

- Boccia, Maria Luisa, undated, "Da una piccola a una grande minoranza", unpublished mimeo.
- Boccia, Maria Luisa, undated, "La búsqueda de la diferencia", unpublished mimeo.
- Castellanos, Rosario, 1979, "La liberación de la mujer, aquí", *Excelsior*, 5 September, reproduced in *El uso de la palabra*, Mexico, Ediciones de Excelsior.
- EMAS et al. (eds.), 1987, "Feminism and Popular Sectors in Latin America", proceedings of a Feminist Workshop, held in Mexico City, November 1986.
- García Amalia, Ifigenia Martínez and Nuria Fernández, "Las cuotas de mujeres en el PRD", *Revista Debate Feminista*, No.3, March.
- Jaiven, Ana Lau, 1987, *La nueva ola del feminismo en Mexico*, Mexico: Planeta.
- Lamas, Marta, 1987, "Venir de los diecisiete", *Revista Fem.*, No.58, October.
- Lovera, Sara, 1991, "Magro fruto de la batalla para lograr una bancada feminista", *Revista Debate Feminista*, No.4, September.
- Monsivaís, Carlos, 1990, "De como amenceció un día Pro-vida", *Revista Debate Feminista*, No.3, March.
- Tarrés, Maria Luisa, with G. Hita and A. Lozano, 1991, "Actitudes y estrategias de los diversos agentes sociales y políticos que participan en el debate sobre el aborto en la prensa mexicana 1976-1989" (Attitudes and strategies of those social and political actors who took part in the debate on abortion in the Mexican press, 1976-1989), unpublished mimeo, November.

CHAPTER 7

Women's Struggle for Equality and Citizenship in Chile

Natacha Molina G.

INTRODUCTION

The participation of women in public life is an ongoing and irreversible process which has become increasingly linked to global issues of democracy and development. Its resolution involves a range of actors: women and men, social entities, the state, public powers and the international community. From a feminist perspective, the aim is to ensure that these processes and relations move in a democratic direction. The project for change advocated by the women's movement is itself undergoing transformation: its tone has become less belligerent and it is seeking a more measured public agenda in negotiation with other social actors and interests. How is this transformed agenda regarded by feminists themselves?

In view of these developments it is appropriate to reflect on the future strategies of feminism. In the end we are left with the age-old feminist question of what it means to "do politics". The history of women's attempts to form a political movement shows that the movement for gender equality grows when feminism abandons introspection and makes inroads into the structures of power and reaches out to women in general. Achieving equality for women is therefore central to the concept of democracy. As Lechner [1994] remarks, "equality of opportunities for women is an opportunity for democracy".

With this in mind, this chapter explores relations between women, the state and civil society in two key areas: the development of public policies on women and political action by women as social actors and citizens. The Chilean case is illustrative partly because it is paradigmatic for many other Latin American countries but mainly because after nearly two decades of dictatorship it has come closest to attaining a level of development which articulates democracy, economic growth and equity.

STATE, CIVIL SOCIETY AND WOMEN

Nearly three decades have passed since Latin American feminism first aimed to make visible the discrimination suffered by women. The issue of equal op-

portunities between the genders is now part of the public agenda and important international and national instruments are in place to monitor discriminatory practices. This important transformation is the result of a protracted history of meetings and mutual learning by the feminist movement, civil society and the state. Although it is difficult to generalize across Latin America, there are some common features.

Women in Public Life

The first shared characteristic relates to the progressive integration of women into public life during the last quarter of the 20th century. In this period women's participation in the workforce has increased, facilitated by a series of socio-demographic changes: greater access to education, lower birth rates, longer life expectancy and later marriages. These changes have diversified the life projects of women and challenged the one-sided image of women as wives, mothers, homemakers and neighbors. The majority of women today have more space for personal development and for creating new relationships in the natural and cultural realms.

Nevertheless, women's more visible presence has not substantially altered the gender gap. Higher levels of education have not led to the diversification of women's careers nor to a widening of their employment opportunities. Female workers continue to earn less than their male counterparts, confront more difficulties in finding a job or gaining promotion, and are discriminated against when they are mothers or mothers-to-be. Life options for women continue to be curtailed by domestic and family responsibilities, irrespective of the size of these responsibilities. Female sexuality continues to be exclusively linked to marriage and procreation. In addition, women continue to be strongly under-represented in politics and public decision-making. This has led more and more women to confront the issue of gender discrimination and to demand equal opportunities: a demand which transcends feminism and involves diverse social actors and institutions. Consequently, equality between the genders has become a social and political problem which must be regulated by the state.

Feminism and Democracy

The second important development is that feminist movements in Latin America have acquired social and symbolic force as part of the social struggle for democracy. In the 1970s and 1980s, diverse groups of women merged their respective interests into a single anti-authoritarian discourse in the expectation that the restoration of democracy would reduce gender inequalities. This is how feminism, which originated primarily amongst middle-class professional women, strove to gain a foothold in society, win space and status for women, and challenge the democratic political forces.

Rethinking Theories and Concepts

A third development is the impetus given to the production of knowledge by the UN Decade on Women (1975-1985). This decade inspired a range of theo-

retical and practical efforts to advance the socio-economic participation of women. Resources were allocated to research on women and to strengthening spaces in support of women's rights (NGOs) [Valdes, 1995]. The idea that global processes of modernization automatically improved women's economic capacity and quality of life was abandoned [Jaquette, undated]. A new concept of development was sought, one which incorporated the problematic of women in a more integral manner, employed the concept of gender as a specific category and provided an opportunity for studies on women (often undertaken by feminists) which would engage with other analytical perspectives which had failed to address gender issues satisfactorily. In addition to these developments, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Nairobi, 1985) marks an important point of reference in support of the movement's proposals. This advocated the creation of national machinery to advance women's interests and to integrate gender perspectives into legislation, and public policies and programs.

Respect for Diversity

Finally, the transition toward democracy and modernization which began in some Latin American countries at the beginning of the 1990s is significant. This transition occurred in an international climate which placed greater value on the principles of diversity, pluralism and respect for differences, thereby enabling women's diverse interests and identities to be taken into account. In this way, the opportunity to debate gender equality and to regard it as an indispensable component of the democratic movement in our societies was broadened. This climate, directly or indirectly, helped transform the Nairobi recommendations into effective public policies and create institutional spaces charged with promoting and coordinating policies on women.¹ In this way the possibility of injecting feminist issues into state policies was opened up, as well as the incorporation of feminists into the official sphere.

Women and the State

The fact that the state affects the lives of women raises several concerns for feminism. Historically our governments have been a principal mechanism for reproducing gender inequality, subordination and exclusion, with respect to participation in decision-making, policy-making and the construction of citizenship. Is it then possible to formulate policies for change within structures with these characteristics? Setting aside stereotypes or messianic visions, any answer has to take into account that society and state as well as women have undergone profound changes. Economic crises, social fragmentation and the rise of new social identities have led other social forces, in which women are also present, to wage a new form of collective struggle against discrimination.

In addition, neo-liberal modernization means that the state is no longer the principal agent of development or regulator of social interests; its functions and size have been reduced. Other institutions, principally the market and the media, have taken on the role of regulator, emphasizing the self-regulation of citizens and leading toward collective systems of belonging. A complex com-

petitive struggle has radically reshaped the relationship between the public and private spheres, affecting both the grassroots, the state and democracy, and generating uncertainty and opportunities for the future.

Finally, as has been said before, the last decades of the 20th century are a period of transition and globalization in which both society and the state are markedly different from when feminist struggles first arose. In this context, formulating public policies on women from a gender perspective implies incorporating gender as a category across the range of state structures and legitimizing its integration.

Establishing a relationship between the state and women has not been easy. For feminists, rapprochement with the state was an unprecedented step in Latin American history, and one which both they and the state resisted. Underlying their meeting is a history of state-civil society-women relations in which the state never regarded women as suffering from specific discrimination, given their analysis of power relationships anchored in culture. On their side, women have been unclear about the links between their problems and the restrictions on their social, economic and political citizenship. Accordingly, a gender perspective is a point of view that has had to be constructed.

The new relationships have achieved significant success, nevertheless. Government action toward women has led to reflection and public debate on new issues such as sexuality, reproductive rights, feminization of poverty, political exclusion and equal rights. The principle of non-discrimination toward women has become progressively embedded in common sense thinking, forcing both left and right to respond. Those conservative cultural sectors who are most opposed have generally assumed a fundamentalist approach. On the other hand, progressive forces have been forced to revise their theory and culture and to recognize the large gaps in a political tradition which ignored women.

This broadening of the debate has involved many actors and institutions, some of whom resist considering women as citizens or as subjects outside the home, and who actively reproduce masculine and feminine stereotypes. Whether the struggle to achieve full equality of rights and opportunities will end positively or revert back to policies and cultures which support sexism, depends on the relative strength of these opposing views. In this context, the production of knowledge by feminism constitutes an important pillar in the construction of public policies.

DEVELOPING PUBLIC POLICIES ON WOMEN

The Chilean experience provides a good example of the problems encountered when proposing public policies on women. In Chile policies on women are being introduced in a context marked by a transition to democracy, whose political dynamics tend to prioritize the restitution of the rule of law. This involves reconstructing democratic institutions (constitutional and legal reforms) and making adjustments in order to be able to respond efficiently to social problems and to the demands of newly emerging social identities.

National Women's Service: SERNAM

The National Women's Service (SERNAM),² the state agency created in 1991 to coordinate public policy on women, parts from the premise that combating inequality and poverty requires explicit political will. From the beginning of the transition it was clear that the policies and programs developed by SERNAM had to cohere with its own objectives and with the overall goals of the government. SERNAM pushed for three kinds of initiatives: legislative reform, specific social programs for women, and policies aimed at confronting inequality in society as a whole.

In the first period (1990-93), initiatives were mainly encompassed within a social policy perspective, focusing on such issues as poverty, family violence or teenage pregnancies. The National Plan for Equal Opportunities³ aimed to develop these programs further and to incorporate new policy recommendations to be implemented by various government sectors. This Plan, which sets the government's agenda for women until the year 2000, has been accepted by the executive. Nevertheless, this does not mean that every government body effectively prioritizes the plan in their work.

As mentioned above, SERNAM is confronted with the difficult task of developing gender equality policies in a cultural framework and within a traditional state apparatus which does not always recognize existing unequal relations. This has meant engaging in processes and designing strategies which ensure the construction of a gender perspective within the government.

Initial efforts in this direction involved demonstrating the close relationship between women and poverty in order to insert a gender perspective into the government's social priorities [Valenzuela, 1995]. Later, the Equality Plan stressed the need to go beyond social policy and insert a gender perspective across the range of government programs and raise gender awareness throughout the state.

Social Equity versus Gender Equity

Despite its achievements, SERNAM encountered a number of difficulties arising from the tension between the policy objectives and principles being pursued generally and those informing policies directed at women. A first group of difficulties relates to the tension between the objectives of social policies and the elimination of gender inequality. In terms of development, government programs are shaped by the priority given to achieving stable economic growth with social equity within the framework of a market economy. This involves a commitment to social policies which benefit the poorest groups in society, of whom a large proportion are women. Accordingly, poor women, especially those who are heads of households, form a target group. From the point of view of overcoming gender inequality, the option of prioritizing poor women would appear to be the best way of increasing awareness and visibility of sex discrimination. This is certainly the case when it is introduced in a context of expanding social benefits and forms part of an integral perspective in which women control the distribution of benefits. In practice, however, this is not the case. The subsidies and benefits being offered to women (for

example, housing, training, employment) are geared toward improving the living conditions of the poorest homes and not toward changing relations of subordination in the household.

Analyzing female poverty with reference to economic indicators alone runs the risk of overlooking many of the dimensions which underlie it. Female poverty cannot be reduced exclusively to a lack of economic resources, but needs to take account of the invisibility and devaluing of women's contribution to society and the restrictions on women's basic social rights which determine citizenship in this sphere. Traditional social policies perceive women not as subjects with rights but through the lens of the family or the partner. Given that these criteria continue to inform policy-making, women are at most the indirect beneficiaries of policies aimed at the family unit as a whole. The same can be said with regard to other social policies, in which women are perceived in terms of their membership of wider and ungendered social categories such as workers, consumers, residents or users of public services. By contrast, policies which are developed from a gender perspective should consider women as subjects with rights and thereby able to control benefits and resources independently of family relations. They should, in addition, go beyond social policy and inform government economic and political policy.

Authoritarian Organizational Structures

A second group of problems relates to the difficulties in coordinating the structures and mechanisms in charge of drawing up gender equality policies for the entire state apparatus. Implementing the government's democratic goals involves transforming the structure and organization of the state so that this can respond more efficiently and flexibly to changing and varied social needs. This involves constructing a democratic, decentralized, transparent state, which is capable of processing multiple and diverse social demands, and which recognizes and respects the rights of people and social collectivities to participate in and control public decisions [Provoste, 1995a].

However, these goals clash with a political tradition in which the state responds to pressure from the most structured groups in society, such as those represented by the political party system. They also confront a state structure with an entrenched hierarchy, supported by an authoritarian organizational culture which is guided more by the need to comply with norms and practices than to meet the needs of citizens [*ibid.*]. There are also contradictory goals within the process of modernization implemented by the military regime, associated exclusively with structural adjustment, fiscal discipline and reducing public employment [FLACSO et al., 1995]. None of these features supports the goals of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in the state or incorporating a gender perspective into public policy.

The measures and initiatives undertaken by SERNAM, particularly those stemming from the Equality Plan, aim to promote policies with "an integral focus according to the systematic character of discrimination". Their implementation thereby involves the entire state apparatus. As the plan points out,

gender equality means redistributing resources, social tasks, rights, participation and positions of power, and a revaluing of activities carried out by men and women.⁴ This task involves establishing coherent mechanisms and developing inter-sectoral gender policies which do not correspond to prevailing organizational structure or practice.

Although SERNAM formally counts on mechanisms to coordinate inter-sectoral actions, it has yet to establish an easy working relationship with the rest of the state apparatus. In addition to its function as a regulatory, planning and coordination agency, SERNAM has to take on board a number of other tasks: move beyond social policy and involve the state's economic and political structures; legitimize its actions with ministries and public entities which carry out actions for women and raise awareness among authorities of the need for a gender perspective. Given that SERNAM depends fundamentally on other public agencies to implement its programs, the task of legitimizing its concerns are paramount.

Gender Policies at the Local Level

A third cluster of difficulties relates to gaps in policies and mechanisms for introducing a gender perspective on the local level. Although formal responsibility for implementing policies rests with central government, in practice this falls to local governments. On paper, municipal governments are autonomous entities with broad powers for local development and local fund raising. In practice, however, municipal authorities are limited by the traditional centralization of power as well as by restrictions which the current economic model places on resources [Racynski and Serrano, 1992; Provoste et al., 1995b].

Policies developed at central level only operate as a general guide for municipal governance and their implementation depends on the political will of local authorities. In some cases women's offices have been created, but these do not enjoy an easy relationship with municipal agencies as a whole and do not have the resources or the political authority to influence other agencies. Plans for equality at the local level which are based on a diagnosis of the situation of local women do not exist and there do not appear to be any moves to create them.⁵ In addition there are no channels for women at grassroots level to participate in drawing up plans and programs at local and regional levels.

Given these conditions, the majority of policies, even those which contain an equality plan, largely reach women in the form of sectoral programs carried out by local governments or private agencies. Only in a few instances, such as the case of some NGOs, do these organizations have any experience of gender issues or knowledge of a gender perspective. This makes it more difficult to give these programs a focus which would allow them to affect integrally the lives of women.

Obstacles to Mainstreaming

In sum, an analysis of public policies shows that, irrespective of their explicit objectives, they contain elements of a social model which regards the social,

political and family spheres in ungendered terms. In Latin America the state continues to be an important structure for addressing demands from the social sphere, historically presented through political parties. In the case of women's needs, these have been represented in a way which obscures gender relations and which co-opts citizenship. This tradition is maintained as a tension both at the level of the state, as well as within the female universe, and is reinforced by the media and the market in a national and international climate of growing conservatism.

Integrating policies of equality into mainstream policy-making entails challenging these traditions and seeking out new ways of coherently integrating social equity and gender equity. Even when the option seems clear at the level of discourse, there is no shared theoretical body of work to guide and support policy-making in this sense. This lack of conceptualization leads us back to the need to evaluate the experiences currently underway in Latin America.

In countries such as Chile, experience shows that inertia and resistance can only be overcome through profoundly changing the political culture which underpins relations between state and civil society. Such a change entails constructing state institutions which are open to change and willing to listen to the people. It also requires involved citizens who are aware of their rights and opportunities and capable of evaluating state actions.

The situation described below acknowledges the potential ambiguity of advances toward equal opportunities and equal rights. The affirmation of these principles will depend on how processes evolve and how equality takes hold in society and in the state. According to Lechner [1994], although equality of opportunities represents a principle that is now generalized in our time, it is not enough. It is necessary to create a community of interests around equality of opportunities: one which involves the state, political parties, the media as well as women themselves.

POLITICAL PROTAGONISM⁶

According to earlier reasoning, progress in the institutional political realm and in the construction of a critical mass are simultaneously required. Sufficient people and institutions need to be concerned about equality of rights and opportunities for women to generate public awareness on the issue and a movement of citizens which keeps the process accountable [Astelarra, 1994]. In this way, a continuous process of interaction between policy-makers, the general public, and women's multiple and diverse interests can take place.

However, this is not a spontaneous process nor one which operates in an ideological vacuum. It is essentially a political process which requires the active intervention of women as social actors and citizens in pursuit of equality and the strengthening of democracy. A review of women's actions in both capacities (actors and citizens) shows that their current intervention rests on very different foundations from those of the past.

The Women's Movement in Chile

Historically the women's movement in Chile made a substantial contribution to the building of national democracy. This is seen in such developments as the extension of political representation in 1949 when women gained the vote, the outstanding role played by women's organizations in restoring the social fabric of society during the years of military dictatorship and, from 1990 onwards, their input into the creation of institutional mechanisms and policies to incorporate gender equality into the public agenda. However, the record also shows resistance to such inputs and a gap between women's considerable potential for social action and their reduced ability to influence decision-making processes [Aylwin, 1990].

During the years of repression, the goal of restoring democracy underpinned the engagement of many different groups of women. From this involvement, the idea developed that politics was about just that: interacting with people at grassroots level, opening up collective spaces for action, denouncing inequality and oppression. Feminism, in the form of an ideological current rather than an organic structure, played a leading role in processing women's demands, which were later taken up by the government [Molina, 1989]. The interaction between feminism and grassroots women also played a central role in linking the demand for democracy to the demand for gender equality, as reflected in the slogan "democracy in the country and in the home". After the plebiscite of 1988, most women who took part in the process remained active and expectant in their respective organizations. They experienced a degree of disillusionment, however, when political parties assumed the leading role in decision-making, even on initiatives relating to women.

Women in the Democratic Transition

The period of democratic transition begun in 1990 reveals the limits of democracy for the women's movement. During this political stage, the process was led by political parties. Apart from the small number of women affiliated to parties, women had no means of linking themselves to this world and its practices. In this context, the large gap between the proven ability of women to act socially under the dictatorship and their opportunity to influence decision-making during the transition period became evident. Indeed, Valdes and Frohman [1993] argue that the inability of the women's movement to transform social leadership into political power led to their exclusion from decision-making circles.

Feminist theory has insisted that the recognition of women as social actors should not be matched by access to power, as leaders arise out of unequal social relationships. The power which oppresses women is an inter-class agreement among men; it, therefore, represents a power alliance of men [Amoros, 1990]. By this is meant that even those men who are oppressed in terms of class, race, status, ideology, are still seen as having the right to strive for power and to have their demands legitimized.

In the early days of the transition, the influence of sexism negatively affected the integration of women's interests. Feminism's emphasis on an op-

pressive masculinity was seen to conflict with "the common goal". This underlines the difficulties facing the movement when seeking to interact with other social and political actors, especially in a context characterized by diversity and social fragmentation. In addition, there has been a weakening of those common political points of reference generated amongst women during the dictatorship, such as the "Joint Action by Women for Democracy". Consequently, feminism's influence on women's voices and organizations has decreased. Those few women who hold high-ranking positions and hold progressive views, lack a social basis of support which could lend strength to their proposals.

Within this conservative context, feminism and other progressive women's voices have only a low political profile and are characterized by a reactive or defensive discourse, participating in a debate whose terms are set by others. The resulting paradox is that key issues such as gender equity are visible in the public domain, but are taken up by the most conservative sectors and debated in terms which often subvert their original intention.

The Building of a Critical Mass

Notwithstanding, there is also some evidence of positive expressions of gender equality being extended to political and institutional life. Women from diverse ideological backgrounds and located in different positions (government, political parties, institutions, social and labor organizations, entrepreneurs and artists), adopt progressive views and share ideas on equality, whilst not defining themselves as feminists. These diverse expressions indicate that progress is being made toward the building of a critical mass—although still insufficient. Such diversity clearly involves a broadening of the ideological spectrum and imposes limits to the demands for change put forward by feminism. It has generated, however, a shift in public opinion so that this no longer isolates women's issues. In this way the concept of equality expresses the interests of different segments of the population.

Rather than a loss of influence by feminism, what is currently happening is a displacement of feminism to new spaces, forms of influence and toward a greater diversity of reference points [Valdes and Frohman, 1993]. This means that its articulation is weaker but that the issue of gender equality is placed within a broader framework, which includes new ways of acting politically on the part of the women's movement. A striking feature of this development is the displacement of debate on women's issues to institutions and spaces (NGOs, think-tanks, some government agencies and Congress) which have a greater policy-making capacity. This could indicate a trend toward the institutionalization of women's actions, expressed in non-governmental organizations which address gender equality, such as think tanks, social and labor organizations. This process is further promoted by the actions of multilateral and international organizations in support of gender equality. Institutionalization is also taking place simultaneously at regional and local levels [Valdes and Frohman, 1993], revealing both the scope and decentralized nature of initiatives on equality.

In the context of transition, it could be argued that women's access to and influence on the power structure has increased as feminist organizations or women within them establish or renew links with conventional political organizations and/or contribute their technical expertise to policy-making. Hence, to intervene in politics is to become involved in public affairs.

Gender and Citizenship

Although important progress has been made in integrating anti-discrimination policies into development policies and plans, the same cannot be said about women's rights or leadership roles, questions which have a bearing on their citizenship, both at individual and collective levels. The continuing dominance of the view that the family sphere is outside the sphere of citizenship means that connections between gender and citizenship have no historical references which allow for an inclusive concept of femininity, let alone a concept which covers the range of areas in which women are now engaged.

Women's participation in social organizations has been closely related to wider economic, social and political processes in Chilean society. However, the dominant assumptions of our political culture have impeded the construction of women's citizenship. One widespread stereotype associates women with procreation and care for others and sees these as the underlying motivation for women's social involvement. This reflects the rigidity of gender socialization and is reflected in the content of women's demands from social and popular organizations (income, health care, housing, social services, safety, etc.) as well as from some labor organizations (education, health) in which women's participation is growing.

The weight of traditional roles and the defense of feminine social action have underpinned the mass mobilization of women in Chile: this has arisen in extraordinary circumstances, when the integrity of the family has been threatened. In situations characterized by widespread change and severe political conflict, this motivation can be expressed either in a conservative or authoritarian way, as in the case of the Empty Pots Movement during the Allende government, or in a democratic way, as in the mobilization of Women for Life during the dictatorship.

Women's Socialization

However, women's socialization also reinforces the perception of women as a homogeneous group, and as expressing a universal essence [Amoros, 1990]. Whilst this perception blurs diversity amongst women, it also serves to construct a shared identity thus minimizing hierarchies and differences between women. If each woman is perceived as identical to the rest, her participation and contribution is interchangeable, and any one individual can have access to the same spaces and opportunities.

Social research in this area concludes that women's lack of ability and training in the exercise of power and citizenship are rooted in a kind of socialization which is not political in origin. According to Amoros [*ibid.*], such problems are directly related to the difficulties women experience in differenti-

ating themselves as individuals. Yet such processes are essential to the exercise of citizenship in modern societies [Amoros, 1990; Martinez Diaz, 1994; Astelarra, 1995]. The concept of citizenship implies individuals who are different from each other and who see themselves as entitled to rights. Therefore, if women perceive themselves to be identical, this is owing to the universalism which is seen to define them and which suppresses their uniqueness, history, learning, and cultural upbringing. This line of reasoning is reflected in empirical findings which demonstrate that women have difficulties perceiving themselves as individuals entitled to rights and as full citizens. This explains why, for example, their incorporation into paid labor does not generally lead to changes in the perception of roles and identities pertaining to both sexes [Iriarte, 1994; Provoste, 1995c].

Within the context of democratization in Chile, such attitudes have a contradictory effect on women's social participation. On the one hand, women are appealed to on the basis of an identity which is supposedly unique and undifferentiated, and which restricts their rights and confines their engagement to traditional roles. On the other hand the women's movement appeals to women on the basis of the multiplicity of views and interests of women in social life. Hence, this kind of participation clearly demonstrates the need to strengthen the processes of constructing women's citizenship, in a way which enhances women's ability to influence and control public decision-making.

I argued earlier in this chapter that feminists were able to gain leadership during the mobilization against the dictatorship because of their ability to link women's demands with the advancement of their rights and to place this in the context of the movement for democracy. In the new institutional and political context in Chile, continued feminist leadership depends on constructing new links between women's demands and the state's agenda for equality in order to constitute women as social actors and citizens.

Diversity, Autonomy and Dialogue

The trends observed in Chilean women's political and social praxis, including feminism, differ from the past. Whether the transition will lead to a broadening of opportunities depends on feminism's ability to appeal to public opinion, to overcome problems of political access and access to the media. These points underline the need to share knowledge about how the movement expresses itself in a democracy, and to explore the impact of democracy on women's organizations.

The movement must start from the assumption of diversity, which recognizes the multiple positions of the subject. In this sense, the concept of networks as a new principle for coordinating different expressions has the virtue of not rejecting any of the collective and individual profiles which make up its components. Political action and the composition of the collective should focus on the full exercise of citizenship by women as part of the search for a plural and modern democracy. This redirects the movement's goals toward concrete action for the accountability of rights and the denunciation of discriminatory practices everywhere.

Redefining Democracy and Citizenship

These new principles of articulation differentiate "given citizenship" from "demanded citizenship". Citizenship is not only about participating in the public sphere and influencing decisions, but also about strengthening the autonomy of civil society and women so that they are better able to control and evaluate state actions. This autonomy is particularly important in respect of issues which are hardly addressed by governments or by the political class in Chile today. Given the prevailing conservatism mentioned earlier, women's rights in the family sphere, their demands for a divorce law, for free and safe contraception, for an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation, for equal access to elected posts and public office, have no chance of success without the ability of citizens to exert social control. On the other hand, these new principles open bridges to other social groups who share their aspirations of equality, tolerance and social equity.

Feminist theory has pointed to women's weakness in the public sphere, and their relationship to democracy and citizenship as a central difficulty for achieving gender equality. Since the Greeks the concept of democracy has been based on a definition of politics as a public space for male citizens in contrast to a private sphere which is regarded as female, natural and non-political. Thus, changing the concept and praxis of democracy involves a simultaneous change in our understanding of public affairs and citizenship. Broadening democracy involves not only broadening ideas about who has access to the public sphere, but also about which issues are acceptable and appropriate for it.

In this sense, Fraser's [1993] point about the need to place the feminist struggle in the public sphere—understood in Habermas's terms as a "space for discursive interaction" where citizens debate affairs of common interest, is relevant. This positioning is the key to broadening citizenship, modifying the public agenda, and strengthening the autonomy of women in civil society. Another interesting idea from Fraser concerns the need to rethink the concept of democracy, differentiating a plural democracy which gives room to diversity and equity, from a liberal democracy (which restricts participation) and a republican democracy (which restricts diversity). According to this perspective, reconceptualizing the public sphere in a way which focuses on developing a "plurality of audiences" and on the ability to influence both public opinion and decision-making is important. With respect to women, this involves enhancing their ability to enter into dialogue with other social actors. This would, in turn, redefine their capacity to dialogue with the state and the political system.

Such general considerations acquire very specific meanings in the Chilean context, given the weakness of civil society, the autonomy of the political system, and the weight of corporations and the Catholic Church in the public domain. They also point to the main difficulties faced by the women's movement: its discursive weakness in the public sphere, and its declining political influence on women and society.

In sum, the challenge is to strengthen the potential of women and their organizations along the lines already stated: broad and full exercise of citizen-

ship, dialogue with other social actors, and a greater voice in the public sphere. Such challenges aim to elaborate politically the diversity of social demands from a perspective of equality and non-discrimination, according to the national political agenda. Making progress in this direction not only means keeping faith with women, but also represents new ways of building democracy and citizenship.

BEIJING: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

The Fourth Conference held in Beijing and the resulting Platform constitute a fourth key moment in the broadening of feminist struggles. Feminism is not alone any more; the struggle for women's rights has become a global issue. International agencies have become increasingly involved in the struggle to overcome inequalities between the genders and have engaged most of the countries in the world through their organization of world conferences. In this new scenario, the question is not only one of making women's exclusion and oppression visible, as the feminism of the 1970s did, but to control and monitor processes of inclusion so as to ensure that they result in greater equality, development and democracy.

The Platform for Action is the result of joint action by three actors: the international community, governments, and the women's movement at the global level. It constitutes an international common agenda, reflecting a consensus on objectives but also encompassing different interests, political and cultural projects. Indeed, the Conference confirmed the existence of two antagonistic visions of women's role in society: one that highlights the family as the natural reference point for women's actions, and the other that regards women as individuals, who are responsible for their actions and the holders of rights. With respect to the future, the Platform for Action admits several interpretations; progressive or conservative, democratic or authoritarian. Each country and each political and social force is likely to invoke the Platform to advance their own projects and to implement those recommendations which best fit their ideas.

The question is how to strengthen democratic and progressive interpretations of the Platform and use it to advance feminism's struggle to change the foundations on which gender inequalities are built. Apart from insisting that individual states implement the Platform, we should also promote our own agenda around it. This agenda will allow the feminist movement to continue to have a valid voice in its relations with women, governments and the international community. Nothing is more undermining to social and political struggle than being devoid of proposals. The lack of a project of one's own invariably leads to cooperation with the projects of others, to dependency and loss of autonomy.

ENDNOTES

1. An example of this is the creation in 1991 of SERNAM (*Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*—Women's National Service) in Chile. This proposal, which originated from the Gathering of Women for Democracy, is based on rec-

ommendations made in Nairobi to create spaces at the highest government level.

2. SERNAM was created by statute as a state agency. This differs from the situation in some other Latin American countries where gender initiatives depend on the First Lady or the political will of the government in power.
3. The Equal Opportunities Plan for Women drawn up by SERNAM for the period 1994-1999 contains chapters on rights, the family, education, the transfer of knowledge, culture and communications, employment, health, social and political participation, and public institutions.
4. Plan for Equal Opportunities, p.9.
5. The only local authority with a plan which adequately addresses the community is the city of Santiago. This was developed by an NGO, the Women's Institute.
6. This section draws on ideas developed jointly with Patricia Provoste, see Molina and Provoste [1995].

REFERENCES

- Amoros, Celia, 1990, *Mujer, Participación, Cultura Política y Estado* (Women, Participation, Political Culture and State), EIL, Argentina.
- Astelarra, Judith, 1994, "La Igualdad de Oportunidades Como Condición de la Democracia Moderna" (Equal Opportunities, A Requirement for Modern Democracy), in *Políticas de Igualdad de Oportunidades*, Servicio Nacional de la Mujer, SERNAM, Santiago, Chile.
- Astelarra, Judith, 1995, "Ciudadanía: El Proceso del Debate" (Citizenship: The Debate), Latin American and Caribbean NGOs, Regional Coordination.
- Aylwin, Mariana, 1990, "La Participación Política de las Mujeres en el Siglo XX" (Women's Political Participation in the 20th Century), in *Existe la Vocación Política de las Mujeres?*, Santiago: Participa.
- FLACSO, PIIIE and the Women's Institute, 1995, "Modernization of the State and Equal Opportunities", training program for public officials, SERNAM, Santiago, Chile.
- Fraser, Nancy, 1993, "Repensar el Ambito Político; Una Contribución a la Crítica de la Democracia Realmente Existente" (Rethinking the Political Sphere, A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy), *Debate Feminista*, No.7, Mexico.
- Iriarte, Claudia, 1994, "Mujer y Legalidad en Chile, Una Propuesta de Cambio" (Women and Law in Chile, A Proposal for Change), Women's Institute, Santiago, Chile.
- Jaquette, Jane, undated, "Gender and Justice in Economic Development, Proposals", *Documents for Debate*, No.4, Lima, Peru.
- Lechner, Norbert, 1994, in *Políticas de Igualdad de Oportunidades*, SERNAM, Santiago, Chile.
- Martinez Diaz, Pilar, 1994, "La Participación Política de las Mujeres" (Women's Political Participation), in *Propuesta de un Sistema de Indicadores Sociales de Igualdad entre Generos*, Instituto de la Mujer, Spain.

- Molina, Natacha, 1989, "Propuestas Políticas y Orientaciones de Cambio en la Situación de la Mujer" (Political Proposals and Strategies for Change in the Position of Women), in Manuel Antonio Garretón (ed.), *Propuestas Políticas y Aspiraciones de la Población*, Santiago: FLACSO.
- Molina, Natacha and Patricia Provoste, 1995, "Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Mujeres; Una Oportunidad para la Democracia" (Equal Opportunities for Women: An Opportunity for Democracy), Working Paper, Women's Institute, Santiago, Chile.
- Provoste, Patricia, 1995a, "A State Closer to the People", working paper, Women's Institute, Santiago, Chile.
- Provoste, Patricia *et al.*, 1995b, "Policies of Equality in Municipal Employment", Women's Institute, Santiago, Chile.
- Provoste, Patricia, 1995c, "La Construcción de las Mujeres en la Política Social" (The Construction of Women in Social Policy), Women's Institute, Santiago, Chile.
- Raczynski, D. and Serrano C. (eds.), 1992, *Social Policies: Women and Local Government*, Santiago: CIEPLAN.
- SERNAM, *Equal Opportunities Plan for Women, 1994-1999*, Santiago, Chile.
- Valdes, Teresa, 1995, "The Production of Knowledge About Women in Latin America", in *Piragua, Latin American Education and Politics Magazine*, No.10, Santiago, Chile.
- Valdes, Teresa and Alicia Frohman, 1993, *Democracy in the Country and in the Home, The Women's Movement in Chile*, Santiago, FLACSO.
- Valenzuela, M. Elena, 1995, "The Legitimacy of the Women's Agenda", paper presented to the workshop on "The State and the Women's Movement: Challenges and Possibilities", NGO Women's Forum, Beijing.

CHAPTER 8

Feminism and the State in The Netherlands

Joyce Outshoorn

Joke Swiebel

To many feminist observers from abroad, The Netherlands is something of an anomaly. On the one hand, until recently female participation in the workforce (often adopted as an indicator of women's position in society [Norris, 1987]), was amongst the lowest in Europe, on a footing with far less-industrialized countries such as Ireland and Spain.¹ On the other hand, sexual and social mores are clearly relaxed and there is a lively feminist movement which has made more headway in public life than its counterparts in the UK, France or Germany. This chapter aims to examine public policy on women and to account for the slow down in progress at the end of the 1980s.

The chapter starts with a brief historical, political and social overview of The Netherlands.² This is followed by a discussion of the emergence of a policy on women and an analysis of the politics and organization of the women's movement. The next two sections address the structure of policy-making and policy outcomes and issues raised by the women's movement. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks.

BACKGROUND

The Netherlands has been a nation state since the 17th century. A decentralized confederacy was followed by a rather autocratic monarchy, which from the mid-19th century had to come to terms with the rise of liberal democracy. Although there has long been a strong sense of national identity, Dutch society is not homogeneous. Its population of around 15 million has traditionally been divided into three religious blocs: about 40 percent of the population are Catholic, 20 percent Protestant, there are small numbers of Muslims and Jews and the rest are non-affiliated.³ These religious blocs began to organize following the industrialization and modernization of the Dutch state at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1917 men gained the vote (female suffrage followed two years later) and the protracted struggle over state and religious education was settled; religious schools finally being granted equal status and financing as state schools.