbour who was a nurse, but she then had a cyst. She said that the examinations she had to have were expensive and her economic situation was bad. Her neighbours advised her about the *consultorio* and she went there. They treated her immediately because by this stage she was seriously ill. She had no health provision.

Veronica (22 NP) said that when she gave birth the quality of attention she received was poor. When she arrived at hospital they weighed her and measured her then shaved and washed her. It was not at all private, she said, and the only thing she wanted to do was to leave. She regretted having been at all. It was completely dark. She

cried out and was told off by angry auxiliaries. She gave birth in a tiny space. They took the baby away and then told her to get up so that the womb would return to its position. She passed her hand over her stomach, but the *matrona* decided that she had not done it properly and rubbed her hand hard across her stomach, hurting her. She did not see the child until the afternoon. She was not able to get up, but there was no one around and she needed to go to the toilet, so after waiting three hours she got up herself, causing her to haemorrhage. She called for her family to collect her, having decided that she would be better cared for at home. Elena (49 L) also found the treatment she received when she gave birth deficient. She said that the nurses ordered the women about telling them to get up and make their beds or wash themselves. The place was dirty, as were the sheets, and it was very cold. Viviana (32 NP) said that she did not ask anything when she went into hospital to give birth, because *la tratan mal a una* (they treat you badly). She said that she gave birth at 5am, but did not see her baby until 12pm that night. She was very worried. She said that she was sewn up *bruscamente*, brusquely. She was unable to sit down or go to the toilet. She was distressed because they had left her in such a mess.

Consuelo (50 L) said that she did not go to the *consultorio* in La Granja because you had to arrive very early in order to get a number to be seen. She payed to see a doctor privately. In her view, the major health problems for women in her community concerned mental health. She saw this as being due to excessive work, having many children, and *machista* husbands. She herself had taken *pastillas para los nervios* (tablets for nerves). In order to change the situation she believed that women had to *hacer un chequeo de uno misma* (reflect upon themselves) in a group. By sharing the problems with other women one learned to confront them better, she said. The group reached conclusions about how to resolve problems that one could not have reached alone: In this way one learned how to get one's rights respected when dealing with people such as doctors. She said that she owed this awareness to *Tierra Nuestra* who she felt had made her *hacerme valer* (value myself).

Rosa (32 L) said that she went to a private clinic to get her IUD removed because in the *policlinico* they asked you if it was really necessary to remove it and you had to go when you are menstruating to have one put in or taken out. She had had it in for six years. She said that she had Fonasa public health insurance so it was not too expensive. When she subsequently gave birth to her second child the attention was free.

Manuela (49 L) said that she didn't have confidence in doctors. She had a bad experience with an IUD. She was in so much pain that she could not sit down and was unable to have sex with her husband but nobody would examine her at the *consultorio*. She spent two years like that before being examined at the Cruz Roja clinic where they discovered that the IUD was out of place and that her womb had prolapsed. She subsequently had a *precoz menopause*. She had also had a bad experience in the Barros Luco hospital after a miscarriage. They did a *raspaje* (scraping out the contents of the womb) and she had to stay there for two months until her sister took her to San Bernardo because she felt that she was not being treated well. When she had contraceptive injections these produced *nodulos*, lumps, which she needed to have treated in hospital, but she was too afraid to go.

Luisa (50 L) initially said that the attention she received during the pregnancies and births of her children was good, but then described how, when she gave birth to her first child on the 25<sup>th</sup> December, no-one attended to her. She said that she nearly bled to death and had to stay in hospital for a month subsequent to the birth; no one explained anything or apologised to her. She had a *precoz menopause*, but did not suffer any adverse symptoms. Ortensia (67 P) said that she was happy with the treatment she received at the Barros Luco, *siempre me atendieron bien tanto a mi como a las demas* (they always treated me well, and everyone else too). Mercedes (64 P) also described the treatment she received as good, saying that she never did anything *para que me retaran*, which would make them tell her off. *Me aguantaba* (I just kept quiet).

Blanca (37 L) said that her experience of giving birth in the Barros Luco was a nightmare: 'it was like a butcher's,' she said, 'everything covered in blood.' The second birth was difficult because it was in 1986 during a time of protest and her husband had been detained in prison. The hospital was full of *milicos* and there was only one doctor. She was in great pain and resorted to techniques she had learned at a workshop to keep herself calm. She used the *consultorio* to control her IUD and for smear tests. She had used an IUD for 10 years and it had been changed 3 times, without any problems. Apart from this she would go and see a doctor privately if she had any other health problems, because she felt that the doctors in the *consultorio* did not have time to treat her properly.

Yamilia (33 L) described the attention she received in her *consultorio* during her pregnancies as *pesima* (dreadful). She used to have to wait at least three hours to be

seen. She decided to go to the *consultorio* at the Sor Teresa hospital for check ups during her last pregnancy.

Diana (46 L) described her first experience of giving birth as *traumatica*, traumatic. She said that she was not allowed to cry out although she was in pain, because the nurse would tell her off. Her second child was born during a period of strikes under the Allende government. The doctor did not arrive in time and the baby suffocated and was born dead. She fell into a depression. She distinguished between having chosen to have this child and the last child, which had been *una casualidad*, an accident.

Constanza (39 P) said that when she went to the *consultorio* for check ups during her pregnancies the nurses never spoke with her about contraceptives, and she did not ask. It was not until after the birth of her fourth child that they gave her information about contraceptives. She said that after the birth of her third child she had wanted to be sterilised. She was 26 and the doctor told her that she could not be sterilised as she was too young. She was not provided with any alternative form of contraception. At a subsequent visit to the *consultorio* the *matrona* talked about fitting her with an IUD and told her to come back when she was menstruating to have it fitted. When she came back, she was already pregnant again: *estaba lista para la foto otra vez* (I was ready for the photo again), she joked. She said that the father of her children had behaved well during this period of time. He had always accompanied her and brought her back from hospital: the problem was *su senora*, his wife. She had not had a smear test done for eight years because she was frightened. She said that this fear was due to the fact that it hurt so much when they took out her IUD. During the time that she had the IUD in she did not go to have it checked, she said, because she did not have a partner. Now she wasn't using any form of contraceptive.

Esmeralda (16 NP) had both her children by caesarian section, in the first case because she was not dilating. She said that she had been treated well, although she felt angry at the doctor's comments that she was very young to be having a baby.

Elena (49 L) also said that the nurses and midwives told the women off for crying out when they were giving birth. She said that she chatted with them and because of this they treated her well, *hice que me respetaron* (I made them treat me with respect), she said. She said that she used *tecnicas* (techniques/strategies) so as not to suffer so much. She thought that the nurses told the women off because they were tired, tense and angry. At that time she had Fonasa public health insurance.

Ruth (22 NP) had no health provision, although previously she belonged to an *Isapre*, she does not have a *tarjeta de indigente*<sup>5</sup> either, because her husband, who is a taxi-driver, had a car. When she took the children to the doctor, she had to pay. When she was pregnant the first time she went initially for a check-up at the *consultorio* in San Joaquin, but the comments made by staff put her off going back: what are you doing here? You should be going out, dancing. She told them that she was there because she wanted to be there, but she did not go back because she didn't want to be told off by the midwives. As a result, she paid to be treated elsewhere and was treated well. She also took her children to be treated at the Red Cross as on one occasion a nurse at the *consultorio* had hit her son because he didn't keep quiet. When asked what suggestions she would make as to how to improve the attention in the *consultorio*, she said that the functionaries should be more sensitive and prepared to work with poor people. The poor asked for things and they, because they have a title, are *frios y prepotentes*, cold and insolent, she explained.

Gabriela (40 OP) said that in her *consultorio* the doctors treated her well but not the auxiliaries. She gave birth to all three children in the Barros Luco. She said that she was treated well in relation to the first two births and had not had serious problems, but with the third birth they gave her *la raquidea* (an epidural), although she had told them not to. She refused a caesaria and had a normal birth. She had some private *Isapre* health cover via her husband. She had anaemia, haemorrhages due to miomas in her ovaries (which needed to be operated on) and an irritable colon. She had at different times taken anti-depressants and tranquilizers. She said that the doctors did not explain anything to her and, although she asked questions to get as much information as she could, she felt that they were negligent in this respect. When asked who took responsibility for health problems at home she said that it was always her.

Nubia (35 NP) also gave birth to her children in the Barros Luco and said that the treatment that she had received was good. She had not had a smear test done for five years. When asked if it bothered her to go to see the *matrona* she said that it did not. It is because she is afraid that, if she goes, they will take out her IUD. When I said that she had a right to decide over her body she said that that was how it ought to be, but she did not have confidence that that was what happened in reality.

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<sup>5</sup> This is granted to an individual who is deemed too poor to pay for treatment.

Jenifer (42 NP) recalled her first birth as problematic. The midwives were pressing hard on her stomach when a doctor appeared and saw that the umbilical cord had become entangled around the baby's neck, she had to have a caesarian and an epidural. She was left with a weak heart as a result of the effort. Her second child had been delivered using forceps and, again, she had had an epidural. She said that they had left her in a terrible mess by cutting her open. She had had to have twenty-eight stitches and was left badly scarred.

Ximena (24 OP) gave birth to her little boy in the Barros Lucos and said that she had nothing to complain about as to the way she had been treated. She had had a caesarian. After this she tried using the contraceptive pill but it gave her thrombosis so the *matrona* in the *consultorio* fitted her with an IUD, which she had had no problems with. Juana (39 P) was also positive about the attention she received in the *consultorio*, where they detected a tumour. Like Juana (39 P), Constanza (39 P) felt that she had received good attention, in spite of being seen as an *indigente* (too poor to pay). However, she was too frightened to have a smear test done.

Isabel (29 P) compared her experiences of reproduction with those of her mother, who married when she was 15 having got pregnant by her brother. She then *paso la vida embarazada* (spent life pregnant) and being beaten by Isabel's (29 P) father. *Fue una vida de sufrimiento* (it was a life of suffering) reflected Isabel (29 P). She described her own experiences of childbirth as good. Both births were by caesarian, the only difficulty she had experienced was that there was a strike at the hospital at the time of the second birth and she was left alone after the caesarian, unable to move.

(Nb. Generally women are unable to rest/recover from childbirth. Lucia (59 P) (10 children) described giving birth to her eighth child: she left her eldest son in charge while she went into hospital and returned home within the space of five hours to begin washing the nappies of her other young children. She said that she barely experienced the process of giving birth because she was so worried about her other children).

Alicia (29 P) had been diagnosed as having cancer of the uterus. She described having had to stay in hospital for five days after the first biopsy was carried out. The doctor began and was then called off elsewhere and his assistant took over. The doctor then returned and told him he was doing it wrong and, as a result, she found herself in great pain. Apart from this experience she said she felt happy with the treatment she had received. She also suffered from a hernia, osteoporosis and *bocio* (swelling of the throat). Berta (38 P) also had cancer of the uterus. When asked about whether she had

had regular smear tests prior to the cancer being diagnosed, she said that she had and that they had always revealed inflammation but she was never diagnosed as having cancer. She described suffering haemorrhages, fainting and serious pain for six months. She was initially diagnosed as suffering an early menopause. After collapsing on one occasion she went into hospital, where she was treated terribly because the doctor suspected that she had tried to have an abortion. She said that it was clear from her papers that she had not tried to have an abortion. She said that she ran away from the hospital at 1 am even though she was in great pain because she could no longer stand how she was being treated: *a mi me trataron de asesina y un lote de insultos mas, me hicieron un raspaje asi, a sangre fria. Yo tenia terror de volver a ir, si yo hubiese seguido atendiendome ahi me habria muerto* (they treated me as a murderess and other insults, they carried out a *raspaje*, just like that, cold-bloodedly. I was terrified of going back, I would have died if I had stayed). She said that this experience had left her psychologically scarred. Subsequently she was diagnosed as having cancer of the uterus and given three months to live before being treated at a private foundation specialising in cancer. She had had three operations to her womb, her ovaries and navel.



## Appendix VI

### Case Studies of sexuality and bodily awareness workshops

#### Case Study I : 'Sexuality as a human right', a workshop conducted by the women's group 'Millaray'

The workshop was lead by Elena (49 L) and Loreto (40 L), both *dirigentas* from the women's groups *Millaray* and *Maria Figueroa*, respectively. It was held in the front room of Ortensia (67 P) (67 P)'s house, where, after the usual greeting of kisses and embraces, we all sat in a long oval around Elena (49 L) and Loreto (40 L). For the first exercise they put a large piece of paper on the wall with an outline of a human figure on it. We were asked to name parts of the body, which were drawn on to the figure. We were then asked to explain what function we thought that part of the body we served. Flor (47 P) named the fallopian tubes, but said that she did not know what they were for. Mercedes (64 P) said that the heart was for everything It is there in order to live, she said; it isn't possible to live without it. Soraya (26 P) said that knees were for walking and taking exercise. Ana Maria (42 P) said that the ovaries were 'to unite with a partner'. Maria P (42 P) didn't know what the kidneys were for. Lucia (59 P) explained that nails were 'to kill fleas, to scratch and to paint with nail polish'. Katy (26 P) did not know what the navel was. Rossana (NGO) said that the ear was to protect the hearing, to listen with and also to feel. Ortensia (67 P) said that the *conchita*,<sup>6</sup> or vulva, is the woman's 'underneath bit'. Veronica (55 P) named the breasts and said that they were something that she saw 'as her own', which she went on to describe as,

Something that one never touches, although they are something so marvellous one should touch them and give them affection. They are for breast-feeding your children. It is something very important to have because, with breast-feeding, children grow big and strong; there is no milk that can replace it.

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<sup>6</sup> Literally 'little shell.'

Sandra (59 P) named the feet and said they were to walk with. When pressed by Elena (49 L) and Loreto (40 L) as to where they were for walking to, she said to go forwards and backwards; to run; to move from one place to another (to the other block for instance). Maggie (26 P) said that the eyes were to see and observe. The nose said Isabel (29 P) was to smell with and to catch cold with. Nancy (37 P) said that the purpose of hair was to make you look pretty. I named the hands and said that they were to touch and to touch yourself with, to eat, to do things with and caress with. Jana (38 L) named the mouth and said that it was to whistle with, to eat and speak with, and to caress and kiss with. She described it as a sensitive organ, saying that she was thinking in terms of her mouth with another person's mouth. It is also to smoke with and to drink beer with, she added. Rosario (49 L) identified the skin as being important to protect the insides with, but also to be touched and to feel pleasure, referring to the pleasure of 'having your skin touched by the skin of another'. She added that you needed to protect it in the sun to make it more beautiful. It was also there to put perfume on and to breathe with via its pores. Loreto (40 L) said that the brain is 'to think with, to dream, to analyse good things and bad things'. Elena (49 L) said that, on the basis of what she has learnt, she now saw the vagina as 'an interior muscle that's only function was to receive a man's penis for sexual contact and it didn't serve (her) any purpose whatsoever. Its other function was 'to expel a child when one gives birth'. She added that it was important, but not that important for her, 'It is [important] when one is giving birth, but there are also babies born by caesarean'.

Loreto (40 L) and Elena (49 L) explained that the purpose of the exercise had been to clarify how we saw our bodies and the importance we gave to different organs. They pointed out that some of us named parts of the body without knowing what they were for; we just knew that they were there, revealing a lack of understanding of our bodies. They drew attention to the sensitive qualities of parts of the body, when we have usually been taught to think solely in terms of their functional qualities, as in the case of breasts being for breast-feeding. Elena (49 L) explained that

Because of our lack of awareness we are prevented from leading a more pleasurable life, both with ourselves and with others, because we do not even have the power of knowledge about our bodies. We do not stop to think about ourselves, we are always thinking about others. For example, when we make ourselves look nice and put on make up we do it for others and not for ourselves.

We wait to be touched by our partners without thinking that we can also caress ourselves. When we get washed we rub ourselves down in a hurry and rush out as quickly as possible to get on with what we have to do in the house and for others. We don't stop to look at ourselves in the mirror, to look at our bodies and love them; we don't have this incorporated into our way of being.

Elena (49 L) explained that this is what they wanted to draw attention to. For us to begin to get to know our bodies and afterwards to recognise them and to know why we feel sensations. To realise that we feel things with our bodies and that it does not have to be others that make us feel things, but rather that we ourselves have that power. Loreto (40 L) added that we should question why it is that we wait for others to value our bodies; 'why is it so difficult to accept our bodies as they are with their wrinkles and bulges?' Nancy (37 P) asked why that happened with women. Loreto (40 L) explained that it is because of a lack of awareness of our bodies and the sensations they feel and because we have a culture that has always been there - the church, the schools, the media - that has taught us to be that way. 'What is the type of body that has value?' she asked rhetorically, 'a body that is young, beautiful, slim and tall, like hers,' she said pointing at me, 'and that isn't our body. Chilean women are fat and short.' She talked about women's obsessions with losing weight - leading in the most extreme cases to anorexia and bulimia - and said that this too was to do with seeking to be valued by others. Instead 'we need to understand our bodies and love and value ourselves and this implies having power and a different way of living life'. She explained that accepting our bodies meant that we were 'parada', (we 'stand', vis-a-vis life), with more security. That is not something that can be learnt in one day, she added; it is a whole *proceso* and this workshop is the start of something that we will continue to develop little by little.

Elena (49 L) introduced the next exercise, which involved responding to the questions: what is a right or what right/s have you heard about? The women answered freely when and if something occurred to them. Answers included, 'that which belongs to me'; 'one's husband is a right'; 'the respect which is owed one'; 'a right to life'; 'a right to education'; 'the right to make mistakes'; 'a right to rest, because the housewife is never able to rest'; 'a right to space'; 'for me a right is what I want to do'; 'that which I need'; 'a right to culture.'

The next question was what, for you, is sexuality? Most of the women understood sexuality as meaning, 'the union between a man and a woman'. Mercedes (64 P) expanded on this saying,

I don't like sexuality... not with the partner I have, after so many years of abuse.... it is something brutal. So now I'd like to be able to forget about it and be alone. It's not important to me. Of course sexuality is nice when two people understand each other, but not for me.

When Elena (49 L) suggested that the pleasure of receiving affection from a son or daughter is also part of sexuality, Ortensia (67 P) said she didn't like affection, she 'can't stand it'; it makes her angry although she doesn't want to be like this. It is enough that 'my dear husband (said with irony) comes near me with all that he has been to me,' she says, adding that it shouldn't be that way. She believed that things were like that because 'one is not in communication with others' and because 'one is taught this as a girl: it is not an open culture, everything has to be hidden and at my age I'm not going to change now.' Before Elena (49 L) had chance to finish saying that that is what we were all there for, several other women began to express similar experiences, that everything to do with the body made them feel ashamed and embarrassed. Elena (49 L) explained that this was because our parents taught us that the body is something dirty, something bad and sinful, when in fact it is not. Those that are Catholic have been taught that their body is the temple of God, 'but how can it be', she asked, 'if that body is dirty, bad and sinful?' 'The body is nice, it is something healthy and beautiful', she said. Julia (42 P) interjected saying that, like the others, she used to equate sex with her husband with *sexualidad* and it is because of the way their husbands have behaved that they experience a sense of rejection and shame in relation to their sexuality, when *sexualidad* is really something else which has to do with sensations.

We went on to talk about when sexuality begins and ends. Those women who equated sexuality with a sexual relation with a man also saw sexuality as being closely connected with reproduction and therefore as beginning in adolescence or with the first menstruation. Others, generally the older participants said that it was 'something we are born with and die with' and Lucia (59 P) added that it was 'something we have throughout our body, not just parts of it'. Elena (49 L) said that the problem is that our sexuality is *bloqueada*, blocked. When we have had sad and embittering experiences,

we accumulate the frustration of the pain and injustice we have suffered. Lucia (59 P) responded, saying that we receive sex badly the way it is, that is, sex with a man, *la pesca, la aprovecha y punto, asi es*, (he takes her, takes advantage of her and that is the end of it). As a result, Lucia (59 P) cannot stand to get close to anyone, least of all a man.

Elena (49 L) said how nice it is to be caressed and hugged by a friend. Flor (47 P) said that it was good to be embraced with sweet words that make one feel younger. Jana (38 L) referred to the bad experiences which the women had had which she saw as having to do with the cultural messages they had received from the family, school, the church and the media, and from men who had also been brought up in the same culture who did not know any other way of relating to women. She said that we did not know how to demand our rights, the right to love, to have sexual relations (or not to when we did not want to). As we didn't recognise these as rights we couldn't make them valued. She emphasised the need to pass on the things we had learnt to our husbands and partners because they do not have the opportunity to talk about these things. She acknowledged that, at least in the context of our discrimination, we had the opportunity to talk about these things; to 'socialise our feelings'; to begin to recognise our feelings. She saw this as also being about sexuality: how one related to and perceived the rest of the world; how one expressed oneself, not just in a sexual relationship; how, when you listened to a song, you floated and, in your imagination, you could dream and feel and your skin could also feel like that. It is with the body that one touches life, she said, and we must listen to it.

One of the women voiced the difficulty of sharing things with husbands who were not really interested. Elena (49 L) said that they too had problems and were never going to be open about their lack of awareness; we had to find subtle ways of teaching them things. Loreto (40 L) added that we have also been taught that the body, mind, spirit and sexuality are all separate when in fact we are *integrales*, an interconnected whole.

The next question we were asked to consider was whether we felt that we had decision making power over our bodies. Mercedes (64 P) said that she didn't feel that she had decided to have 10 children, because it caused suffering for her and the children because of the low standard of living they had. Thanks to one of the other women in the room

she had only had 10, otherwise she would have had more. Nancy (37 P), the president of the group, said that she felt that things were different now. She said that in days gone by, women couldn't make decisions about their bodies; they couldn't decide how many children to have or when to have sexual relations. That was the old culture when the man was *despota*, a despot, who felt he had a right over you; that you were his to have sex with when he wanted. Loreto (40 L) asked her if she felt that this situation has changed. Nancy (37 P) said not 100%, but about 60%. Several women disagreed. Loreto (40 L) asked her if she was talking about her own personal situation. Nancy (37 P) said that she was, but she felt that there was more understanding about women in general than before. Loreto (40 L) said that you have to think about the subtleties, the subtlety with which a man, for example, decides when to have sexual relations and the *chantaje* the employs to have sex when he wants to. At this point Nancy (37 P) and Isabel (29 P) both spoke up in defence of men generally and their husbands in particular, with some of the other women disagreeing. Isabel (29 P) said that her father used to say that, if she used a contraceptive, it would give her cancer and so she didn't and her father had sex with her whenever he wanted and she had 12 children. She compared this with her own situation, saying that she and her husband talked things through with mutual respect and without getting angry. She added that when the woman has her *etapa*, stage, meaning menstruation, she shouldn't have sexual relations. Jana (38 L) asked why? Was it because he didn't like to have sex at this time? Isabel (29 P) said no, that it was by mutual agreement on the basis that when she is 'like that' he doesn't like it and neither does she. She added that when she is 'like that' it is sacred and her husband respected that. Veronica (54 P) said she thought that a period was something so intimate that one shouldn't share it with a man. Elena (49 L) interjected that he shares his semen with her. Nancy (37 P) also expressed the view that she thought having intercourse when a woman was menstruating was *sucio*, dirty. Jana (38 L) challenged her on this point and said that menstrual blood was cleansing and that some women felt more pleasure at this time of the month. Loreto (40 L) said that really it was a matter of personal choice; that Nancy (37 P) viewed her periods in a different way to those who had sexual intercourse during their periods and felt more secure because they couldn't get pregnant, and it might be worth her while considering why it is that she views them as something so intimate and sacred. Jana (38 L) said that there are cultures where women who are menstruating meet together and people come to consult them about crops and such like. As far as respect was concerned, if a man didn't touch you when you were menstruating,

but the next day he treated you badly, it is hard to know what kind of respect that is. She also pointed out that he shared his body fluids with her and asked what the difference was? Nancy (37 P) answered that it had to do with being a woman and remained fairly unconvinced by what she had heard.

Flor (47 P) felt that it was important to say that you could get pregnant during your period. She had on two occasions, and *lo mas diveretido* (the funniest thing) was, that she had never felt pleasure with her husband. She explained the relation had been *por parte de el no mas*, just for his pleasure. There was a moment's uncomfortable silence, but little response to what Flor (47 P) had just said.

Lucia (59 P) said that before it was as if men bought women. Now it is not so much like that; the very fact that we were able to meet together as we were reflected this. 20 years ago we didn't meet like this. Loreto (40 L) disagreed. Lucia (59 P) said that we may have met up, but to talk about the *junta de vecinos* or matters concerning the *centros de madres*, we met up and talked about survival, not like now, sex was a theme that was prohibited, and things had changed a bit. Loreto (40 L) insisted that the women's movement began at the end of the last century and that the fight for the right to abortion began early on, which means that women were already meeting together to talk about these themes. Lucia (59 P) conceded this but said that it was something fairly hidden. It wasn't in the open the idea that men *Te apabullaba*, that they kept you down. Loreto (40 L) asked Lucia (59 P) if she thought that anyone was really interested in what they were talking about and did she really believe that the things they were talking about were in the public light? Lucia (59 P) still insisted that the kind of meeting we were having did not use to take place. Elena (49 L) suggested that perhaps such discussions had taken place, but at a different level. Lucia (59 P) agreed that it was women *de por alla, con mas cultura*, referring to the women 'up there' in an area of Santiago that was more high class. *Nosotras eramos las incultas*, we were the ignorant uncultured ones, she said. We could now say *poto* (bottom/vulva), *pene*, (penis) and talk about sex, which we never could before.

Jana (38 L) said that she wanted to draw attention to the fact that the women in the group, as *mujeres organizadas*, were a minority and that most young women were still educated by a woman who had the same history of repression that we were talking about. She felt that young people today were not more liberal in terms of sexual culture,

although perhaps they had more information. She referred to the fuss that had been made about advertisements concerning AIDS and how cryptic they were, making no reference to condoms. Everything was *oculto*, hidden. Advertisements for women's sanitary towels 'for those special days' were the same. It as though we should not talk about sex or menstruation. She referred to the fact that menstruation is often referred to as being *indispuesta*, or indisposed, when she isn't really, or that she is *enferma*, or sick, when it isn't an illness; it is part of a woman's cycle. She agreed with Lucia (59 P) that it was only recently that we had begun to address these issues. Various women began to talk about how they believed that men also had a cycle and that they ought to meet up and talk about these things too.

As a souvenir of the workshop, each woman was given a paper with a motif of a smiling, plump, naked woman on it with a right written on the back. Each woman was asked to read out 'her' right and explain what she thought it meant. After each woman had done this Elena (49 L) made her a present of that right saying it was 'hers'. Constanza (39 P) began with: 'The right to exercise sexuality without having genital relations.' Constanza (39 P) said that this was because you could have sexual relations in many ways, looking, talking, touching. She said that she and her partner talked and she touched him and he touched her, including her *guatita* (tummy). 'He feels good, we both feel good.' Lucia (59 P) read out her right: 'The right to have voluntary sexual relations, including within marriage.' Lucia (59 P) said that this was now possible, but in her time it wasn't. When Loreto (40 L) asked her if she felt she had the capacity to say 'no' she said that she did, but during her marriage she complied with a duty/obligation. When Elena (49 L) told her that this right was a gift for Lucia (59 P), Katy (26 P) asked if she could have that right. She explained that she wanted to give it to her husband. Even though when she says 'no' she means 'no', she says she wants to stick it to the head of the bed. She then read 'her' right: 'The right to exercise sexuality with autonomy in accordance with needs, principles and desires of each individual, taking into account the rights of the other'. When Katy (26 P) said that she didn't understand what this meant, Nancy (37 P) suggested that they explain what the word 'autonomy' meant to start with. Lucia (59 P) helped out saying that autonomy was her freedom. It is what she wants to do, Nancy (37 P) added, without anyone telling you what to do. Elena (49 L) said that when she desires something, they are her desires, they are not his desires. Katy (26 P) said that she and her partner respected each other and talked things through. For



instance when they wanted to go to bed. Elena (49 L) quipped: 'Do you always do it in bed; never in the sink, on the table, in the shower, in the car?' Jana (38 L) added 'on the table's good!' They made her a present of the right.

When Gina (68 L) was asked if she would like to read out her right she said that she couldn't. She couldn't see and she couldn't understand. Rossana helped her out: 'The right to count on an adequate legislation in relation to abortion, which sees abortion as a public health problem and which prioritises women's lives.' Elena (49 L) asked Gina (68 L) what she thought about abortion. She replied by saying that she was against it. She thought that it was *malo*, bad, and that if you get pregnant you have to resign yourself to it and have the baby and bring it up. She said she is not *partidaria*, party, to abortion and never has been. She had had 10 children and could have had 3 more. Elena (49 L) asked her what she thought about other women that had had abortions; would she condemn them? Gina (68 L) said that she would tell them to think about it. Now there were ways of preventing it whereas before that was not possible and the *mamitas*, little mothers, were obliged to abort. When I asked about the case of rape, Gina (68 L) conceded that she agreed with abortion in this case because it was by force, *a la fuerza*, and not in the context of a relationship, *en la pareja*. Elena (49 L) then asked what she thought about a situation where it was the husband that had raped the woman, because it is sometimes the husband that takes the woman by force? Gina (68 L) said that she had not thought about that. She said that she herself had experienced this problem and for that reason she had rejected affection from her children and her husband because he made her do things that she didn't want to. Elena (49 L) pressed her: 'so you don't condemn abortion in women who have been raped? Gina (68 L) answered, 'Yes, it is like you are saying, but I don't really know what to answer, but in the other case of rape *a la fuerza*, 'yes she can have an abortion, because in that case there is no affection'. At this point Loreto (40 L) addressed the group as a whole saying that there was a reality behind the demand for this right and that she wanted to draw attention to the 150,000 abortions which took place each year and that 'we poor women abort in the worst conditions. That is the reality regardless of whether we are in agreement with abortion or not'. Elena (49 L) added that because of this fact we needed a law that protected women. The majority of women who died as a result of abortions which were badly carried out in miserable unhygienic conditions were 'like us', *mujeres pobladoras* and not *mujeres ricas*, rich women, who pay to have a safe abortion in an expensive clinic.

They made a present of the right to Gina (68 L), in a move to shift the conversation to the next right but Nancy (37 P) wished to opine. She said that she thought that if they legalised abortion it would not be *pan de cada dia*, something that is just like the bread you eat everyday. She thought that abortion was a matter for the couple and that if you wanted to have a good time and not get pregnant, you had to take steps to prevent that. She believed that *las chiquillas*, young women, were not as innocent as they were in days gone by; 'they have information'. These days there were not just one or two ways of preventing pregnancy but 'a thousand ways', although the form of prevention chosen should be by mutual agreement and, if the woman gets pregnant, both of them should accept responsibility. She said that, for her, the life of a *criatura*, creature, was very important and we did not have the right prevent it being born; 'I wanted to have children, I had three, I didn't want any more, so I take preventive measures'. She believed that the authorities ought to increase awareness amongst young people, but accepted the need for a limited law in relation to abortion in the case of rape or in the case of *las drogas*, which she mentioned without clarifying whether she was referring to extreme poverty or, more likely, to illness or deformation as a result of drug addiction.

Rosario (49 L) countered Nancy (37 P)'s assertion that there were 'thousands' of methods of contraception'. She pointed out that a 15 or 16 year old girl would be embarrassed to go to the local clinic to find out about contraceptives. She would have to arrive at 6am like all the other patients to get a number and wait to be seen and if another woman saw her there she would get embarrassed. Jana (38 L) agreed and highlighted the fact that adolescent pregnancies had not decreased; the figures were the same as before even though there was supposedly so much more information available. She said that she also felt that abortion was her right. She said that she respected Nancy (37 P)'s opinion, which may be religious or moral, but what would happen to her if she had a partner, decided to have children, got pregnant and then the relationship failed? She would have to continue a pregnancy which she knew was going to result in the birth of an unwanted child, knowing also that unwanted children were the most likely to become delinquents or drug addicts, because when one doesn't desire a child it is felt in *las vibraciones*, the child senses it. Jana (38 L) asked Nancy (37 P) to consider those women who decide one way or another to end a pregnancy 'with the ultimate right to decide in conscience what I want or don't want with my body, with my pregnancy and with my future with a child.' Lucia (59 P) asked, what about that 'life that is coming?'

Jana (38 L) responded by saying that she had every respect for the position that you don't have the right to take away anybody's life, but that her perception of the situation was different. 'So it is something personal, a personal opinion, not a generalised opinion,' interjected Nancy (37 P). Jana (38 L) confirmed that this was the case and went on to explain that all the sexual and reproductive rights that they were discussing were about 'how things ought to be'. They were good in principle but in practice we didn't live like that:

I too am a part of all these women who live sexually oppressed and I know that I (that we) don't live this way (ie. as the rights suggest things should be), because I carry with me a whole history that causes me to repress myself.

There was silence. The women all looked deep in thought. Veronica (55 P) finally broke the silence by reading out the right that she had picked out: 'The right to education policies which promote from infancy onwards the valuing of sexuality as an important agent in life which needs to be lived in a pleasurable way without fear or guilt.' Veronica (55 P) said that she had a daughter who was a nursery school assistant and that they had tried to explain to the children that babies were not brought from Paris by a goose, or born from bread or a *repollito*, a little cabbage, or an egg from the mother, as they had been told at home, but the mothers then came to the office to ask what was happening; what are they saying to the children? Elena (49 L) explained that this was what happened to 'us women' as adults, that 'we were frightened and denied ourselves because we were frightened of the unknown and when we didn't appreciate that they (infants) start learning from what we don't know.' Soraya (26 P) said that in her children's school they taught them from when the baby formed and how it was born, showing them normal and caesarian births and forceps deliveries on video. Loreto (40 L) acknowledged that this represented some progress but 'what about what happens before that?' She also observed that, whilst there was much talk about condoms and other contraceptives, in the AIDS adverts they had censored any mention of condoms and nobody taught young people what kind of condom they should use or how or when they should put it on and remove it. Thus the fact that something is talked about publicly does not necessarily imply it constitutes 'information'. Not even parents teach their children these things, added Elena (49 L). Lola (34 OP) said that this should be taught in schools. Veronica (55 P) said that when her children were 12 or 13 she explained some things to them, because her husband didn't dare. She said that she told

them about the danger there was because 'there are always men around seeing if they can turn upside down (pervert) a child's sexuality'.

Isabel (29 P) read from her piece of paper: 'The right to be valued as a person and not only on the basis of maternity; that women be recognised as having an identity of their own with capabilities and potential beyond their reproductive capacity.' Isabel (29 P) said that she thought this meant recognising women with all their rights and not just on the basis of maternity. Loreto (40 L) expanded saying that it meant that we should be recognised and valued as people, not just 'an incubator', which is the greatest value given to women and the basis on which we are respected. Elena (49 L) said, 'That you as Isabel (29 P), intelligent, smiling, not only as the mother of your children, that you be valued and recognised with all the qualities that you have. That your partner values you and tells you that you do nice things and that you are gorgeous, that is what it means.' All agreed on the importance of this right.

Nancy (37 P) read out the next right to be considered: 'The right to have education policies in relation to public health that promote sexual and reproductive health on the part of men and their active participation in contraception.' Nancy (37 P) explained that this referred to men taking responsibility in relation to contraception so that it was no longer just the responsibility of the woman. Elena (49 L) pointed out that women have to go to control at the *policlinico*, they have to take contraceptives or have them fitted, they have to go and have PAP tests, while the men are sitting comfortably at home watching television - *todo solitas nosotras*, we do it all on our own. Jana (38 L) added, 'And then you get pregnant and they tell you off!' Rosario (49 L) felt that another problem in relation to public health was that they don't ask what we want or tell us what they are going to put in place as contraceptives.' Nancy (37 P) said that ,when she went ,she kept asking questions so that they had to explain things to her. Loreto (40 L) said she thought that this was unusual, 'in most cases they don't tell you anything'. Nancy (37 P) said that the problem was that a lot of women didn't dare to ask things. Rosario (49 L) said that, when her daughter-in-law went to the policlinic, Rosario (49 L) had told her beforehand to ask for the T.120, but they ignored her and when she subsequently bled for a week and she asked why they didn't explain why it happened to her. Soraya (26 P) said she had been lucky; the nurse had treated her well. Initially they gave her contraceptive pills. Now she had an IUD and they had answered all the

questions she asked. Loreto (40 L) made the point that men are fertile all the time and yet it is us women, who are only fertile a few days each month, that take contraceptive pills or have IUDs. She said that we should think about why this might be, why is it not the men taking the pills? She said that this had to do with society and culture.

The workshop finished an hour later than it was meant to, as no one had wanted to go home. There was a very positive atmosphere at the end and the women expressed a wish to do more work on the theme. As well as taking home with them their 'right', each woman was also presented with a little homemade card as a souvenir of the workshop and the fact that it was November 25, the International Day Against Violence Against Women, with a picture of a fat, naked smiling woman on the front of it, inside the card read:

Woman: Defend your sexual and reproductive rights because they are the basic elements of justice, dignity and happiness for you as a person.<sup>7</sup>

### Case Study II: Bodily awareness and sexuality workshops run by professionals

The women in the *Coordinación de mujeres pobladoras* in San Joaquín ('the Co-ordination') obtained funding from the Ministry of Health to conduct workshops relating to women's health and specifically in relation to bodily awareness and sexuality. The workshops were conducted by two separate professionals. The bodily awareness workshops, which took place first, were conducted by a woman from an NGO called *Domus*. The sexuality workshops were run by the director of a local *policlinico*, who is a nurse and midwife linked to the Open Forum of Reproductive and Sexual Rights, she is interested in encouraging more horizontal relationships between the *policlinico* and the community.

The woman from *Domus* presented the Co-ordination with a document setting out the objectives of her workshops: to initiate and advance a personal process of greater bodily

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<sup>7</sup> *Mujer: Defiende tus derechos sexuales y reproductivos porque son los elementos basicos de justicia, dignidad y felicidad para ti, como persona.*

awareness, which seeks to bring about greater contact with, and perception of, the body by means of the recognition and elaboration of lived bodily experience. The workshop aims to facilitate interaction amongst the participants, creating a climate of closeness, trust, acceptance and respect that enables each member of the group to share experiences, to express feelings and to receive feedback from the group. By means of exercises it is hoped that the women will recognise what image they have of their bodies and the ideas, judgements and opinions that they have of themselves and the world around them. The overall idea is to stimulate personal growth from the perspective of the body, identifying the relation between the body and the emotional state of the person and exploring the importance of the body as a channel for expression and communication in daily life and in relation with others.

The workshops took place in the large hall at the *junta de vecinos* in El Pinar. They consisted of physical exercises (sometimes working individually, sometimes in pairs and sometimes in groups) aimed at relaxation, creating trust and enabling expression. Examples included working in groups with each woman taking it in turn in the middle of the group, while the others massaged her in different ways according to the *monitora's* instructions. At the end of her turn the woman would embrace the woman facing her and they would switch places. The effects of exercises such as these would be reflected in the women's faces, which appeared more relaxed and alleviated, and the ease and warmth with which they related to each other. Another exercise involved splitting into two groups, which congregated in opposite corners of the room. One woman from each group would set out across the room taking big strides and opening her arms widely, saying *abro* (I open) and then doubling over and crossing her arms tightly saying *cierro* (I close). They met in the middle and embraced before continuing to the other side. The women were encouraged to shout *abro* as loudly as they could. Many of the women were initially self-conscious. They were not accustomed to being the focus of attention in this way but they became less inhibited. At the end of the session some said that they had found it more difficult to open out their arms and shout *abro* than to close up and say *cierro*. We also carried out various massage exercises working in pairs, including facial and head massage and also, at the last session, a foot massage, where each partner took it in turns to wash and massage the other person's feet. All of this was completely new to the women and created a strong sense of trust. One woman said that the foot massage she had received had made her feel better than all the treatment she received at the clinic where she was being treated

for a variety of aches and pains. She would always remember the woman who had given her that massage. At one of the later sessions we also did an exercise in two large groups. One at a time the women took it in turns to lie down and let the other women first massage her back and then her front and then to listen as each took it in turn to express to her what she felt about her. Usually each woman would rest a hand upon her as she spoke. It was extremely moving and in many cases the women broke down in tears.

The *matrona* who was going to run the sexuality workshops also gave the Coordination an outline of the material she would cover in her workshops. The initial session would consider what the women understood by *sexualidad*, subsequent sessions would look at the biological bases of sexuality; human psychosexual development; human sexual response and how women experienced their sexuality; difficulties in sexual experience; women's sexual health and reproductive and sexual rights. The women from the Coordination asked her what the objectives of her workshop were and she said: - to provide the women with more information, awareness and clarity to enable them to deal with the health system with more resources and understanding; to clarify the concepts that permit them to incorporate *la sexualidad* more fully into their lives; to enable the women to connect with their bodies and to take responsibility (*hacerse cargo*) for their sexuality; and to place the element of pleasure into their lives.

These workshops also took place in a room in the *junta de vecinos* in the El Pinar neighbourhood. At the first session we began by discussing the fact that women in Chile do not choose when to have children. Nancy (37 P) said that she was 16 and pregnant when she got married. Gabriel (67 P) and Maggie (34 P) said the same. Elena (49 L) said she thought that it was the worst thing that could happen to the development of a relationship *de pareja*, between a couple, especially in relation to sex, if the woman got pregnant early on. The *matrona* introduced herself and said that she wanted the workshop to be very participative. They would be talking about very personal things and the idea was that the things they learned could be shared with their partners and families. She asked the women why they were so interested in the theme of *sexualidad*. They responded by saying that they did not feel well informed; that they needed to be able to provide support for their children. One of the biggest problems expressed was that children wanted to begin to practise sexuality so young. The women felt that they did not know how to talk with them about it. Soraya (26 P) said that she was not taught

anything at school. On one occasion the science teacher had separated all the boys off from the girls, and spoke just to the boys about procreation. Cecilia 31 (L) said that at her (all girls) school she had received some information from a male teacher who had taken the initiative to discuss sexuality with her class. The *matrona* asked the women what they thought about sexual activity amongst *jovenes*, young people. Martha (59 L) said she thought it was 'natural'. Nancy (37 P) said it was all very well thinking like that, but when it concerned your own children it was different. She said that she would have liked to have had more sexual experience before marrying. The *matrona* said that around 200,000 babies were born in Chile each year and about one half of these were unwanted. She asked the women what that figure said? One woman said that it was because there was not enough information available, another that young girls felt that they had to have sex with their boyfriends, and another said that previously at least children were born in wedlock, whereas now couples didn't even get married. A couple of the other women questioned the security that marriage provided anyway. The *matrona* went on to say that the average age for commencing sexual activity was 15 and she asked them what they thought about this. Most of the women remained silent. Patricia (33 L) said she thought that men took advantage of young girls. The *matrona* asked why we look for sexual activity. Answers included: to feel in communication with someone; *entregar*, to offer/give of oneself; *placer*, pleasure; to be touched; a form of expression. She then asked them how they related this to young people starting sexual activity young and asked if it was realistic not to? Gina (68 L) said that it was not: 'if we liked it, they will too!'. The others chuckled. The *matrona* said that it was an activity that was *muy humana*, very human, if it is *bien hecha*, well done. Nancy (37 P) said that she did not know how to *asumir*, to deal with, *sexualidad* as it is presented in films, magazines and pornography. She did not think that this was real *sexualidad*. The *matrona* said that it was important to analyse these things. Rosario (49 L) said she thought that things were much more open now. Elena (49 L) said she thought that children were now more *autenticos*, authentic, and that they have more stimuli. The *matrona* said that she thought that children and young people were inundated by highly eroticised publicity. She said that the body and desire were used to sell things because they knew that everyone was interested. Martha (59 L) asked why we didn't put men there instead of always using women's bodies. The *matrona* said that this was related to the theme of gender, and was a whole 'other story'. The women began describing the contents of television advertisements using women's bodies and how they have nothing



to do with the product . We discussed what we like to see in a man physically. Isabel (29 P) said *gordito con dientes blancos*, plump with white teeth; Virginia (27 P) said *todo atletico*; Elena (49 L) said that she was racist, she liked white men; Rosario (49 L) said that when she saw a good-looking man she would imagine him naked and on top of her - 'No', interrupted Elena (49 L), 'you on top of him!' The women laughed. Other women said that they liked men to have nice bottoms or nice eyes.

The *matrona* said that the following week we would consider what *sexualidad* meant to us. She said that it goes 'mas alla', further than just the sexual act. Genoveva (41 P) asked when it finished. The *matrona* answered that it never did; we never stopped feeling. We talked about hugging and how some people hold back when they hug whilst others give a really big hug. Several of the women said they found it difficult to give affection, one woman described how she had gradually begun to be able to hug her friends, but when she first started participating she was very *fria*.

The following week we split into three groups of eight to carry out the first activity which was to cut out pictures from magazines, identifying images that suggested to us what *sexualidad* is and then to make a collage using these images, with comments and observations beside them. One woman, for instance, said that she had chosen the image of a bride to suggest the idea of sexuality beginning at the moment of getting married. Another woman had chosen a picture of a uterus to show that some women think that if they lose this they lose their *sexualidad*. Another chose a picture of a bank note saying that sexuality can also be bought and sold. One woman had chosen a picture of a woman, naked apart from a pair of tights curled up with her head peeping out, explaining that this showed repression and sexual shame. Another chose a photograph of a baby, saying that this was the consequence of *sexualidad*. Another woman chose a picture showing blonde women, saying that this showed sexual racism, blonde women were all 'they' wanted to represent in magazine pictures. Jana (38 L) chose a picture of a fat lady to show that you don't have to have a good figure to enjoy your sexuality. She had also chosen a picture of a woman alone to show that *sexualidad* exists in a woman on her own. One woman had cut out several pictures of women in advertisements where their sexuality was obviously being used to sell products and had written a comment beside them saying that this showed women in all their flirtatiousness and seductiveness. Next to images of women lying on couches in underwear or evening

dresses a woman had written 'women identified with sensuality'. Next to images of men standing behind women with the woman nestled within the man's embrace a woman had written 'Man the protector and the beautiful woman'. One woman had written 'I felt embarrassed about my breasts' by a picture of a woman in a winter coat with her arms crossed across her chest. Beside the picture of a young girl with a broom smiling a woman had written 'they taught me that I had to do the household chores'. A number of women selected pictures containing babies. By one picture of babies a woman had written 'I always dreamed about having babies'. 'This is my great dream', wrote one woman next to a picture of a boy dressed in blue. Next to another picture of a baby in blue was written: 'My first baby boy has told me something so sad that it doesn't compare with anything'.<sup>8</sup> 'My daughters are the joy of my life and I am happy', one woman had written beside a picture of baby girls. Next to a picture of a pregnant woman was written, 'This is how I want to look soon'. Another woman had written 'When I became a mother I was happy, my children have been my happiness'. Several women chose pictures with couples in them. Beside one picture of a young couple with their heads together a woman had written 'I dreamed about an affectionate partner.' By another picture of a young smiling couple the comment was 'this is my romantic couple.' Next to a further picture of a happy couple was written 'I would like it if it were like this'. By a picture of young boys was written 'they are the most important for me'. One woman had chosen a photograph of a girl in masculine clothes on a motorbike saying, 'I always want to do what they do'. Next to a woman in a nightdress a woman had written, 'My first period - a taboo'. Beside a picture of a young woman laughing with a man was written 'This is how I would have liked to have been with my boyfriends, instead I always had to hide this part of my life for fear of punishment from my parents'. Next to a close up of a woman's head with a pensive expression on her face a woman had written, 'This is how I feel when my children suffer', and by a picture of a woman on the beach the same woman wrote 'I would like to spend a few days like this, alone by the coast to relax and unwind'. One woman had written beside a photograph of a woman in a skimpy black dress 'Sometimes I am like this!'

The second activity consisted in drawing an outline of our hands and to write what we do with our hands, with the matrona we then divided these activities into things that we like doing, '*me gusta...*' and things that we do not like doing, '*no me gusta...*'.

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<sup>8</sup> I later learned that her son is gay.

The things that the women liked doing were: *lavarse* (to wash oneself), *acariciar/tocar* (to caress/touch), *cuidado del cuerpo* (caring for the body), *carino* (affection), *cuidar* (to care/look after), *cocinar* (to cook), to garden, *trabajar* (to work), *tomar* (to drink), *fumar* (to smoke), *masajearme* (to massage myself), *dibujar* (to draw), *curar* (to cure sick people), *planchar* (to iron). The women did not like: *castigar* (to punish), *recoger basura* (to pick up rubbish), *hacer dano* (to do damage), *joyas* (jewels), *pegar* (to hit), *lavar la loza* (to wash the dishes), *lavar* (to wash), *planchar* (to iron), *servir a mi marido* (to serve my husband). The *matrona* asked the women what all this had to do with sexuality. None of the women gave a clear answer; one simply said ‘everything’. The *matrona* pointed out that some of the activities they had mentioned referred to doing things to yourself whilst others involved doing things to others. She asked them what the word ‘*sexualidad*’ made them think of? They responded: *deseo* (desire), *placer* (pleasure), *relaciones sexuales* (sexual intercourse), *genitales* (genitals). She introduced the idea that *sexualidad* is much more than just *el sexo*, sex. It something ‘*social, cultural y corporal*’, it is something social, cultural and physical; it is about how we relate to others.

At the next session, the *matrona* said that we were going to look at the biological bases of sexuality and psychosexual development. She began by explaining how the sex of a foetus is determined using a diagram showing male sperm and a female ovum and the possible chromosome combinations. She went on to explain how we label babies male or female according to their genitals and we dress boy babies in blue and we pierce the ears of girl babies and dress them in pink. She asked the women to imagine what would happen if a baby’s female genitals were mistaken for male ones or vice versa. The women accepted the idea that they would be brought up as though they belonged to the other gender. She used this idea to get the women to begin to understand the idea of *los roles sociales*, social roles. Apart from the biological difference of sex, she explained, everything else is cultural, creating a ‘*mundo femenino*’ and a ‘*mundo masculino*’, feminine and masculine worlds. Men are taught that crying is not to be valued and they are unlikely therefore to give value to a baby that cries, but rather to distance themselves. She then went on to explain the distinction between what she described as biological difference or *el sexo*, sex, and social difference, or *genero*, gender. She explained the latter as having to do with ‘*la cultura*’; with the social development of biological basics, explaining that to be a Chinese woman is different to being a woman

in Chile. She asks the women to consider the differences between women in different cultures. Martha (59 L) said she thought that they were more repressed in other countries. Erica (36 P) referred to female circumcision and asked what it was for. The *matrona* explained that it was to increase male sexual pleasure and that it was something that happened in parts of North Africa and Asia. She went on to talk about how culture gave value to things, for instance female virginity. She told them that men too have a piece of skin beneath the head of the penis that breaks like the hymen, but that no one talks about men losing their virginity. The typical roles for men and women depicted in the pictures the women had used in their collages were of '*hombre protector*', the protective male and '*mujer bonita*', the pretty woman. We discussed the fact that the reality is often the other way around, 'how many women have had a man that protects them?' asked Martha (59 L). The *matrona* highlighted the fact that the *rol femenino*, feminine role, was too narrow to be women's role, women do so many things.

In relation to homosexuality a number of the women exhibited prejudice. The *matrona* said that heterosexuality was not normal, but rather habitual, and emphasised that 20% of the people in all societies were homosexual. One of the women asked what 'bisexual' meant, and the *matrona* explained that it meant attraction to both sexes.

The *matrona* asked the women what sexuality had to do with all this? Many said that sexuality was something that happened *en pareja*, with your husband/partner. She asked the women what would happen if they touched themselves? Jana (38 L) said, 'you get excited,' and gave the example of dancing as a means of expressing one's sexuality. The *matrona* explained that sexual intercourse with a partner was just one part of sexuality. It was important to recognise that we can enjoy sexuality without a partner, at the most basic level just feeling attractive and sexy. She said that we were always sexual beings, that our thoughts were highly sexually influenced; they were influenced by our identification as women. The fact that we were all here together relating to each other, that we were all women, was something sexual, she explained. She also said that she could 'join her genitals' with those of another man or woman, without involving herself. Sex, she said, was too focused on the genitals. Women often complained that 'sex lasts 5 minutes'. That is because it is too genitally focussed, '*para el es suficiente que el se lo mete y para ella que se lo mete*' (for him it is enough that he sticks it in and for her that

her puts it in her). For men if there isn't any penetration there isn't sex. She emphasised the importance of being able to separate sexuality from genitality.<sup>9</sup>

The *matrona* explained that our relations with other people were marked by our gender - woman, man or homosexual. The tendency to see contraceptives, sex and pregnancy as women's business was because we live in a *machista* culture. One of the younger participants said that she believed that one problem was that young girls, like herself, confused sex with sexuality. It should be taught in schools, she said, that they are not the same thing. When asked by the '*matrona*' why she thought it wasn't, she replied that it was because many schools were Catholic. The '*matrona*' explained that the body is denied in many teachings, Catholic and otherwise (even dolls do not have genitals). She drew attention to the fuss that was made of a picture of genitals when all we needed to do was to look down to see the same thing. It was easier for boys to know themselves because their genitals are outside their bodies, but even they are told off for exploring themselves, '*saca la mano de alli!*' (take your hand out from there!). She identified the fact that we often continue teaching the same things we were taught and that, if we don't try to change our beliefs and ways of behaving, this will continue.

At the next session we were asked to draw ourselves on the day when we first menstruated. When we had finished she asked us individually to hold up the pictures and to describe how we had drawn ourselves. Jana (38 L) had drawn herself beside a tree, which she said she felt represented life in the *población*, in which she saw herself as 'just another girl in the *población* she said she didn't think that beginning to menstruate was a tragic event for her, it was just '*un dia normal y corriente*', just another ordinary day. Gina (68 L) said that she began to menstruate when she was 12 and that she cried; she shut herself in the bathroom and was very frightened, she said that she washed and washed. Her mother later explained that '*se iba a enfermar*', she was going to get sick like this, every month. Elena (49 L) was told that she should stay inside and not wash. Veronica (55 P) said that she grew up in the countryside and that when she began to menstruate the older girls at school explained that this would happen every month and what she needed to do. She was warned by her mother not to let boys

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<sup>9</sup> At this point one woman complains saying 'why aren't there sexuality workshops for men? It's always women who go to these workshops.'

come near her and especially not to let them touch her breasts or genitals. Martha (59 L) said that she drew herself alone, with some nuns in the upper corner of the picture. She described having had a very lonely and unhappy childhood and went to a school run by nuns; some of her older 'companeras' at school had explained to her a little about menstruating but 'lo pase sola', she experienced it alone. Patricia (33 L) said that all she had heard in relation to menstruation were some bad jokes that her father had told. When she began to menstruate she went running to her sister who said that she had begun to '*enfermarse*', to get sick, and that she should not go to school when this happened. Jimena (40 L) said that she began to menstruate when she was 16 and it was not '*una cosa bonita*', a nice thing. Maria P (42 P) said she washed and stayed inside. Her mother told her it would happen every month and she should take care with '*los cabros*', boys (literally 'goats'). Genoveva (41 P) said that her '*madrasta*', her stepmother had told her that she must not wash her feet or head.

When each woman had spoken, the '*matrona*' summarised by saying that almost all of them had experienced their first period with little information and with differing degrees of fear and dislike. She asked them how they would have liked it to have been, knowing that they have daughters and granddaughters. Lucia (59 P) said she would have liked to have been able to discuss it, to have had some information. Maria P (42 P) said she would have liked to have had a party. Jimena (40 L) said that she thinks that a girl's first menstruation should be celebrated in some way, that she should be given a gift for instance and it should be seen as a happy event. The *matrona* asked the women to list the different ways in which menstruation was referred to: - '*andar enferma*' (to be sick); '*andar indispueta*' (to be indisposed); '*tienes que cuidarte*' (to have to look after oneself); '*la regla*' (the rule). She pointed out that all these expressions related to illness and hiding what was really happening; that is what happened with changes in women's bodies; they were associated with concepts of illness, as opposed to '*normalidades*'. Similarly when a woman was going to give birth, it was said that she was going to '*mejorarse*', to get better. She said that this has to do with the culture in which we lived and with a certain discourse in relation to gender, which connoted that these things were not valued. She said that in days gone by these things used to be celebrated, but that as women lost power this was '*borrado*', wiped out.

The *matrona* began to set out on a large sheet the different stages of psychosexual development, which she divided into: 1. The oral stage, 2. The linguistic stage, 3. The playing stage, 4. The oedipic stage and 5. the final stage of acquiring a psychosexual identity. She said that these were labels used by psychologists. In the first stage, encompassing the first year of life, she explained that everything was related to sucking, this was the main way in which the baby connected with the world. Already, she said, the baby had sexuality, it felt pleasure. Cecilia 31 (L) asked what happened when the baby was not fed breast milk. Paty said that sucking and contact with the skin was still the most important way of communicating. Patricia (33 L) said that adoptive mothers sometimes held the feeding bottle beside their breasts so that the baby could touch her breasts. She also referred to the importance of the mother-child bond. The *matrona* said that this idea of the bond between mother and child was something cultural and that sometimes we are too ‘*apegados*’ (close to/glued to) our children. She said that sometimes we wanted this and would not let our children develop; that we are too identified with our children, but eventually they have to go. Lucia (59 P) said that she had a niece who had a baby that was 5 months old and she wouldn’t let anyone touch her; this had provoked a rejection of the baby within the family and she lamented that this was not the baby’s fault. ‘No’, said Elena (49 L), ‘it is the mother who has the problem’. Having said that the mother-baby bond is cultural, the *matrona* went on to say that ,within days the baby can distinguish the mother’s voice from that of other people and how much the baby loves ‘*la teta de su mama*’, it’s mother’s breast. ‘It uses it to feed, to touch, to play with’ and takes the opportunity to advertise the fact that it is the best food for a baby. Lucia (59 P) boasted that she had breast-fed all her children. Soraya (26 P) said how much she had enjoyed breast-feeding and the women talked about the ideal period to breast feed for. Several said that they thought that 6 months was enough and at that point they had applied garlic to their nipples to put the baby off. One woman said that her 2-year-old was still breast-feeding and would wail ‘*teta*’ at her at inconvenient moments. The *matrona* said that she had come across many women who had denied that their milk was good for their baby and wanted to give it soya milk or powdered milk. Sometimes they said that the baby did not want to take their breast, but that was probably because they were rushing around stressed and the baby sensed this, she explained. She talked about how the family unit was now smaller and there therefore weren’t other female relatives to help out, which meant that women were

under a lot of pressure. She pointed out that this was one of the few advantages of polygamy in places such as Africa.

We moved on to the linguistic stage, from 1 to 3 and a half years old. The *matrona* explained that this was the time in which the baby began to define its personality, defining itself as different from others. She also referred to this stage as the anal stage, which she said had to do with pleasure (relating to urinating and defecating). She suggested that, if the child were made to feel that these processes were dirty then there was a connotation that sexuality was also dirty. The *matrona* said that parents should not be too *puntuoso*; that they should try to be fairly relaxed about these things and not too rigid.

In the next stage, up to 5 years of age, the child learnt through games, including about sexuality. She gave the example of her 4-year-old daughter running around with her pants around her knees. In the oedipic phase the daughter is very interested in her father and the son vice-versa. This she explained in terms of sexual identity. During this stage children also began to explore their genitals and feel pleasure from this. She said that she had asked her little daughter why she was touching herself and she had replied, *Es rico*, it feels nice. The women laughed. Some said that they had not known what to do when children touched themselves and had usually become embarrassed and told them off. The *matrona* said that parents had to be careful with negative messages because they get stuck in a child's head and can develop causing problems or conflicts later on. She gave the example of a woman who came into the policlinic who was told that it was dirty to have sex and as an adult she now defecates if she has sexual intercourse. Several of the women said that they had been made to feel that sex was dirty and that this had prevented them from being able to enjoy sex; one of them said it prevented her from being able to achieve orgasms.

At the following workshop the *matrona* asked the women to describe what happened *cuando nos calentamos?*, when we get 'turned on'. Everyone laughed and one woman answered by saying, 'we get excited, the heart starts to beat faster, the skin gets covered in goosebumps, the body vibrates and one feels desire for physical contact'. 'What happens to our genitals?' asked the *matrona*. Nancy (37 P) answered by saying that they



get lubricated, '*como que de una cosquilla*' (you feel things). The *matrona* asked again why we say we are '*calientes*'.

One woman said that it is because our temperature rises; another because '*se pierde la nocion*'. An older woman sighed 'so many years of that! I don't remember. Your legs tremble, it depends on your position...if you are vertical or horizontal...we feel desire to touch ourselves and to be caressed and the situation becomes more agitated. We are very excited! What else happens? One woman responded '*se ponen turnias*', the man's eyes go white from pleasure, the muscles become uncontrolled, the man's penis becomes erect, the desires increase. What else? asked the *matrona*. You want them to put their penis inside you soon said one of the older women and all the others laughed. 'But it depends on the man if this can be prolonged and it is more enjoyable', said Gina (68 L) indicating that she was speaking from her own experience in her second marriage. The women all laughed because she had only had this pleasure in her second marriage. One of the women commented that Gina (68 L) was very sensual, especially when she was dancing. Gina (68 L) continued by saying that she was very happy sexually in her second marriage but not in other respects. In her first marriage she said that she was not happy because she had married very young when she was only 16. She had been obliged to marry, but after 7 years she was widowed because her husband had had an accident. She got married again 2 years later. She had 3 children in her first marriage and two more that did not survive. She got pregnant every year, she said. She continued having children in her second marriage. In all she had had 15, 8 of whom had survived. Patricia (33 L) said it gave her *escalofrios* (the shivers) to think that women got pregnant with such frequency. Another commented that contraceptives did not exist then, and still another that women were lucky now that there were ways of preventing pregnancy. Gina (68 L) added that now even children knew how to prevent pregnancy. In the past it was taboo even to talk about such things; women used to be pregnant all the time. The doctor would say 'come back next year' and it wasn't a joke, she went back the next year pregnant again. She recalled a doctor called 'Zipper' and the *matrona* said that he was the one that had invented the Copper T. All the women expressed their gratitude to this doctor.

The *matrona* said that this week they were going to look at the 'Human Sexual Response' from a biological view, next week we would look at it from a more practical

perspective. She explained how the functioning of human sexual life was not investigated for a long time and in Chile it was kept *ocultaba*, hidden. She referred to Masters and Johnson, explaining that one was a doctor and the other a psychologist and that they did research with prostitutes and volunteers on human sexual response, which they divided into 4 stages:- ‘*excitacion*’(excitement), ‘*meseta*’(plateau), ‘*orgasmo*’(orgasm) and ‘*resolucion*’(resolution). She described each of these stages: in the first the vagina becomes lubricated, the penis becomes erect and lubricated, the labias and clitoris grow, the uterus rises; in the second the tension is maintained; the third is the orgasmic platform, culminating with contractions of the vagina, followed by resolution. She explained the reaction as not just physical but also psychological, one therefore needs to be prepared psychologically as well as physically. She emphasised that these stages could be reached alone and also with a partner without penetration. Patricia (33 L) queried this by saying that there was a saying in the country that sex without penetration was *calentar el agua no mas*, just heating up the water. The *matrona* responded that *el cuento*, the story, of penetration was more to do with men than women. She said that it is possible to have an orgasm in your dreams if your body and mind are sufficiently in connection. Penetration, she said, had a lot to do with domination and power. Men have ‘*una drama*’ in relation to sex without penetration, ‘*como se lo van a meter*’, how they are going to stick it in, is their great problem. We talked about women’s erogenous zones, and the *matrona* explained that the *vulva* is where the woman’s sexual organs are, not the vagina. The clitoris is the part most sensitive to stimulation.

Elena (49 L) referred to the influence of the church in making the subject of sex so taboo. The *matrona* agreed saying that it makes it as though everything is so spiritual and religious when really it is just one body with another body. Religion seems to try to deny that the body exists. Lucia (59 P) commented that we are all so obedient to the church’s teachings. Jana (38 L) put it more strongly saying that we ‘castrate ourselves’ sexually<sup>10</sup>. She referred to a friend (Victoria (34 L)) whose mind was completely in another place when she was having sex. All she could think about was how God was going to punish her. The *matrona* tried to encourage other women to speak. Martha (59 L) said that she thought that the church traumatized people by making them feel that

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Greer, G. *The Female Eunuch*. 1971. St. Albans:Paladin.

everything was bad. The *matrona* asked the women what their image of an excited man was? Many responded '*bonito*', attractive. Several said that it was a frightening image. Martha (59 L) said she felt men were less ashamed about being seen naked. Luisa commented that she had never seen her husband completely naked. The discussion drifted back to the theme of having children. Patricia (33 L) said that she was horrified at people having so many children when they had so few resources. The *matrona* said that this sort of thing depended on the life project of the individuals. Many had such scarce resources that they could not really have a life project or vision, so deciding about children was not really relevant for them. There was also the cultural issue, that men often have various partners. They want to have children with one woman and then move on and have children with another, and so on. We discussed the reasons why women wanted children. The *matrona* suggested that sometimes it was due to a lack of self-esteem, which often meant having children 'because he wanted them'.. Lucia (59 P) said that she had never even thought about it, it was so ingrained in her that this was what one did as a woman. Patricia (33 L) said that she wanted a child because she felt lonely. The *matrona* asked Ana Maria (42 P) to move in closer as she was somewhat detached from the group.

Elena (49 L) asked if anal sex was dangerous for women. The *matrona* said that it depended whether she was in agreement to it. Whatever was agreed was normal. Patricia (33 L) asked about rape in marriage, 'before it wasn't against the law', she said, 'nobody wanted to know'. The *matrona* said in theory there was protection against this in the *Ley de Violencia Intrafamiliar*, the new law against domestic violence, but in practice women did not denounce their husbands for rape under this law. Mercedes (64 P) said that she thought that women got sick as a result of not expressing what had happened. The *matrona* talked, speaking from her own experience, about occasions where you didn't really want to have sex but you finally agreed to in order to be left alone. The women all chuckled in recognition of this problem. Patricia (33 L) said that her sister's husband gave her sleeping pills and then had sex with her. She finally discovered this by drinking his drink rather than hers. He also tried to do the same thing with her younger sister; she was frightened that he had raped her little sister. She asked how long we could go on looking for excuses for men, saying that they were *enfermo*, sick. She said that her sister had now separated from her husband.

One of the younger women asked if it was bad to have sex during menstruation. The *matrona* said that it was not; it was a matter of personal preference. We began to talk about trust in relationships and about AIDS. The *matrona* emphasised the importance of communication between a couple in relation to this problem. She asked the women if they trusted their partners and if there had been any time when they had not trusted their partners. All the women in the room said that they did not trust their partners. Several said that when a woman is pregnant the man looks for another woman. The *matrona* said that 60% of men had been unfaithful and 40% of women. She asked the women, 'How can you all be having sex with your partners without using a condom?' Maria (35 P) said that when women got involved with someone they were involved emotionally, whereas men less so. She said she had seen women leave everything because they have fallen in love. Patricia (33 L) said that she was unfaithful to her husband on one occasion and had later confessed to him. Several women shook their heads in disbelief. Ana Maria (42 P) said that she had been married 35 years and during that time her husband had had many other partners. Sometimes he even brought them back to the house when she was there, but now he has Parkinson's disease and can't have sex. Patricia (33 L) said: - 'now it's your turn. Look for a partner!' The usually flamboyant Ana Maria (42 P) went pink. Some of the women asked her why she put up with his behaviour and Ana Maria (42 P) said that it was because he was so '*buen mozo*', so handsome, that was why she stayed with him. She left him once but went back. The others said that she sacrificed everything. Ana Maria (42 P) said that she didn't feel desire for any other men and that she had problems because she had had so many children and problems with her health: haemorrhaging, cancer of the uterus. She said that she still had dreams about the romantic times that she had had with her husband. The *matrona* commented that we always dream when we have sexual desires. Jana (38 L) said she often had dreams of this type. Several women said that they enjoyed sex more when they were older. The *matrona* said that many women were able to enjoy sex more after the menopause because they were so frightened of getting pregnant before it that they were unable to relax.

We talked about women's capabilities, saying how women were so capable and continue learning all the time, they are able to do lots of things at once, dealing with the house, the children, managing the money, and often doing some work outside the home too: '*somos multiuso*' said Nancy (37 P). Several expressed the view that that men are

being left behind. Jana (38 L) commented that men couldn't take responsibility for bringing-up children, or for contraceptives.

At the end of the workshop Jana (38 L) and I went to the bakery and bought a dozen or so freshly baked custard doughnuts, '*Berlines*', and fizzy drinks, which we consumed as we continued to chat, before the women had to leave to prepare '*Onces*', tea. Talking about men, the *matrona* commented that women were more and more fed up with husbands who were like kids. She joked about how her husband is always asking her where his things are, 'Where are my socks?' The problem is, she said, that she usually knows, but he would have no idea where her bras were if she asked him. She commented on the subtle language men make use of, giving the example of how her own husband will say to her in relation to domestic chores: 'can I help you with your plates'? She tells him that they are not her plates and comments that men seem to need to make 'declarations of help' so that it is explicitly recognised that they are doing something.

At the last workshop given by the *matrona*, we discussed the Open Forum document setting out a Declaration for Reproductive and Sexual Rights. The workshop was held in the larger room at the *Junta de Vecinos* in *El Pinar*. There were mattresses on the floor and we sat sprawled out and relaxed. Martha (59 L) rested her head on Jana (38 L)'s shoulder. Even the older ladies were encouraged to lie down and we lay and chatted eating biscuits and drinking Coke until the *matrona* arrived. Before we considered the document we talked for a while about homosexuality. The *matrona* repeated a point she had made previously, that in any given society 20% would be homosexual. She asked one woman who refused to accept homosexuality as 'normal' what she thought should be done with all these people - 'should we kill them all?' she asked. Martha (59 L), Tia Carmena (65 P) and Luisa all said that they should be allowed to live in peace. Nancy (37 P) asked what the difference was between a homosexual and a transexual; the *matrona* explained the difference between both of these and transvestites.

(Agreement in relation to rights 1 and 2).

In relation to '*derecho 3*' Luisa said that she agreed that sexuality should be taught from infancy. When the *matrona* asked the women how they perceived this happening, Patricia (33 L) said the problem was that politicians did not see this as an important theme. For the church sex is still a taboo subject and as a result parents often complain when teachers try to implement sexual education. The *matrona* asked if they thought

that it was important that this right existed? Gina (68 L) said that she thought that it was, describing it as a right to information. Jana (38 L) pointed out that the little sex education there is is just biological; it never takes a more 'integral' look at the subject. She said that she thought that institutions prevented the exercise of these rights. The *matrona* agreed saying that professionals also tended to 'biologise' sexuality.

In discussing 'derecho 4' the *matrona* pointed out that the way it is worded separates sexual from reproductive education. Martha (59 L) said that the kind of education envisaged by this right didn't exist anywhere. All the women agreed on the importance of 'derecho 5.' and 'derecho 6.' In relation to 'derecho 6' they pointed out that '*no es asi*', it wasn't like that in reality. In relation to 'derecho 7' Martha (59 L) said 'If only it were like that' and Maria (35 P) said it would be '*un sueno*', a dream, if reality were like that.

The women thought that 'derecho 8' was extremely important, although they again expressed the view that in reality it wasn't like this. Soraya (26 P) referred to the fact that employers still demanded certificates from women confirming that they have undergone a medical examination and that they are not pregnant. Maria (35 P) said she had had to go through this. Patricia (33 L) said that employers were now employing older women because they were not young enough to have babies.

When the *matrona* read out 'derecho 9' Martha (59 L) said she would have liked to have had this right. Gina (68 L) said that she would have liked to have had it too.

(Agreement in relation to rights 10-13)

For many women the idea expressed in 'derecho 14' of separating sexuality from reproduction was still a new idea to grasp. Patricia (33 L) said what it meant was that one should have the right to have sex without having children. To explain the concept more graphically the *matrona* explained the story of Farinelli, who delighted women because of his sexual prowess and because he could have sex with them without any danger of them getting pregnant. The women were delighted by the story.

As we had already discussed homosexuality we passed quickly over 'derecho 15'.

The women could all relate to the contents of 'derecho 16' and several spoke up about their experiences, saying that they used to or still did have sexual relations when they did not want to.

(Agreement in relation to rights 17 and 18)

In relation to 'derecho 19' the *matrona* emphasised the fact that *responsibilidad compartida*, shared responsibility, did not exist, either in relation to partners or the state. In an earlier discussion the women had revealed that none of them trusted their husbands. Jana (38 L) (38 L) commented that, although the relationship might seem stable to us, we could not be sure that it was for the other.

Consideration of 'derecho 20' stimulated some discussion relating to abortion. The *matrona* said that abortion had to do with decisions in relation to the whole body. She said it was crazy that society told us, and in fact prepared us, to take responsibility for pregnancy, birth and *la crianza*, (bringing up children) and yet, if we decide to intervene in this cycle, the process of pregnancy, birth and *la crianza* that we have been made to assume, we have no right to decide. She emphasised that you always had to enter this cycle, you could never deny it. Tia Carmena (65 P) said that she felt that there was more need for abortion than there had ever been, with houses being so small '*donde meten tantos chiquillos?*' (Where do they put so many children?). The *matrona* said that this had to do with another right, the right to defend life when the life is inside the uterus, but once the life is outside the uterus and walks, nobody cared. By this point all of the women had joined in to bemoan the fact that no one was interested in defending this life. Nobody defended the children who were out in the streets; children who were abandoned or who live in tiny houses, or the adolescents who are taking *pasta base*. The *matrona* pointed out the ridiculousness of having a whole right to life movement defending the right to life while the baby was inside the woman's stomach, but once it had been born, you were in effect told '*arreglalo como puedas*', you sort it out as you can. Tia Carmena (65 P) rejoined that it was terrible, but it was the truth. Alicia (29 P), having listened carefully to what the *matrona* said, concluded that basically women didn't have any right to decide over their bodies.

The women were in agreement with 'derecho 21'.

Several women found 'derecho 22' difficult to understand, just because it is so long. Patricia (33 L) picked up on the right to infertility treatment, saying that she and her husband were undergoing infertility treatment, but that it was very expensive. The *matrona* said that in that case it was not a right.<sup>11</sup> The *matrona* asked the women what they thought about the health services that existed for women. One woman said she thought they were *muy precarios*; precarious and scarce, another that they were discriminatory. One of the older women said she thought that they were worse than in the past when she was given milk for her babies. Now the service in the *consultorios* was poor and women had to get up extremely early to try to get a number to be seen. The others agreed. Several women complained that there were too few doctors. In general the feeling was that the service was poor. The *matrona* said that it was a mixture. Where good service existed it was because there were individuals who were committed to their work and who made a big effort to do things well, with few resources. This was because public services were always underfinanced and there were other people who just didn't care; who treated people badly, who were fed up because they were badly paid and who vented their anger on the public. Martha (59 L) raised the point that a doctor gets paid much more in the private health service and so often the best doctors are not to be found in the public hospitals. Jana (38 L) said that, in spite of the deficiencies of the public health system, it is much more *solidario* (community-spirited), offering a discount provided by Fonasa,<sup>12</sup> and the poorest can obtain healthcare as *indigentes*. By way of contrast in the private system it is only the person that can afford to pay that receives attention. She added that the private system also discriminated against women, against part-time and short-term contract workers, people infected with the AIDS virus and old people, because it was a *negocio*, a business. She said that there was a *desconocimiento*, a lack of awareness, that we have as *pobladoras*. 'Sometimes we earn a low salary and often we are in the private health system without even knowing what the requisites are, how this system maintains itself, where the money goes, or how it functions, or the damage it is doing to the public system'. She pointed out that there were people who were really *indigentes* and who were being attended in the *policlinico* when they had *Isapres*. The *matrona* agreed that public

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<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, Patricia (33 L) on this occasion said that they were undergoing this treatment because she and her husband both had fertility problems, but in a workshop at a much later stage I learnt that in fact it was just her husband who had a fertility problem, so she was on this occasion protecting him.



provision was being *absorvida*, absorbed, as Jana (38 L) said, by private schemes. She added that personnel in the public sector have now become very protective in their provision of healthcare so as to avoid giving treatment to people covered by Isapres. This has meant that bureaucratic rules are applied stringently so that, if someone has lost, for instance, their identity card, they may well be denied treatment or charged amounts that they cannot afford to pay. Maria (35 P) gave an example, saying that they pay for an Isapres and when she needed to take one of her children to the *posta* (A&E) she could not afford the price they were asking, even though she and her husband had been paying contributions, so they refused to treat them. The same happened when one of her children needed to have a tooth taken out. She said she didn't even have the money to pay the bus fares to get there. She had to go back home and find the money (£7) to pay because the child was crying incessantly in pain. The *matrona* said that really *Isapres* are only for people with a monthly salary over \$(CH)400,000. Those *Isapres* which are aimed at people with salaries between \$(CH)100,000- 200,000 have low contributions and seem attractive, but when it comes to making use of emergency services or having an operation, which is when people most need cover, these types of *Isapres* do not cover them. In fact the plan hardly covers them for anything. Jana (38 L) said that this was a form of disinformation. The *matrona* agreed and said she had recently come across an old couple living on a monthly pension of \$(CH) 40,000 (£70) they had been convinced by a *promotora*, promoter, to join. The *matrona* pointed out that, as soon as they needed to go to hospital for anything, they would not be able to receive treatment. Maria (35 P) said that she was hospitalised on one occasion and her husband had been required to provide a blank cheque before they would treat her. He was unable to do this and she spent the afternoon crying. She was haemorrhaging and the only thing they were interested in was receiving the blank cheque. She was finally moved from the private clinic to the Barros Lucos public hospital.

We then moved on to '*derecho 23*'. The women joked about the contents of this right, saying ironically that this was, of course, just how things were, and mimicked the way that the personnel actually treat them telling them to hurry from one queue to another. In relation to being offered information about all the different methods of contraception they joked about being offered '*un T Cobre o un Cobre T*', a copper T or a T of copper.

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<sup>12</sup> Health insurance tied to public system as opposed to private insurance schemes known as 'Isapres'.

In relation to '*derecho 24*' the *matrona* explained that there were few policies which protected the consumer and if someone decided to fit you with some sort of contraceptive which subsequently caused you damage, nobody was responsible for that damage.

All agreed in relation to '*derecho 25*' that women should have the right to decide about sterilisation without having to seek their husband's permission as they do at the moment. In relation to vasectomies the *matrona* pointed out that there were very few men who considered this an option and there was also no provision to provide vasectomies, reflecting doctors prejudice on the issue. They always claim that the operation is dangerous for men and won't accept the idea of making a little cut in the man's body. Soraya (26 P) said: 'so it's the woman that has to put up with everything'.

As we had already discussed the theme of abortion we did not discuss the contents of '*derecho 26*' and '*derecho 27*' was accepted as straightforward and non-controversial.

After the *matrona* read out '*derecho 28*' the women wanted to talk about what it meant. The *matrona* said that an important point to consider in relation to this right was the very large number of hysterectomies conducted in Chile. She gave the example of a woman arriving at the *consultorio* and being told by the doctor or nurse that she had a small benign tumour. When the ectography had been conducted the woman took the advice of a doctor who said *hay que operarla*, she had to have an operation, and they take out her womb. There were many women, she said, who succumbed to this type of treatment when they were not suffering in any way. They are not bleeding and yet, in order to make money, the doctor tells her she needs an operation and conducts an unnecessary hysterectomy. This kind of thing happened every day and women needed to begin to inform themselves and to ask, 'Is it really necessary that you remove my womb because of such a small problem?' She added that most women, if they underwent a full scan, would find that they had a cyst or something of this nature which they had probably had for years and didn't cause them any problem.

After reading '*derecho 29*' the *matrona* informed the women that in the private sector 50% of pregnancies end with a caesarian section, when normally the figure should only

be about 10%. The women were shocked. She asked why she thought they conducted so many caesarians and Jana (38 L) was quick to respond that it was because they get paid more for conducting a caesarian. The *matrona* said not only that but they would usually schedule the caesarian for after 8pm in the evening because that way they got paid still more. She emphasised again that this was a business and that we had to make sure that we were well informed, '*no podemos seguir siendo cordereo para el matadero*' (we can't continue being lamb for the slaughterer). Cecilia 31 (L), referring to the birth of her fourth child, said that at the last minute her doctor had wanted her to have a caesarian and she had refused. She said that she had given birth normally to her first three children and did in relation to her last child too. One of the other women asked her why they had wanted to carry out a caesarian and she said it was because they were going to sterilise her too so they wanted to carry out the caesarian and then sterilise her straight away. The *matrona* said that another reason why so many caesarians are carried out is because many doctors have little obstetric experience and so they prefer to carry out a caesarian because it is safer and easier for them, as well as paying better. Sometimes in the public hospitals it happens the other way around, that a woman needs a caesarian at 4am in the morning and there is no doctor around at that hour to attend her. In that case they oblige her to have a forceps delivery, and then in 6 or 7 years everyone is surprised that the child has epilepsy. 'And that really happens?' asked one of the women. The *matrona* confirmed that research has revealed that a large percentage of neurological problems in children were due to badly handled births. She again affirmed that all this had to do with having a better idea of what was necessary and what was not. In this respect we must inform ourselves more and ask more questions. She gave the example of a patient who, when asked why she had come said, '*Porque tengo una problema*', (I have a problem). '*Y que problema tiene Ud?*' (And what is the problem?), asked the doctor. '*No se po, por eso estas tu po*' (I don't know, that's what you're here for), replied the woman. The women shrieked with laughter.

Turning to '*derecho 30*', the *matrona* observed that many of the contraceptives in use in the world today have been tested on women in poor countries. She refers to how Puerto Rican women were used to test hormonal forms of contraception. In this way it was discovered, for instance, that women who took high-dose contraceptive pills often developed breast cancer 10 or 20 years later. She said that this had to do with not

allowing ourselves to be *cornejitos* (rabbits) to have things tested on us. The women murmured their agreement.

At the end they gave the *matrona* a loud round of applause to thank her. Luisa said that although she felt that she had not had the benefit of these kind of rights, she had daughters and for this reason she felt it was important to learn about such things. When the *matrona* asked what was the most important thing that they had learned, Maria (35 P) said she had learnt to believe more in herself and to be more in touch with what her body felt. She said that she used to think her body belonged to her husband, now her body was hers. She also said that her daughter had been wrongly taught in her biology classes that the vagina was the female genital equivalent of the male penis. She had been able to explain to her that in fact it was the vulva and she used the opportunity to explain to her some of the other things she had learnt in the workshop. Alicia (29 P) said that she had never really talked about her body with anyone, and she has enjoyed listening too and asking questions. Another women felt that she had learnt to value her body more. Jana (38 L) said how much she had enjoyed the workshop. She had never participated in a workshop about sexuality. She liked the direct language and atmosphere of trust which had also enabled us to *pararnos*, stand up, differently than with other *matronas*. She said she felt that there was ‘an abuse of power that was there because of our ignorance’, in the sense that we do not dare to ask questions or stand up to health personnel on an equal basis. There is ‘*una barrera*’, a barrier, that exists ‘with nurses, midwives, doctors, even the person that opens the door and the one that comes in behind too’. In this way, she said, the system also protects itself, it has to do with how they manage power by way of the information that they have. For this reason she would like this kind of information to be shared with more women, to strengthen the Women’s Movement and to make demands and proposals. ‘Starting with our bodies we can start to be autonomous as people and after this as organisations in relation to a local council, a system and the state’. She suggested that it would be a good idea to maintain a more continuous relationship with the *matrona*. At the same time she complained about the *matrona*’s failure to arrive to the workshop on a number of occasions and how she had felt hurt because it showed a lack of respect to the women who had made an effort to be there. The *matrona* accepted that she had been remiss. Some of the older women said that they regretted the fact that they had not had this kind of information earlier on in their lives. They felt that it was too late for them. The others said, ‘*Nunca*

*es tarde*’, it is never too late. The *matrona* said that all women, herself included, would have liked to have had the most information possible so as to be ‘*mas duena de su vida*’, more in control of her life. However, the other important thing was that, as women, we were teachers; we were always transmitting our knowledge. She said that it was admirable that women like Gina (68 L), who was now in her seventies, were still keen to learn to be able to transmit information better rather than just saying that they had already passed that stage of life. Lucia (59 P) said that she had shared everything she had learnt with her daughter and with her neighbours. The *matrona* said she felt that she would like to do some more work with the group at some stage showing them to look after their bodies better themselves, for instance learning how to examine their breasts, but a date could not be agreed. They discussed having a daylong workshop combining an evaluation of the workshops on sexuality and bodily awareness.

The daylong workshop took place a couple of months later. The Coordination rented a large room in an old colonial house with an extensive garden in nearby San Miguel. Neither of the professionals who had given the course of workshops was present. The day’s activities were conducted by the *dirigentas* of the Coordination. After coffee and biscuits and some warm up exercises, the first task was to work in our assigned groups (the Uteruses, the Pink group, the Condoms, the Doves and the Little Boys) on an evaluation of the workshops. In each group one person wrote the group’s answers to the following questions on a large sheet of paper: 1. What for you is ‘*sexualidad*’?; 2. How is your relationship with your body now?; 3. Do you feel that your self-esteem has improved?; 4. Did this workshop fulfil your expectations?; 5. What theme did you like most and which did you not like so much and why? 6. What themes would you like to discuss more? The answers, by group were as follows. Sometimes the group would choose one or two women’s expressions as representative:

Grupo Utero (Martha (59 L), Virginia (68), Ortensia (67 P), Monica (46 L), Mercedes (64 P), Isabel (29 P), Gina (68 L) (+ 3 other women)

1. Recognition of the body and contact with it.

Recognition of our body.

Knowing our bodies

I would like to receive affection from him, but he doesn’t respond.

2. At times my relationship with my body is good, I like myself, but I also feel tired and mistreated.

It is good, I look at myself naked in the mirror and touch all of my body, now I know myself well.

I don't feel ashamed (anymore), after this workshop on sexuality I no longer turn off the light.

I am aware that my body is tired, it has pain, I want to be caressed by someone.

After this workshop I have learned that I must love myself.

I have learnt to relate to my body.

I still don't dare to look at my body, less still to caress it.

3. Yes, it is hard for me to take the first step, yes, I love myself, in spite of the years.

I make myself look pretty for myself and for him.

I don't look at myself.

I love myself as a woman and mother, I think of myself as '*una negra guena*<sup>13</sup>', an attractive woman.

I have more self-esteem than before.

I (now) dare to caress my body, to look at it and care for it.

4. Yes, it helped me to value myself as a person.

I forgot about everything that oppresses me.

I don't think stupid things anymore.

I forgot about everything, we communicated well and I had a good time.<sup>14</sup>

This subject is very important, when we were children we couldn't talk about it, it was tabu.

It served to enable me to learn something about myself.

5. I liked all the work that I did with the other women.

I liked everything, but it makes me nervous to answer questions.

6. I liked all the themes that had to do with women.

I would like to do some more work on the menopause.

More on the fears about hormonal illnesses such as tumours and cancers.

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<sup>13</sup>'*Negra*' is used as a term of affection between 'pobladoras' and in this case to describe oneself. The phrase '*una guena negra*' means a woman who is good in the sense of doing everything in the house, but here Isabel (29 P) means a woman who is sexually appealing to men.

<sup>14</sup>Reading over these notes with me, Jana (38 L) observed that Isabel (29 P), who made this comment, like Nancy (37 P), always says that everything is fine, but wonders why she says she forgot everything if everything is so good.

### Grupo Rosado

(Jana (38 P), Lucia (59 P), Ana Maria (42 P), Loreto (40 L), Jana (38 L), Doris (37 P), Alicia (29 P), Nancy (37 P) (+ 2 other women)

“*Por el orgasmo de la vieja fea, Rosaditas a la pelea*”(the Pink Group fights for orgasms for ugly old women)

1.It is ours, it is everything.

It has to do with our body, with our feelings.

Each of us has lived it in different ways.

*Sexualidad* should be pleasurable, but it not always is.

Now, it is everything I feel in my body through touch.

It is all the pleasure that two people share together and that which makes us happy, physically and psychologically. It isn't traumatic; it is about mutual love and respect.

2.Through the different teaching that each of us (three generations) has received our way of relating to our bodies is different. Through the things we have learned we try to make changes in ourselves and share what we have learned with others.

It is incomplete; I feel that I lack something, now I have arthritis.

I feel incomplete, I am cold, I don't give myself to him as I should, I don't know why.

3. Yes, we respect ourselves as women and as people.

Before I didn't have a clue, now I know how to value myself.

4.It was the first time I had taken part in a workshop on *sexualidad*, I didn't know my body before. It fulfilled my expectations.

5.All the themes were well received, especially recognising our bodies. We now give our bodies much more importance.

6. We would like to discuss the '*relacion de pareja*', relationship between man and wife and family relationships.

### Grupo Ninos

(Katalina (28 P), Yolanda (50 L), Rosario (49 L), Paty (39 P), Raquel (40 P), Pilar (67 P), Maria (35 P) Rosa (34 P) (+ 3 other women))

1.It is a '*complemento total*', everything combined together, a feeling, something physical and psychological and emotional, involving the whole body, skin, smells. It is the personal development of a woman in relation to her sex.

A means of reproduction.

For many it is something learnt aged 30, 40 or more.

The recognition of our body.

I discovered sex when I was 35, it was wonderful to have known it.

2. Now it is better, I have less fear than before and I observe it more.

For the most part it is better than before, we enjoy it more, feel more pleasure, although some continue feeling a lot of fear and are ashamed of touching their bodies or enjoying them.

3. It is true, my self-esteem is better and I feel more realised, although we realise that we still have a long way to go and everyday we learn more.

It isn't easy - it is a slow learning.

I look after my body, I give it more time to get better.

4. Yes, it has been *enriquecedor*, enriching; our vocabulary in relation to the theme is wider.

5. We liked all the themes, especially the relationship between man and wife and learning about what gives us pleasure.

6. We would like to *profundizar*, learn more about homosexuality and lesbianism.

### Grupo Condonos

(Mirella (34 P), Gina (68 L), Carmena (65 P), Maria, Sandra (59 P), Veronica (55 P), Soraya (26 P), Blanca (37 L) (+ 4 other women)

*“Por los condones del elefante, San Joaquin adelante”* (For the elephants condoms, San Joaquin goes forward).

1. The right to know about your own body and to decide in relation to it.

It is '*una porqueria*', a confusion. In 40 years I haven't had orgasms. I have lived for others, especially my children.

I don't like my husband he is very *salvaje*, savage/wild.

2. After so many years my relationship with my body is good and I feel my body without having (sexual) relations.

I have recently learned to value my body, to acknowledge it and touch it, without thinking that it is *grosero*.

All my life I have been a *mujer objeto*, an object; now after this workshop I like to look at my body and touch myself.

It is tired, it aches, it is defrauded, but one has to keep things to oneself, so I do and I get bitter.

I am healthy and disposed to share with my husband when he wants to.



3. I feel that my sexuality has improved in all my body and I love myself and I look after it.

Yes, I value myself as a person, I can talk about sex without feeling inhibited.

Little by little I am valuing myself. I find it difficult, my husband still takes me and rapes me.

It has always been good, now it is much better, I value myself more.

4.I have learnt, although late, to know myself and to be able to speak freely about 'sexualidad'.

Yes, I wish we could continue; I haven't understood all the themes in all their dimensions.

I liked this space to be tranquil and happy, because I am a slave to the house where I live, pure bitterness with children that were born *a la fuerza*, forced/not desired.

5.I have enjoyed all the themes because they have been concerned with me, I would like to be here forever.

6.We would like to look at all the themes in more detail.

I would like to learn something to help me with my children, I feel alone with my children.

### Grupo Palomas

(Erna (30 P), Maria F(40 OP), Me, Maggie (34 P), Ines (62 P), Rosa (45 P), Patricia (33 L)) (+ 3 other women).

1. Affection, kisses and caresses.

Sexual relations.

Harmony and comprehension in the home.

To feel love and attraction.

The key part of my identity (me).

2.Comfortable and content.

Now it is very good.

Good, I feel rejuvenated.

It is all right, I don't feel good because I used to be thin and now I feel fat.

Good, before I criticised my body a lot and I felt out of contact with it and I also did not have the right to decide over my body.

Before we all found it difficult to say 'no' when we did not want to have sexual relations, we felt obliged, but now "NO".

**3.**It made me feel stronger and with more confidence.

**4.**It went beyond our expectations.

I haven't lived it, but now I want to.

**5.**I liked the contact with my '*companeras*'.

I liked it because we learned to know our bodies and to value ourselves as women.

The massages, I was very anxious and the '*monitora*' helped me to relax.

It makes me feel that I have rights over my body.

**6.**I would like to share more of the experiences of individual women.

Case Study III: 'Sexualidad' in the school for women leaders in San Joaquin (run by women leaders)

Sexuality was included as part of the personal development module in the school for women leaders in San Joaquín, which was run by local women leaders for other women leaders. Yolanda (50 L) was the '*monitora*' at the first session. After doing some warm up exercise the work began and we put up a large sheet on the wall which Elena (49 L) filled out as women offered suggestions as to the meaning of *sexualidad* : -

- sex ('*el sexo*', '*el coito*')

- '*tareas*' (homework)

- to look into my husband's eyes

- obligation

- communication

- something that is necessary

- love

- pleasure

- offering oneself

- something good

- nice ('*rica*')

- health

- to free tensions
- a form of expression
- part of my identity (me)
- a biological necessity
- discharging tensions
- part of my life
- dirty
- bed
- affection
- intimacy
- breasts
- the body

Yolanda (50 L) explained that our sexuality is ours but that the patriarchal system and institutions have made us feel that it is not ours - not to think about it or to feel. Juana (39 P) said that she felt that we were born with sexuality - babies masturbate and this is normal. Sexuality is ours, but it has to be shared, not necessarily only between heterosexuals or in order to have orgasms. For her, full sexual pleasure is something experienced with a partner. She said that, if everything is fine in bed with her partner, everything else goes well. But she said she has many friends where the man leaps on top of her and ejaculates and that is it. Angelica thought that sexuality went much further than what you had with a partner. Jana (38 L) said that sexual relations are part of sexuality, they don't have to be with a partner to be pleasurable; it depends on each individual. It all had to do with cultural conditioning, myths and fear. When Yolanda (50 L) asked if any of the women felt that they were frightened of expressing themselves, Martha (59 L) was the first to reply, saying that she wasn't so much now, but it was taboo for a long time and it had been difficult for her to learn to be herself. One of the younger women said that it had been difficult for her too. She had married the first and only man she had had in her life and said that she was very repressed. She said she had learnt but felt she had lost a lot of time. Susanna (43 P) said that she too married the first man in her life and couldn't talk at all about sex at first. She said she had married for love and that, whilst she had had no other sexual experience, her husband had had other women. They now have 4 children but barely a sexual relationship. If she wants to have a good time she see her friends. Angelica said that she has a problem with masturbation; she feels guilty; that she married to have a partner not

to masturbate. Angelica's situation is unusual in that her partner is not very sexually interested and has even on occasions kicked her out of bed, some of the other women suspect that he is gay.

The younger unmarried women all said that they hadn't told their mothers when they started having sexual relations. One, aged 23, said that although she had talked a bit about sexuality with her parents - she and her sister knew what periods were before they started menstruating - she wouldn't like to tell her mother that she was having sexual relations with her boyfriend. There is still the assumption that they want her to be a virgin. Angelica (36 P) who has a 14-year-old daughter said that she hoped that she would tell her when she began having sexual relations. Other women reprimanded her saying that there was a need to respect daughters' choices.

Jana (38 L) talked about how girls have much more negative conditioning than boys do. For example, boys have masturbation competitions and are more able to get in touch with their sensations and sexual instincts. One of the younger women said that she had started having sexual relations when she was very young, with the man who is now her husband. She had her first child when she was 15. She said that she wished she had had more experience. Now it was too late. She said that she began to feel pleasure some time after they had got married; before it was too quick. Her friend, who had been quiet for some time, said she felt that we were all cowards, frightened of losing everything, of being alone.

Yolanda (50 L) voiced her frustration saying that the church and her parents *me cargaron*, burdened me, in the sense of having impeded her psycho-sexually. She said that she felt she had to be a virgin on her wedding day. She had had a mediocre sexual life with her husband, which was now over, and just as she might like to explore elsewhere, AIDS had arrived.

Nancy (37 P) told us that she was raped when she was 15. She overcame this to some degree with her husband but he was very jealous and hit her. Now she feels nothing with him during sex. Sandra (59 P) had a *madre castigadora*, a mother who punished her and hit her. She married at 18 and had to run away with her husband. She was too afraid of returning home having had sexual relations with him. She had been one year

away from finishing her studies, so the cost had been high. Carmen (47 P) says that she had a great mother, but she was never able to talk with her and her siblings. She even hid her pregnancies and dressed Carmen and her sister in '*copinos*' to hide their developing breasts. Susanna said she would like to re-live her youth with the knowledge and experience she has now.

Yolanda (50 L) said that sexuality involves all our being. She said that she was *sexuada*, a sexual being. All women are but often can't express it the way that men can. She talked about the way women's sexuality is controlled in other parts of the world, describing how in Africa and Asia over 5 million women are circumcised so that they cannot feel sexual pleasure and are purely reproducers. We too have been denied our right to sexual pleasure, she said. She talked about more ancient civilizations saying that, on primitive ceramics, women are all fat and are less often seen in a couple, people lived in a more communal fashion. Women, she says, were seen as goddesses because of their ability to reproduce; they were worshipped as symbols of fertility. Yolanda (50 L) related that the subsequent realisation of the economic value of children meant that women's bodies were appropriated and that women themselves became invisible. Our bodies were still controlled - the church decided how many children we should have, or the health system. She cited the fact that men are never sterilised. She said that at 58 she feels that she shouldn't feel or think anymore, let alone feel sexual pleasure. Everyone pressurises and questions her and others decide for her and restrict her. We need to start making changes, she said, not just relating to our genitals but 'integral' changes.

The women were entranced listening to Yolanda (50 L). Angelica (36 P) was the first to speak, saying how much she liked what Yolanda (50 L) had said and saying that we have been used all our lives; we have experienced so many fears that it has been difficult to be able to relax and enjoy our sexuality. Yolanda (50 L) responded that it was difficult, it required a process. It was easy to talk here, but as soon as we got home it was different. It was about changing people's mentalities. The church still says that women have to maintain respectability enclosed in the home - from this notion the roles of good mother, wife and grandmother emerged, making us invisible as women. The church has said that women have to accept all this and keep quiet. Jana (38 L) added that it is important to emphasise that these are 'cultural things' and therefore susceptible to change. They can be modified and are not 'natural.'

Angelica (36 P) asked Susanna if her husband had cheated on her. Susanna (43 P) answered that he had on a number of occasions. She went to the *juzgados*, the justices, seeking a separation. The judge asked her if her husband hit her and when she answered 'no' he said 'well he doesn't treat you badly then' and said they couldn't separate. One of the younger women said that when her child was 8 months old her husband had cheated on her. She threw him out when she discovered this. She said that for her mother's sake she had let him come back as she couldn't bear for her mother to think she was *mala*, or bad. It had never been the same as it was before, she said, although she wouldn't say she didn't love him. She told him everything she felt and she says he had changed. She felt that she had gained a lot of freedom and respect as a result. Previously he had been very jealous, not allowing her to wear make up. Susanna said she didn't believe that there was such a thing as a faithful man and the others agreed. She also said she didn't like marriage and thought that it wasn't good for women.

At the second workshop, run by Elena (49 L) and Jana (38 L), the first exercise we were asked to do was to draw our body. Many drew bodies with clothes on, or half-clothed eg. with breasts but with the bottom half covered up. Often the pictures bore no resemblance to the drawer eg. long hair and a small waist, when the woman actually had short hair and was full-figured. Maria (35 P) said she didn't like to look at herself in the mirror. Pilar (31 P) said she didn't like to see her body naked and that is why she put clothes on the body she drew. She said that other people liked her body but she didn't. She wanted to be thin. Rosario (49 L) said she accepted her body as it was, although she said it had rolls of fat and bits that hung out where they shouldn't. Jana (38 L) commented that Patricia (33 L) drew herself tiny in a large space - several other women had done the same. She said that it wasn't a coincidence that we cover our breasts and pubis, it was cultural and had to do with morals that were imposed on us. We needed to appropriate our bodies. We were making ourselves invisible, she said. If we cover ourselves then it also suggests we are not feeling - that we are not in touch with our sexuality. Yolanda (50 L) said that, just because she is old, that doesn't mean she has to deny or reject her body. Jana (38 L) spoke of the self-inflicted violence of not recognising or acknowledging our desires or the aches and pains they produced.

Martha (59 L) said that now she loved her body but she didn't before. She has learnt to love and accept it. Nancy (37 P) said she feels that it is prohibited to be naked; that is why she covers herself up. Yolanda (50 L) said that we lose our capacity to feel. Loreto (40 L) mentioned that we also deny ourselves the pleasure of masturbation.

We then had to pick out and put labels on two large diagrams, one showing the male penis and reproductive organs and the other showing the female vulva and a separate picture of her reproductive organs. Yolanda (50 L) then went through identifying all the parts of both sets of sexual organs. She emphasised that the inner organs were for reproduction with the sexual organs outside. She said that it was incorrect what we had always been told that the men have their sexual organs outside and the women inside - we have them outside too - the clitoris is outside the body. Jana (38 L) commented that the little sexual information or education there is, only concerns itself with the vagina upwards in the case of the woman. In fact, she said, our sexual organ is the vulva, not the vagina. Many women did not know where the clitoris was located or what it was. One woman asked about the 'G' spot and Yolanda (50 L) said that this was a myth. She said that nearly 100% of the sensitive nerve endings were in the clitoris and that the vagina was just muscle. There followed some discussion as several women were convinced that they had had orgasms in their vaginas.

Several women asked about the effects of a hysterectomy on sexual pleasure. Yolanda (50 L) explained that it made no difference - she herself had had a hysterectomy and felt pleasure and desire in the same way. Yolanda (50 L) also cleared up another myth - that men can feel IUDs with their penis and that it hurts and he says *me molesta, sacatelo*, it bothers me, take it out. One woman said that her husband had used this as an excuse to have sex with another woman. Yolanda (50 L) said that, unless the IUD has fallen out of place, the man couldn't reach it with his penis. At the end she emphasised that everything she had learned she had learned from other women and that it was important to keep passing on this information. Homework was to take a long shower or bath and to caress and feel our bodies.

At the next session, the first exercise was to split into pairs and take turns to stroke and massage each other whilst standing, in accordance with Yolanda (50 L)'s instructions, to the sound of calming music played in the background. At the end most of the women spontaneously embraced their massage partner. Afterwards they all expressed how much they had enjoyed the exercise. Some said that they had initially

felt uncomfortable, not with massaging the other person but with being stroked and massaged themselves. Marie (43 P) said that she usually didn't like touching or being touched, it is seen as unacceptable she said for women to touch each other, but like the others, she said that she had enjoyed it and felt more confident and relaxed. Another woman said that when embracing her partner after the exercise she had experienced a sensation that she and her partner were *como un solo ser*, like one being.

After this we took it in turns to pick questions relating to sexuality from a sack. Martha (59 L) read out a question in relation to the menopause. She said she felt that the menopause was a time that women's needs were neglected. She thought that women should attend 'control' at the clinic. Jana (38 L) said that it was a *mito*, myth, that once women were no longer able to reproduce, their sex life ends and also their value as women. Martha (59 L) said she felt that women do not want to *asumir*, confront, the menopause and talk about it openly. They feared criticisms, more from other women than from men.

Tatiana (48 P) read out the next *mito*: that women should *fingir*, fake pleasure, in order to satisfy men. She said that this was wrong, that they should talk together; *los dos tienen derecho a sentir*, they both have a right to feel. Maria (35 P) said that all women have faked sometimes, several others voiced their agreement, (Susanna 43P) said that she had faked orgasms for years: she had never felt pleasure with her husband. She also said that she had had children *por obligacion* because the doctors would not sterilise her until she had that number of children.

Nancy (37 P) read out the next question: men can have sexual relations without involving themselves emotionally, women can't, and she agreed that this was true that women generally only sleep with men because they feel something for them. This stimulated some discussion, with the women concluding that women can feel *deseo*, desire, and *placer*, pleasure, without involving themselves, but that they did not generally put this into practice.

In answer to the following question, 'where did you learn about sex?' the women said that they learnt through experience and in the workshops they had participated in with other women. Susanna said she felt that she had learnt too late.



Juana (39 P) read out another *mito*, that men feel more sexual impulse than women and this is why men need more sex than women. Susanna (43 P) said that, looking back, if she had had a better relationship with a different partner she would have liked to have had sex every day. Jana (38 L) said we have castrated our desires: this had to do with our history as women. She mentioned the fact that *violacion*, rape, is common in marriage and being put down by men in general. Another woman said that she used sex to communicate anger - *chantaje* - and the other women all agreed that they had done this too. Susanna reflected that in the end she was punishing herself.

The next question related to *eyaculacion precoz*, a condition which many of the women did not understand. Yolanda (50 L) explained the 'squeeze technique' where, by pressing the penis in the correct place, ejaculation can be delayed. She explained that men too have suffered as a result of being taught that sex is dirty and *pecado*, sinful, giving the example of young boys being made to hurry up in the bathroom.

Miriam (39 P) read the next question which concerned the issue of whether the size of a man's penis affects the amount of pleasure he and the woman he is with experience. All the women agreed that this was not true.

Maggie (34 P) then read out the following *mito*: *sexualidad* is an instinct so it is not necessary to learn anything. There was some disagreement as to whether sexuality has an instinctual aspect to it, but all agreed that it was more than this and it was definitely important to learn about it so as to be able to experience it fully.

The next question asked how often a couple should have sex. The women agreed that this was something for each couple to decide. One woman said that once a week was plenty, *mas y me muero*, more than that and I'd die, she said. Other women said that they had sex with their husbands every other night. One said that early on in their marriage her partner used to try to have sex with her several times a day. She got so used to fighting him off that she had no sense of her own desires at all.

Jana (38 L) read out the final *mito* which stated that sexual relations were more about pleasure for men than for women. She said that in practice this was true but that we were now addressing this issue.

Case Study IV : 'Sexualidad' at the school for women leaders organised by the local council

The local council of San Joaquin offered a 'School of Integral Development for Women Dirigentas or Leaders', taking the idea from Tierra Nuestra's School for Women Leaders (which has been running for a number of years) and the School for Women Leaders organised by 'dirigentas' in San Joaquin, which was in its first year. One of the themes was *Relacion de pareja y sexualidad*, Relationships and Sexuality, presented by an anthropologist. I attended the workshop with Jana (38 L) which was held in the Civic Centre. The set up was much more than typical of a teaching situation. The anthropologist stood up at one end of the room writing things up on a large sheet of paper, with the women seated in two lines along the sides of the room. We signed in on our way in and received a programme, a badge with our name on and photocopied material. The first exercise was to work in two groups and draw up a list of women's rights and responsibilities, which the anthropologist then listed on the board:

<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Rights</u>
<u>Group A</u>	
to educate	space
nutrition/feeding	to require discipline
protection	to share
to satisfy her husband sexually	to be listened to
to listen	to be loved and satisfied
to attend to the ' <i>dueno de casa</i> ', her husband	sexually by her husband
 <u>Group B</u>	
to procreate	sexual rights
to be a ' <i>buena madre</i> ', good mother	to exercise one's citizenship
to be ' <i>duena de casa</i> ', a house-keeper	reproductive rights

to give a good example to your children  
to concern oneself with the man's development  
to recognise one's rights

'*deberes de obediencia*', responsibilities of  
obedience

'*deberes de sometida*', responsibilities of  
submissiveness

to attend to guests  
(38 L))

to freedom

to have an opinion

to decide in relation to my  
person

to abortion

to work outside the home

to express oneself

to rest

to have a lover (Jana (38 L))

In relation to the responsibilities of obedience and submissiveness, the women reflected that these are contained in the Bible and the wording of the marriage ceremony. There was some argument relating to this: some women denying that they existed and others saying that they had strategies for dealing with them. When Jana (38 L) said she wanted the right to have a lover there was a shocked silence. One woman said that a lover was when a man married and then has another partner. 'Yes', said Jana (38 L), 'that's exactly what I want to do'. Some of the women laughed nervously. Some of the other rights included in the second list were included because of my and Jana (38 L)'s presence, such as the right to abortion. The anthropologist introduced the idea that social roles were taught culturally. In the discussion there was a considerable amount of resistance from many of the women to the idea that there were still inequalities between men and women, Jana (38 L) and I stood out clearly as *feministas* and there was some tension between us and the other women. Most of these women had a different type of organisational background to the women of the Coordination, several coming from *Centros de Madres* or from organisations with close links with the local council and most would have considered themselves middle-class. We then worked through the contents of photocopies of IPPF material relating to sexual behaviour and sexual dysfunctions. We discussed 'cultural reasons' for sexual problems, such as lack of information/awareness; lack of communication and 'socio-cultural reasons to do with men's and women's traditional roles and a cultural double standard in relation to sexuality, which on the one hand says it is *pecado* and encourages female modesty and on the other allows advertisements which show women as sexual objects. When the anthropologist asked the women what was happening with young people and marriage,

the women replied that they did not want to get married, they just wanted to live together. The anthropologist pointed out that traditional roles were changing and that the loss of identity as a man's *señora*, 'Mrs' to becoming his *companera*, companion, could mean a loss of power too. We could no longer rely on the man as provider, an assumption that many women still make, feminists included. He also raised the fact that our *machismo* often comes out in our dealings with our *nuera*, daughter-in-law. We don't expect our daughters to wash plates, but then expect our *nuera* to do everything for our son. In general the women were more conservative than those involved with the Coordination, but all agreed that they would not marry if they had their time again. Jana (38 L) questioned at the end of the workshop how it could be called a workshop on sexuality when there was no mention of female orgasm or clitorises. Whilst the anthropologist had made an effort to make the workshop participative, his approach fell short of the 'horizontal relations' ideal which she and the other women from the Coordination aim for in their work.

## **Appendix VII**

### **Declaration of Reproductive and Sexual Rights**

(Produced by the Open Forum for Health and Reproductive Rights. My own translation)

1. The right to have value as human beings and not only in terms of women's reproductive function. This requires that women be recognised in their own right with their own identity, extending beyond their reproductive capacity, with skills and potential.
2. The right to share equally the responsibilities during pregnancy, birth and during the post-natal period, in bringing up children, doing away with the mistaken notion that these tasks can only be done by women.
3. The right to have public education policies that promote sexuality from infancy as an important aspect of life that should be lived as something pleasurable, without fear or shame.
4. The right to an educational system, which provides adequate information about sexuality and reproduction, preparing children and including educative programmes for, mothers, fathers, guardians and teachers. This sexual and reproductive education should be based on notions of self-esteem and emotions. It should be clear, non-sexist, humanising, respectful and without discrimination.
5. The right to education and public health policies which promote the sexual and reproductive responsibility of men and their active participation in the use of contraception.
6. The right to be able to count on the nutrition necessary for growth and development, preserving the reproductive capacity of each individual throughout their lives. The right is closely linked with other rights that assure the dignity of life.
7. The right to conditions which facilitate childcare, such as creches and nursery schools (especially in the case of seasonal workers, adolescents and women-headed households), basic education, after school centres for children whose parents work away from home; infant health programmes; legal provisions ensuring that women in salaried work can breastfeed their children; low-cost public services to enable household maintenance.
8. The right of women not to suffer discrimination in the workplace or in education because they are pregnant, have small children, or because of their marital status.
9. The right to decide whether to have children, their spacing and number, taking into account our future projects and concern for the welfare of the family.
10. The right to voluntary and responsible motherhood and fatherhood, either naturally or by adoption, regardless of marital status. This applies also to infertility treatment.
11. The right to share equally, between women and men, the efforts and risks involved in implementing the reproductive decisions made by the couple (whether to have children and family size). This right releases women from their exclusive responsibility and is aimed at the decisions being implemented through the use of contraceptives, as much by women as by men.
12. The right to care and rest during pregnancy, to share domestic chores with the partner or for these tasks to be carried out by other family members.
13. The right to enjoy a full, voluntary and responsible sexual life.
14. The right to enjoy sexuality independently of reproduction.
15. The right to choose one's partner freely, without external pressures and to respect for different sexual orientations.
16. The right to have voluntary sexual relations, including within marriage.

17. The right to exercise one's sexuality with autonomy, in accordance with the needs, principles and desires of each individual, taking into account the rights of the other party.
18. The right to exercise one's sexuality without being infected with sexually transmitted diseases.
19. The right to exercise one's sexuality without risk to one's health or life. This implies shared responsibility of the individuals that participate in the sexual relation and responsibility on the part of the state to ensure access to education and the prevention of risks, in terms of adequate and non-discriminatory treatment of diseases.
20. The right to awareness of one's own body and to decide in relation to it in a free and informed way.
21. The right to integral healthcare and good quality attention throughout a woman's life cycle and not exclusively in the fertile period. The right applies to promotion, prevention and recuperation as much as to psychological and occupational health. It is also considered necessary to strengthen the public health system and halt the privatisation process.
22. The right to good quality attention in relation to reproductive and sexual health, that incorporates contraceptive services, attention during pregnancy, birth and the post-natal period, infertility treatment in accordance with human rights practice, complete gynaecological attention, early detection and treatment of cervical/uterine and breast cancer, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, especially AIDS, a safe abortion service, or as a minimum, efficient, effective and humane treatment for women who attend with an incomplete abortion, advice and assistance in family planning after an abortion, services offering attention to women during the menopause, services offering attention specifically to adolescents, bio-psycho-social attention in relation to sexuality, violence and sexual abuse.
23. The right to contraceptive services which encompass health personnel who are competent, respectful, non-discriminating and with good interpersonal skills; an efficient and effective system for referrals; objective and up-to-date information in relation to all types of contraceptives, including details of their effectiveness, safety, the way in which they work, their disadvantages and side-effects.
24. The right to hold those who provide contraceptives and other medicines that concern sexual and reproductive health legally responsible for their actions.
25. The right to informed access about both male and female sterilisation, in accordance with the preferences and circumstances of each, without referring the need for the decision to be authorised by the partner.
26. The right to count on adequate legislation in relation to abortion, that abortion be considered a public health problem, where priority is given to the life and health of the woman.
27. The right to effective legal protection against violence and sexual abuse.
28. The right to the information necessary to assess the benefits and risks of alternative medical treatments, so as to be able to decide freely in relation to surgical operations on one's body.
29. The right to legal protection against surgical abuses, such as unnecessary hysterectomies and sterilisations, etc., and against technological abuses, such as the use of toxic substances in the work environment.
30. The right to participate as part of an organised civil society in the monitoring of research into new medicines and new reproductive technologies, including the introduction of new contraceptives.

31. The right of women to participate equally by voice and vote in the formulation of health policies, programmes and campaigns which concern them, at the local, regional and national levels.

The right of women to participate in the formulation and monitoring of the policies and plans for the implementation in Chile of the Programme of Action of the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development is also important.

We consider that it is necessary in our country that women and men, civil society and government, respect these reproductive and sexual rights as basic elements of justice and of people's well being, dignity and happiness. And we are committed to them becoming a part of the every reality of each one of us.

Organising for the defence of our reproductive and sexual rights is an integral part of citizenship. We will denounce and protest against abuses of these rights, we will contribute reliable information and we will propose laws, policies and lines of work that permit us to exercise them fully.

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