

Performing Professional Motherhood

Conservative Women's Political Activism through Journalism in Chile, 1964-1989

Hannah Leoni-Hughes

Senior Thesis

Department of History

Barnard College, Columbia University

Professor Celia Naylor

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Introduction

Chile is a small, narrow South American nation, wedged between Argentina and the Pacific coast. As of 2016, it had a population of roughly 17 million, of which almost a third lived in the capital city of Santiago, and a population density of only approximately 15 people per square mile.¹ It has been an independent nation since 1822, and, until the late 20th century, was known for its relatively strong democratic tradition and free elections in a region often plagued by dictatorships. However, in the late 20th century it drew international attention when this tradition was shockingly upended by the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. In 1973, the Chilean military overthrew Salvador Allende, the first socialist president of Chile, seizing control of the government in a violent coup.² The dictatorship that followed was characterized by violent repression, growing socio-economic disparity, and civilian “disappearances,” which lasted until 1990. The Pinochet era is also famous in women’s history in Latin America as the era that produced the first strong feminist movement in Chile, self-consciously also an anti-Pinochet, pro-democracy political movement as well. On the other side of the political spectrum, conservative women were instrumental in anti-Allende demonstrations from 1970 to 1973, particularly through the 1971 March of the Empty Pots and subsequent formation of the Feminine Power movement.³ After the coup, they were key supporters of the regime,

¹ *United Nations DESA/Population Division*, <https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery/> (accessed April 15, 2019).

² Salvador Allende was a democratic socialist who was elected president of Chile in 1970, making him not only the first socialist president of Chile but also the first Marxist president ever elected in a liberal democracy. General Augusto Pinochet held several important military positions in the Allende administration before being promoted to Commander-in-Chief of the army in August 1973, just a few weeks before the coup. He was one of the key leaders of the coup, and subsequently declared himself president of Chile. He remained in this position until the end of the regime in 1990. For more information on this period of Chilean history, see *The Chile Reader: History, Culture, and Politics*, eds. Elizabeth Quay Hutchinson et al., and *The Pinochet Generation: the Chilean Military in the Twentieth Century*, by John R. Bawden.

³ The March of the Empty Pots was a protest held by women in Santiago in 1971 to protest government policies, in particular severe food shortages and rationing, so named because they marched through Santiago carrying empty pots and pans. Feminine Power was a committee of primarily by upper-class women from Santiago that organized

maintaining their support throughout, largely voting for the regime in the 1988 plebiscite to determine whether to open the country up to free elections again. The 1970s and 1980s were a pivotal period for the history of women's political involvement in Chile, through conservative women's emergence as a powerful force against the Allende administration and as equally powerful supporters of the military regime, as well as through the emergence of a strong feminist movement expressly aligned with democracy and political involvement among left-wing women.

While the period from 1970 until 1990 is an important one in the history of Chilean women, it is also, as such, an extensively studied period. Many pages have already been dedicated to the study of left-wing women in Chile under the Pinochet regime, and much has been written about the Feminine Power movement and the March of the Empty Pots. Margaret Power's work, in particular, has dispelled the traditional narrative that upper-class women demonstrated against Allende and subsequently supported Pinochet to defend their own economic position, instead showing that, for the majority of women, this was primarily about family and gender politics that appealed to working- and upper-class women alike. This brings up a paradox of right-wing women's political participation in Chile, as well as across Latin America: conservative women become more politically involved, through civil movements or volunteer organizations that perform distinctly political work under the auspices of an apolitical organization, all in order to protect the sanctity of their roles as apolitical mothers and housewives. Thus, the scholarship on Chilean women from 1970 to 1990 has generally focused on one of two topics: right-wing women's participation in ostensibly apolitical, but more

anti-government activities and were formed out the March of the Empty Pots. There was, additionally, a second March of the Empty Pots held in 1973, days before the coup took place.

accurately clearly political, organizations, upholding traditional class and gender norms, and the emergence of a leftist feminist movement that was explicitly political.

This thesis focuses neither on the 1980s feminist movement nor the 1970s anti-Allende protests. Instead, it uses the already well established phenomenon of right-wing women's apolitical-political participation mobilized in defense of highly traditional, conservative understandings of family and womanhood as a foundation to explore how right-wing women negotiated this role, specifically through journalism. It also investigates the differences in the scope and function of right-wing women's activities as part of a private organization with a conservative political agenda vs. members of a conservative government. In order to do so, this thesis examines two distinct groups during two different time periods: female journalists who were also members of Opus Dei during the second half of the 1960s and the National Female Secretariat and CEMA-Chile volunteers during the late 1970s and early 1980s. There is no evidence that the Opus Dei journalists whose work this thesis utilizes ever joined the Secretariat or CEMA, and, equally, there is no evidence that any of the Secretariat or CEMA publications discussed were written by Opus Dei members. The two groups shared similar political ideologies, but they worked in very different national contexts for two very different organizations. However, both groups consisted of conservative women seemingly violating the traditional gender roles they professed in order to defend those roles in the public sphere. Through a comparison of these groups, I argue that the female Opus Dei journalists of the 1960s were able to simultaneously fulfill their prerogative of promoting and proselytizing for their organization without violating their professed ideal of women as wives and mothers by selecting highly gendered subjects to write on and constantly couching their arguments in maternal language. However, their reach was limited by their position as a highly conservative minority

during a centrist-liberal period of Chilean history. Later, the journalistic work of the National Female Secretariat and CEMA-Chile volunteers was grounded in maternal language and images of traditional womanhood and motherhood, mirroring the way the Opus Dei journalists negotiated their positions. However, as an arm of the military government, they were able to reach a much broader audience and expand their activities beyond simply writing in favor of the military regime to actually help create the foundation for its legitimacy and justification for many state policies and programs.

Chapter 1 of this thesis examines the female journalists of Opus Dei during the mid to late 1960s. Opus Dei, an ultra-conservative Catholic lay organization originally founded in Spain, opened its Chilean branch in 1950. By the mid-1960s, it was becoming well-established among Santiago's upper-class, but its power and influence remained limited. During this period, four women: María Elena Aguirre Valdivieso, María Teresa Alamos Zañartu, Elena Vial Correa, and Lillian Calm Espinosa, all professional journalists and all members of Opus Dei, published work on art, gender roles, youth culture, family planning, and education reform that simultaneously promoted their organization and maintained and defended their belief in women's primary role being that of wife and mother.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the National Female Secretariat and CEMA-Chile volunteers during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The National Female Secretariat and CEMA-Chile were the two largest women's voluntary associations run by the Pinochet regime, under the leadership of First Lady Lucía Hiriart, and their volunteers, among other activities, wrote and distributed magazines, articles, and pamphlets on a variety of topics, always, ultimately, in defense of the Pinochet government. These organizations, unlike Opus Dei, were part of the state apparatus, and they are clear examples of right-wing women performing free and ostensibly apolitical labor

in order to further conservative political objectives. Chapter 2 discusses these women's roles in legitimizing the regime's existence and ideology, and Chapter 3 addresses how they backed specific education, healthcare, family planning, and economic policies instituted by the regime. In both cases, the National Female Secretariat and CEMA-Chile volunteers ventured outside their prescribed roles as apolitical mothers and housewives to both shore up the conservative regime they supported and the conservative image and ideals for women within the regime.

I would like to add a final note on what this thesis is and what it is not. This thesis is about right-wing women in Chile in the late 20th century, how they were able to occupy seemingly contradictory roles simultaneously without conflict, and how these roles differed depending on the type of organization the women were involved in and the national political context they operated in. This thesis is not about the ramifications their organizations (Opus Dei and the Chilean state under Pinochet respectively) had on Chilean society as a whole. Opus Dei believes in a natural hierarchy of class, gender, and race that places wealthy, white men at the top of society. Its power has grown substantially in Chile since the 1960s, and its great success enabled its members to influence social policy, notably ensuring deeply conservative, Catholic abortion and divorce laws, in the 1990s and early 2000s. Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship violently repressed all perceived threats to the regime and was responsible for secretly murdering, or "disappearing," more than two thousand people. This is the regime that the women of the National Female Secretariat and CEMA-Chile supported, and what they invested years of time and energy into defending and legitimizing. It is important to remember this when discussing their activities, but the atrocities carried out by the Pinochet regime are not the subject of this thesis. For more information on how state violence contributed to women's protest movements against the regime, I encourage readers to learn more about the left-wing

women's movements in Chile during the period.⁴ However, neither the later policy effects of Opus Dei's growing influence in Chile nor the atrocities committed by the Pinochet regime will be directly addressed in this work, which will focus instead on how right-wing women understood and performed their roles within their organizations, independent of the organizations' broader impact on Chilean society in the late 20th century.

⁴ For further reading, see *Women and Politics in Chile* by Susan Franceschet and *Why Women Protest: Women's Movements in Chile* by Lisa Baldez.

Chapter One

Performing Dual Vocations: Numeraria Journalists during the 1960s

In Chile during the 1960s, social and political changes in the country encouraged many upper-class Chileans, including many upper-class women, to become members of Opus Dei, a conservative Catholic lay organization. During the same period, many of these women were also graduating from university and entering the workforce. Because Opus Dei preached the importance of strictly adhering to traditional Catholic gender roles, it would seem like a contradiction that the same women who pledged themselves to following Opus Dei's teachings would also become members of the professional class. However, for these women, Opus Dei teachings on both gender and professional vocations allowed for the coexistence of several different gender and professional roles. Moreover, for female Opus Dei members who were also journalists, because of the specific nature of their work, their publications illuminate their understanding and navigation of these roles.

Opus Dei was founded by Josemaría Escrivá in Spain, in 1928, with a mission to sanctify mankind through perfect performance in one's vocations.⁵ It now has branches around the world, and it has been particularly successful in Latin America, where over one third of its members reside.⁶ The Chilean branch opened in 1950, where it has since benefitted from the country's socio-political climate in the second half of the 20th century. During the 1950s and 1960s, the

⁵ Josemaría Escrivá was a Spanish priest, born in 1902 and ordained in 1924, who claimed that, in Madrid in 1927, he saw through divine intervention that God wanted him to open a way to holiness for lay people, in which they could both dedicate their lives to ordinary work and to a vocation to serve God. As a result, he founded Opus Dei to carry out this mission in 1928. The Bishop of Madrid approved Opus Dei as a pious union in 1941, beginning a series of Church judicial acts giving Opus Dei increasing formal recognition within the Church and culminating with Pope John Paul II's recognition of Opus Dei as a personal prelature in 1982. Finally, Escrivá was canonized by John Paul II in 2002. John Flader, "Opus Dei in the Church," *The Australasian Catholic Record* 89, 2 (2012): 221-232.

⁶ J. Michael Francis, "Opus Dei," *Iberia and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History*, 2005, https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/abcibamrle/opus_dei/0 (accessed November 16, 2018).

Chilean Catholic Church embraced liberation theology, emphasizing the need for social, political, and economic change to alleviate inequality.⁷ In 1964, Eduardo Frei Montalva, of the centrist Christian Democratic Party (PDC), was elected president, representing a popular shift towards more liberal Catholic politics, away from the far-right Conservative Party traditionally allied with the Church.⁸ In this context, Opus Dei attracted conservative, upper-class Catholics who did not approve of the Church or nation's liberalization.⁹ Opus Dei's strict adherence to a traditional class and gender hierarchy, orthodox Catholicism, and its mission to spread Christ in society through work all resonated with Chilean elites, who were deeply Catholic and emphasized the importance of bettering the nation through their wealth.¹⁰

Opus Dei membership further grew under the military junta that came to power in 1973. Though not highly prominent in the Chilean episcopate, there were Opus Dei military bishops throughout the regime.¹¹ Furthermore, unlike the episcopate, the prelature of Opus Dei never denounced the human rights abuses of the Pinochet regime, bolstering its governmental and upper-class support, as the mainstream church increasingly aligned itself with the lower and middle classes.¹² By the 1990s, Opus Dei membership and influence had grown substantially, allowing it to play an important role in setting the political agenda, particularly regarding abortion and divorce laws.¹³ Through the late 20th century, Opus Dei successfully utilized the

⁷ Anthony Gill, *Rendering unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 138-139.

⁸ Kathleen B. Fischer, *Political Ideology and Educational Reform in Chile, 1964-1976* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1979), 12-14.

⁹ María Olivia Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei en Chile* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones B, Grupo Zeta, 2003), 156-158.

¹⁰ María Rosaria Stabili, *El Sentimiento Aristocrático: Elites Chilenas Frente al Espejo (1860-1960)*, trans. Paula Zaldívar H. (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andrés Bello: Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, c2003), 230.

¹¹ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 208.

¹² Brian H. Smith, *The Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 333.

¹³ Merike Blofield, *The Politics of Moral Sin: Abortion and Divorce in Spain, Chile and Argentina* (New York City: Routledge, 2006), 95-110.

socio-political climate of the time to become a force against socio-political liberalization in Chile.

One of the central beliefs of Opus Dei is that men and women are fundamentally different beings for whom God has different plans. Men and women belong to separate branches and Opus Dei centers, which are sex-segregated. Moreover, men and women are expected to perform different vocations. There are several types of Opus Dei membership. Numeraries are lay people or priests with a master's degree or higher who take a vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and legally release all future income and belongings to Opus Dei. Supernumeraries, on the other hand, are usually upper-class and college educated, though they are not required to be, and accept a "vocation of marriage" to sanctify family and household work, as well as professional work. This category comprises the vast majority of members. Additionally, it is much more common for women to become supernumeraries than numeraries. While men are expected to spread God's teachings through perfect work in their profession, women are expected to spread God's teachings by raising perfect, Catholic children to grow the Kingdom of Heaven.¹⁴ Finally, there are associate numeraries, usually women, who take binding vows but do not fulfill the education requirement to become a full numerary. They perform secretarial and domestic work in Opus Dei centers.¹⁵ Thus women in Opus Dei dedicate their lives to performing and upholding a conservative, gendered separation of labor.¹⁶ During the second half of the 20th century, Opus Dei attracted large numbers of upper-class numerarias and supernumerarias¹⁷ willing to dedicate

¹⁴ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 196.

¹⁵ Francis, "Opus Dei."

¹⁶ The intense class hierarchy of Opus Dei is clear here, in the breakdown of upper-class supernumerarias filling the role of housewife, while lower class, less educated associates work as domestic servants, mirroring the allocation of domestic roles by class in Chilean society at large.

¹⁷ The Spanish terms "numeraria" and "supernumeraria" will be used in this thesis instead of English translations because Spanish more clearly conveys the gender of the members in question.

their lives to upholding and sanctifying a deeply conservative understanding of womanhood and women's work.

Female membership, like membership at large, did not draw from a wide socioeconomic background. Supernumerarias and numerarias were almost exclusively members of elite families, mostly from Santiago. A significant number of middle and lower-class women only appeared among the associate numerarias.¹⁸ Furthermore, the centers themselves were highly concentrated in the most affluent neighborhoods of Santiago.¹⁹ The Opus Dei women also tended to be highly educated. For numerarias this was a requirement, but most supernumerarias were university graduates as well. For example, María Elena Aguirre Valdivieso, María Teresa Alamos Zañartu, Elena Vial Correa, and Lillian Calm Espinosa, the four journalists and Opus Dei members whose work this thesis examines, all studied journalism at Universidad Católica de Santiago during the early 1960s.²⁰ These women had successful, decades long careers as journalists, and their devotion to traditional gender norms were deeply intertwined with their work.

During the 1950s, most supernumerarias were married to supernumerarios, and most did not work outside the home. This began to change in the 1960s, when increasing numbers of female professionals joined the ranks of Opus Dei.²¹ This was not due to any specific efforts to recruit professional women by Opus Dei. Rather, during this period, increasing numbers of upper-class women pursued professional training at universities, particularly in the healthcare, social work, and education sectors.²² As more women were becoming professionals, more

¹⁸ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 22.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 474.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 652.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 504-505.

²² Margaret Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile: Feminine Power and the Struggle Against Allende 1964-1973* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 63-65.

women were encountering Opus Dei while attending universities, which were important Opus Dei recruitment grounds. As a result, the number of professional women who joined Opus Dei steadily increased. Few details of these women's personal lives are public, in keeping with Opus Dei teachings that members should not publicize their lives or appear in the society pages.²³ For example, there is no public information on Lillian Calm's family or personal life. However, what is publicly known clearly points to these women performing traditional gender roles in their own lives, as Opus Dei prescribes. María Elena Aguirre married an important businessman and supernumerario, Fernando Agüero, with whom she had four daughters.²⁴ One of their daughters, Carolina, became a supernumeraria as well,²⁵ indicating that María Elena was, in fact, fostering a strong dedication to Catholicism in her children, as she vowed to do as a supernumeraria. Similarly, María Teresa Alamos married Cristián Bulnes Ripamonti, a powerful lawyer though not a member of Opus Dei, with whom she had one son.²⁶ Elena Vial, as a numeraria, was not permitted to marry, though her brother, Gonzalo, was a supernumerario.²⁷ Though information is scarce, it appears that, in their personal lives, these women succeeded in living up to the expectations for female members of Opus Dei.

While supernumerarias during the 1960s were wives and mothers, many also had prosperous professional careers. Female professionals have a long history in Chile. In 1877, it became the first country in Latin America to allow women to be professionally trained and, in 1886, produced the first female Latin American medical doctor. Journalism, one of the vocations

²³ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 504-505.

²⁴ "María Elena Aguirre Valdivieso," *Genealogía Chilena en Red*, <http://www.genealogiachilenaenred.cl/gcr/IndividualPage.aspx?ID=I103994> (November 17, 2018).

²⁵ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 604.

²⁶ "María Teresa Alamos Zañartu," *Genealogía Chilena en Red*, <http://www.genealogiachilenaenred.cl/gcr/IndividualPage.aspx?ID=I103994> (November 17, 2018).

²⁷ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 180.

prioritized by Josemaría Escrivá, was a particularly important field for numerarias.²⁸ Just as with the history of female professionals in general, Chile had a long history of female journalism, dating back to the 1850s.²⁹ Furthermore, from the 1920s to the 1940s, Chilean female journalism could be characterized as feminist journalism, often directly discussing women's movements in the country at the time. However, in the 1950s and 1960s, the period that directly coincided with the establishment and initial spread of Opus Dei in Chile, the development of mass media and large media conglomerates led to the disappearance of a distinct feminist voice to female journalism.³⁰

It was in this context of that Aguirre, Calm, Alamos, and Vial began their careers. María Elena Aguirre had an extensive career, including the directorship of the conservative women's magazine, *Eva*,³¹ before the publishing company was bought by the Allende administration in 1971.³² Much later, in 2002, she was appointed chair of the Feminine Magazine department of the journalism school of the Universidad de los Andes, founded by Opus Dei in 1989.³³ Lillian Calm accepted a position as a journalism professor at Universidad de los Andes the same year, and she was previously the international editor for *La Segunda*, a subsidiary of *El Mercurio*—one of the most prominent conservative newspapers in Chile.³⁴ María Teresa Alamos also worked at *La Segunda* as the political editor.³⁵ From 1968 to 1972, Elena Vial wrote for *Ercilla*, one of the most popular magazines during the 1960s and early 1970s. She then moved to *Revista*

²⁸ Ibid., 587.

²⁹ Claudia Montero, "Cincuenta años de prensa de mujeres en Chile 1900-1950," in *Historia de las Mujeres en Chile Tomo 2*, ed. Ana María Stiven and Joaquín Fernandois (Santiago de Chile: Taurus, 2013), 352.

³⁰ Ibid., 353.

³¹ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 644. Dates for her directorship are not specified.

³² Fischer, *Political Ideology and Educational Reform*, 88.

³³ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 604.

³⁴ Ibid., 640-653.

³⁵ Ibid., 644. Dates for her editorship are not specified.

del Domingo, another subsidiary of *El Mercurio*, then to *Apuntes*, a student magazine on media studies. In the 1980s, she was the Compositions Secretary for *Qué Pasa*, another conservative magazine, as well as a Castilian professor at the Catholic University of Santiago. Finally, in 1989, she was one of the founding members and first journalism professors at Universidad de los Andes.³⁶ Additionally, all these women contributed to *Cuadernos del Sur*, a conservative pan-South American journal published during the late 1960s that many numerarios contributed to as well.³⁷ Members of Opus Dei were supposed to spread their ideology in everyday life through their vocation, which for these women was journalism, but they had to uphold their vocations to be good wives and mothers as well. This dynamic is clear in their articles. They wrote primarily on traditionally women's topics, and, in their articles, they clearly advocated the ideology and agenda of their organization, thereby fulfilling the proselytizing professional mission without violating their primary mission to be perfect women—both of which were required of professional women in Opus Dei.

The works of Aguirre, Calm, Vial, and Alamos were most commonly published under the Arts Review sections of the respective magazines in which their work appeared.³⁸ The arts have traditionally been an acceptable pursuit for women, particularly upper-class women, with much more disposable time and income. Though they were professional journalists, they remained within the bounds of acceptable women's topics in their work. Yet, in their reviews, they often subtly endorsed or publicized Opus Dei. Sometimes this was done simply by selecting artists with Opus Dei connections to interview. For example, Calm informed her readers, in the first

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 649.

³⁷ *Cuadernos Del Sur* (Buenos Aires: Elis Publicad, 1964-1970).

³⁸ For the sake of brevity, Aguirre, Alamos, Calm, and Vial will collectively be referred to as the numeraria journalists from now on.

paragraph of “Conversando con el escritor Armando Uribe,” that Uribe’s first anthology included works by his friends Carlos Ruiz-Tagle and José Miguel Ibañez, both prominent supernumerarios.³⁹ Vial, in an interview with Chilean writer Guillermo Blanco, included a similar note that Blanco’s book, *Revolución en Chile*, was a bestseller incidentally co-authored with Carlos Ruiz-Tagle.⁴⁰ By including these details, as well as covering artists with Opus Dei connections, Calm and Vial quietly maintained Opus Dei’s presence and relevance in public discourse.

Just as they publicized its members, the numeraria journalists also promoted their organization’s ideology in their arts reviews. In her 1964 article, “Conversaciones con Peter Horn,” Alamos interviewed Horn, a Catholic sculptor who primarily created works to decorate churches. She included his contemplations on how he conceived his art; he explained: “My art...is meant to be the most loyal expression of Christian emotion...it is to serve God. Art in Church has only one reason to be there...to better the faithful’s understanding of the sacred.”⁴¹ His description of his art’s purpose, to serve God’s cause and improve Christians’ understanding of their faith, is highly reminiscent of numerarios’ mission to serve God and spread his message in their daily work. Although Horn expressed this, not Alamos, Alamos could have excluded this aspect or deemphasized it. Instead it was the first response she included, putting it front and center in her piece. Later in the interview, Horn disparaged abstract art as an art form of Godless Marxists and explained that, because of this, he cannot understand “the current tendency to accept this art in Christian Churches.”⁴² Just as Alamos chose to include Horn’s understanding of his art aligning with the Opus Dei’s mission, she chose to include his disparagement of Marxism

³⁹ Lillian Calm, “Conversando con el Escritor Armando Uribe,” *El Sur*, 1970, *Literatura*, 2.

⁴⁰ Elena Vial, “Con Guillermo Blanco,” *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 19/20, 1966, 204-205.

⁴¹ María Teresa Alamos, “Conversaciones con Peter Horn,” *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 4, 1964, 320.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 321.

and his belief in its incompatibility with Christianity, reflecting Opus Dei political ideology. The condemnation of Christians that allow Marxist art and, by implication, Marxism into the house of God symbolically spoke to the exact demographic Opus Dei was appealing to during the 1960s: conservative Catholics uncomfortable with the Chilean Church embracing liberation theology. This assertion that Catholicism and leftist politics were incompatible also appeared in Calm's 1967 interview with Chilean poet Diego Dublé Urruita. In summarizing his life for the readers, she chose to include the fact that he joined the Chile Radical Party when he was eighteen, but when, years later, he publicly committed himself to Catholicism, he "did away with the Radical Party and all militant politics."⁴³ It is clear in Calm's and Alamos's writing, and in Opus Dei ideology, that dedication to Catholicism and participation in radical politics could not coexist.

Although the numeraria journalists often appeared in arts reviews, they were not confined to them. However, their other subjects also fit under the umbrella of women's issues. Most directly, they discussed changing women's roles during the 1960s. The women's liberation movement was in full swing, across the world as well as in Chile, and the numerarias were well aware of it. Aguirre even wrote a review of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1965.⁴⁴ Though she gave little indication of her own opinion of it in her review, Aguirre was clearly aware of the global women's liberation movement. The Vatican was also reassessing its gender politics. In 1963, Pope John XXIII preached "equal rights and duties for man and woman in the family."⁴⁵ Meanwhile, in Chile itself, Eduardo Frei Montalva and the PDC focused on mobilizing marginalized groups to win support in the 1964 presidential election, including campaigning directly to women through Mothers' Centers. Though the PDC rhetoric generally

⁴³ Lillian Calm, "Con el poeta Diego Dublé Urruita," *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 8, 1967, 757.

⁴⁴ María Elena Aguirre, "La mistificación de la mujer," *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 10, 1965, 424-426.

⁴⁵ Mala Htun, *Sex and the State: Abortion Divorce and the Family Under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 32.

stayed within the boundaries of traditional gender roles and norms, its platform did include women's right to work, maternity, and equal pay, as well as a proposal for the creation of a Department of Female Labor Studies to provide new professional training and educational opportunities for Chilean women.⁴⁶ After Frei was elected, he continued to push for legislation to improve the unequal status of women under Chile law, though not always successfully, such as by introducing legislation to eliminate women's unequal status in Chilean marriage law.⁴⁷ Thus, during the 1960s, there was a global and domestic push for gender equality, particularly in the work place. Opus Dei opposed these changes, maintaining its belief that women and men were fundamentally different and, therefore, suited to different work: men outside the home and women inside it, with little crossover between the two.⁴⁸ The 1960s were a time of great change in the global discourse on women's rights and roles, and Opus Dei stood fast against it all.

The numeraria journalists supported Opus Dei's views on womanhood, but, at the same time, they themselves participated in the transnational movement of women into the workplace. Their articles reveal how they understood this as non-contradictory to their belief in Opus Dei, by defining the very specific ways—and to what extent—women should be liberated. Aguirre addressed this issue in her 1965 article, “La mujer ante el problema de ser mujer.” She identified the women's liberation movement's acceptable and unacceptable aspects. She began her own discussion with a traditionalist stance: “Many of them (women who worked) abandoned their homes, their children, and went to the offices, the factories. Disagreements with their husbands, problems at home and lonely children, working outside the home brought new problems to the

⁴⁶ Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth Century Chile* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 75-78.

⁴⁷ Heidi Tinsman, *Partners in Conflict: The Politics of Gender Sexuality and Labor in the Chilean Agrarian Reform, 1950-1973* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 132.

⁴⁸ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 220-221.

home.”⁴⁹ Her language was harsh, describing these women as abandoning their home and families and laying out the detrimental effects of their choices. She recognized the need for a women’s movement in other countries, stating that “There are countries where the issue has become very serious. Women are fighting to win more respect for themselves, to obtain better salaries and positions.”⁵⁰ Her word choice, that “there are countries” in which it is necessary and right for women to fight, implied that her own country was not one of them. It also implied that Chilean women fighting for liberation fell into the next category she described: women who took the movement too far, for whom “the fight for female independence has become a crusade to do away with virtues like purity, modesty, honor, sacrifice and generosity.”⁵¹ This was exactly aligned with Opus Dei ideology. To ask for respect, for equal pay, or better positions was justified in Aguirre’s eyes, but not at the cost of traditional Catholic virtues.

Aguirre also expressed why and when women should work outside the home by explaining that, in the past, being a mother and running a household was a more varied, time consuming occupation that brought women in contact with their entire community. As she argued, however, by the 1960s, particularly with the advent of modern home appliances making the physical work of maintaining a household easier (at least for middle- and upper-class women), this was no longer the case. This too reflected Opus Dei ideology on work. Women’s central role was supposed to be having and raising good Christian children. Yet, in a world where a woman could dedicate herself to this work and still be left with some free time, continuing the Opus Dei vocation of spreading God through work beyond the home could be an

⁴⁹ María Elena Aguirre, “La mujer ante el problema de ser mujer,” *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 17, 1965, 1085.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1085.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1086.

acceptable use of female members time. Therefore, in Aguirre's view, though the home should still be a woman's primary vocation, it did not have to be her only vocation. In Aguirre's words, "first her house. Her home, her husband, her children. But 'first' does not mean 'only.'"⁵²

While Aguirre discussed modern women directly in her article, Calm often incorporated the topic into art reviews. The effect was the same: explaining and legitimizing the coexistence of professional women with traditional gender values, while ultimately promoting the Opus Dei ideology. In a 1966 interview with Chilean writer Eliana Cerda, Calm praised her for writing a novel that was "clean and pure."⁵³ Calm later directly linked this characterization of Cerda's writing to her merit as a mother, by including Cerda's comment that all four of her teenage sons "were of the opinion that a book like *The Flute on the Horizon* (Cerda's book) was necessary," and they hoped their mother would continue to write only if she maintained "the level of cleanliness she had already established."⁵⁴ In Calm's article, therefore, Cerda's merit as a female author was predicated on the fact that her books were clean, pure, and suitable for her children. In short, Calm framed Cerda as an ideal professional woman, whose professional work was an extension of her maternal work. Similarly, in a 1969 interview with Chilean novelist Elisa Serrana, Calm dedicated the opening paragraphs to informing the reader about Serrana's husband and children. This was followed, in Calm's first question on how she made time in her schedule for being a fulltime writer, wife, and mother, by Serrana's reply that her family came first and that she made time to eat lunch with her children every day.⁵⁵ Calm also described Serrana's process: "the novelist only writes when she has spiritual peace...in her works also there is a

⁵² Ibid., 1088-1090.

⁵³ Lillian Calm, "Con la Escritora Eliana Cerda," *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 28, 1966, 991.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 991.

⁵⁵ Lillian Calm, "Conversando con la Escritora Elisa Serrana," *El Sur*, 1969.

considerable value of discipline.”⁵⁶ Highly disciplined, valuing spiritual peace, and prioritizing her children: Elisa Serrana, as Calm presented her, was the perfect Opus Dei working woman. As Calm presented them in these two articles, Serrana and Cerda were living embodiments of Aguirre’s assertion that home and family should be a woman’s first, but not necessarily only, priority. Serrano’s interview made it clear that, though she had a professional writing career, she would never allow this to take precedence over caring for her family, while Cerda’s sons and their approval were central to the discussion of her work. By including her sons’ comments, Calm was able to indicate that their approval was a key factor in the continuation of Cerda’s career. Thus, by interviewing Serrana and Cerda, Calm demonstrated the viability of being a working mother who still always puts her family first, while simultaneously promoting Opus Dei ideology on womanhood.

In addition to writing about women’s roles, the numeraria journalists covered stories related to their roles as mothers, utilizing their authority to determine what was best for their own children to write articles on what was best for Chilean youth at large. In the late 1960s, the Hippy movement was becoming popular in Chile, characterized by disregard for traditional social norms, rejection of authority, idealism, and political engagement.⁵⁷ Miniskirts, berets, long hair, and floral prints were all the rage.⁵⁸ Youth culture was, in short, the antithesis of Opus Dei, which valued discipline, traditionalism, respect for authority, and officially taught that members should abstain from showy or revealing clothing.⁵⁹ Aguirre, in her 1967 article, “La Juventud de la Abundancia,” directly addressed youth culture in the late 1960s and upheld the Opus Dei line.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Patrick Barr-Melej, *Psychedelic Chile: Youth, Counterculture, and Politics on the Road to Socialism and Dictatorship* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 6-7.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 157.

⁵⁹ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 545.

Aguirre described young people as “scandalizing, strolling down Providence Street on Saturdays to shop, to walk, to be seen” at Copellia, in miniskirts, berets, and tight t-shirts, for the girls, and floral shirts with long, messy hair, for the boys.⁶⁰ Her account fit the young members of the hippy movement exactly, down to their clothing and pastime: hanging out in Providencia to shop and be seen. The location, Copellia, was the fashionable shop at the center of the upper-class hippy social scene.⁶¹ Throughout the article, youth culture was presented as frivolous, vapid, and in need of discipline, exactly the Opus Dei position on this issue. Aguirre conceded that the youth were “idealists, they have a need to invest themselves in something, to know more through reading, to fill life with love, to help others.” However, this was outweighed by their “frivolous environment, their ability to drown any initiative” with their “immense number, tremendous danger, of commodities, of money, of means, of luxuries, of abundance.”⁶² Aguirre pinpointed the problem as dangerously spoiling youth with access to immense amounts of money and material things. This aligned with Opus Dei ideology, which preached the importance of putting one’s wealth towards perfecting God’s kingdom on earth.⁶³

Aguirre’s balance of praise for the essential good qualities of the Chilean youth coupled with her distaste for their environment conveyed a concerned, maternal tone, rather than that of a scathing critic, thus softening her ideological condemnation and maintaining her maternal qualifications for speaking on the issue at all. Moreover, by blaming the youth’s frivolous, vapid character as a product of their environment, not an innate aspect of their character, Aguirre subtly implied that the best thing for them would be to turn away from their ostentatiously materialistic ways and surround themselves in the opposite kind of environment. This article was

⁶⁰ María Elena Aguirre, “La juventud de la abundancia,” *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 38, 1967, 712.

⁶¹ Barr-Melej, *Psychedelic Chile*, 131.

⁶² Aguirre, “La juventud de la abundancia,” 716.

⁶³ Blofield, *The Politics of Moral Sin*, 110.

published in a journal that was generally written and read by the members of the elite, thus, Aguirre's audience very well could have been the parents of some of the upper-class hippy youth she described. Had any of these parents heeded her advice and sought an antithetical environment to push their children towards, they would have found Opus Dei schools or youth programs a good option. Thus, as a woman, it was legitimate for Aguirre to weigh in on the state of Chilean youth, and she utilized this legitimacy to promote her organization's ideology and possibly even boost its membership, while mitigating her condemnation of youth culture by highlighting young people's potential and maintaining her maternal tone.

In addition to youth culture, the numeraria journalists weighed in on another maternal topic: family planning. Since the 1920s, medical and social care experts in Chile had been promoting birth control methods to combat high rates of maternal mortality due to illegal abortions.⁶⁴ Therapeutic abortion was legalized in Chile in 1931,⁶⁵ but, despite this, strong cultural norms against public discussion of sexuality and sexual behavior ensured there was only minimal state action on family planning until the 1960s. The number of cases of illegal abortions documented by public hospitals increased 104.4% between 1940 and 1965, and, by 1952, Chile had the highest infant mortality rate in Latin America, at 129 deaths per 1,000 live births.⁶⁶ Finally, in 1965, in response to this growing public health crisis, the Frei administration implemented the first official family planning program in Latin America. By 1966, there were 102 family planning centers nationwide with 58,000 women receiving free contraceptives.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 168-169.

⁶⁵ Htun, *Sex and the State*, 55-56.

⁶⁶ Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood*, 48-54.

⁶⁷ Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, "Overpopulation and the Politics of Family Planning in Chile and Peru." In *A World of Populations: Transnational Perspectives on Demography in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Heinrich Hartmann and Corina R Unger (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 96.

Furthermore, 18 out of 20 Chilean bishops during the early 1960s permitted couples to use contraceptives.⁶⁸ Although most clergy members fell in line after the Vatican published *Humane Vitae* in 1968, officially condemning the use of any contraceptives by Catholics, many members of the Chilean episcopacy had been in favor of individual choice prior to 1968. A substantial number, including the Archbishop of Santiago Raúl Silva Henríquez, continued to publicly advocate for individual choice after 1968 as well.⁶⁹ All this was completely opposed to Opus Dei ideology, which preached that having children was one of women's most important and sacred duties.⁷⁰ There could be no compromise between what the state and some members of the clergy wanted—increased access to contraceptives and family planning education—and what Opus Dei endorsed—a strong ban on contraceptives in any form.

When writing on family planning, the numeraria journalists endorsed Opus Dei ideology, leaving no room for debate. In her 1966 article, “Las condiciones de la explosión demográfica,” Calm did not, for the most part, discuss family planning directly. Instead, she dedicated the piece to arguing for the benefits of a population explosion in the late 20th century, into the 21st century, claiming that Earth was “a planet of immense resources and it only needs arms, more arms to do the work.”⁷¹ However, concerns over rapid population growth were another important motivation for family planning. Between 1920 and 1960, Chile's population doubled, and Santiago's population grew to be five times larger. This caused serious problems in housing and health and social services, particularly in the rapidly expanding shantytowns around Santiago, and family planning was a way to alleviate the situation.⁷² Thus, Calm's argument in favor of population

⁶⁸ Paola Bacchetta and Margaret Power, *Right-wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists Around the World* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 279.

⁶⁹ Tinsman, *Partners in Conflict*, 161.

⁷⁰ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 196.

⁷¹ Lillian Calm, “Las condiciones de la explosión demográfica,” *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 23, 1966, 472.

⁷² Pieper Mooney, “Overpopulation and the Politics of Family Planning,” 91.

growth was implicitly an argument against family planning. Throughout the article, she never once offered a positive benefit to population control, instead positing that population explosions enabled European countries to become global powers. If Chile were to experience a population explosion, she posited, “the demographic pressure will have promoted agriculture... enough to feed the world population.”⁷³ Furthermore, she argued, countries that stifled population growth would find one day that “the political and economic leadership of the world will have passed to other countries with rapid demographic growth.”⁷⁴ Not only did she frame population growth as a positive, but she also explicitly threatened that should Chile choose to limit its population, it would fall behind the rest of the world. Finally, she brought the discussion more explicitly to the issue of family planning by reminding the reader that the limit on population growth she warned about was being implemented through “the wave of contraceptive propaganda.”⁷⁵ This article was an unequivocal promotion of uncontrolled fertility, as preached by both Opus Dei and the Vatican, by elaborating on the positive effects of a population boom compared to the detrimental path of a nation guided by birth control propaganda.

At the same time that Chilean society was engaging in a debate over family planning policies, it was also experiencing a powerful education reform movement. During the mid and late 1960s, university students across Chile were calling for the modernization and democratization of the university system. The movement was primarily driven by working-class students seeking to make education more accessible.⁷⁶ By 1970, only 2% of university students were working-class, and all working-class students attended public universities, while the private

⁷³ Calm, “Las condiciones de la explosión demográfica,” 474.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Alfredo Jadresic Vargas, *La Reforma de 1968 en la Universidad de Chile con especial referencia a la facultad de medicina* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 2001), 55-56.

universities remained 93% upper-class and only 7% middle-class.⁷⁷ Furthermore, in 1964, only 32% of students even finished their legally mandated six years of primary education.⁷⁸ In 1965, in response to these conditions, the Frei administration implemented an education reform program based on the principle that education was necessary for democracy. It supported education as a means to prepare students for the lives they would actually lead, by offering technical training options for secondary schools rather than preparing everyone for university.⁷⁹ Frei's education program, implemented in the midst of widespread student calls for reform, was meant to increase access to education across Chile and create a curriculum tailored to the variety of students the system had to accommodate.

Two aspects of the Frei reform were of particular interest to Opus Dei. One was the initiation of a large-scale construction project to build new schools, so there would be spaces available for more students to attend.⁸⁰ The other was the fact that the reform program was generally friendly towards the private education system.⁸¹ Though Opus Dei, an organization made up of the most conservative members of the upper-class, had no interest in increased access to education for members of lower classes, it benefitted from the administration's school construction project and positive view towards private education. Founding Opus Dei-run schools was one of the most effective ways of increasing their membership, in Chile as well as across Latin America.⁸² One of the very first courses of action the founding members the Chilean

⁷⁷ Fischer, *Political Ideology and Educational Reform*, 64.

⁷⁸ Fredy Soto Roa, *Historia de la Educación Chilena* (Santiago de Chile: CPEIP, 2000), 55-56.

⁷⁹ Fischer, *Political Ideology and Educational Reform*, 39. Before the 1965 reform, all students attending secondary school were taught as if they would proceed to university, despite the fact that many students would not attend university.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁸² Francis, "Opus Dei."

branch of Opus Dei undertook during the 1950s was building Opus Dei dormitories at the Universidad Católica de Santiago.⁸³ Their school construction project quickly expanded during the 1960s, under an administration actively encouraging such activities. In addition to more university dorms, Opus Dei opened many of its own private primary and secondary schools in affluent neighborhoods in Santiago. The most successful of these schools included Colegio Tabancura, for boys, and Colegio Los Andes, for girls, both located in Vitacura, an affluent suburb of Santiago. These schools attracted families that would otherwise have sent their children to one of the well-established upper-class Catholic schools, such as St. George, where the majority of the students at Tabancura transferred from, were it not for the Church's liberal tendencies at the time.⁸⁴ Although many of the principles behind the education reform movement of the 1960s did not fit well with Opus Dei ideology, the organization nonetheless greatly benefitted from the reforms because of the relationship between them and the practical expansion of Opus Dei's infrastructure and membership in Chile.

Just as with the women's liberation movement, youth culture, and family planning, numeraria journalists published articles assessing the education reform movement, and, in doing so, highlighted and promoted aspects of the reforms that benefitted Opus Dei. In "La orientación profesional en Chile," from 1966, Vial argued for the benefits of the new technical school option for secondary school under the Frei administration's education program. She argued it was "absurd...to prepare all students for university," and it was much preferable "to educate in accordance with the diversity of aptitudes."⁸⁵ This idea, that university was not right for everyone, was one that the Frei reform and Opus Dei agreed on, though for different reasons. For

⁸³ Mönckeberg, *El Imperio del Opus Dei*, 154.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 553-559.

⁸⁵ Elena Vial, "La orientación profesional en Chile," *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 28, 1966, 939-940.

Frei and the PDC, this was part of their democratization mission, by creating more and better options for students at the secondary education level. Meanwhile, Opus Dei was facing growing numbers of working-class students in the university system and demands for reforms to allow even more to attend, so creating an option for working-class students to leave the university track for technical education during secondary school was an appealing way to lessen their influx in the university system. As Vial expressed, it was absurd to prepare all students for university, and, given her membership in a classist, hierarchical organization of upper-class elites, for Vial, this largely meant it was absurd to prepare so many working-class students for university.

Vial made a similar argument earlier that year in “Reforma educacional Chilena,” in which she argued for the benefits of technical training and highlighted the importance of allowing children to follow their interests in primary school as well. Here, she included a final section concluding that the reforms “result in a certain advantage for private education” because private education allowed for “a flexibility that had never before been given in Chilean education.”⁸⁶ In other words, private school was preferable to public school because it allowed students more flexibility to explore their interests and aptitudes. She simultaneously supported the state’s reform program while promoting the virtues of private education, a key locus of Opus Dei recruitment and indoctrination, in relation to the state reform. Furthermore, in both articles she adopted a maternal tone, emphasizing that what the education system needed was “a lot of care, personal guidance, and understanding of the young people.”⁸⁷ It was not enough to prepare them for life; they needed care and compassion along the way. This tone underscored her legitimacy, as a woman, to judge the merits of the education system, even though she was not

⁸⁶ Elena Vial, “Reforma educacional chilena,” *Cuadernos del Sur*, number 21, 1966, 273.

⁸⁷ Vial, “La orientación profesional en Chile,” 940.

actually a mother herself. After all, being a good mother included providing a good education. In her articles on education reform, Vial was able to simultaneously give a well-informed opinion on the program and promote aspects of it that were beneficial to Opus Dei, all without ever violating her place as a numeraria.

Female members of Opus Dei during the 1960s with full-time, professional lives outside of their homes were in what, at first glance, may seem like a contradictory position. As members of Opus Dei, they vowed to perfectly perform their female vocations related to marriage, housekeeping, and motherhood, but they were also working professionals, often in journalism, which took time away from their familial vocations. In their lives as journalists, they fulfilled the Opus Dei mission, traditionally allocated to male members, of perfect performance of their work, promoting Opus Dei members, ideology, and politics through their publications. However, this did not violate their assigned gender roles in Opus Dei. Firstly, many of them fulfilled the expectation of being wives and mothers, raising Christian children, in their personal lives. Secondly, and more importantly, they upheld their gender roles in their professional lives as well by adhering to traditionally feminine subjects, such as the meaning of womanhood, aspects of child-rearing, and the arts, thereby expanding, rather than violating, their vocations as mothers and housewives into the professional sphere. These women's professions, rather than contradicting their conservative, traditionalist beliefs about women and their place in society, served to strengthen and promote their beliefs, both through the content of their articles and the way in which they wrote them. However, they were a minority group in an organization that promoted a minority view during a moderate-liberal era in Chilean politics, and, as such, the scope of and audience for their work remained limited. This would differ drastically from the

conservative women's movements of the 1970s and 1980s that were about to emerge, which would work, after 1973, within the framework of a deeply conservative military state.

Chapter Two

Keeping Women at Home and Marxists at Bay: Women's Associations and the Ideological Foundations of the Pinochet Regime

During the 1980s, Chile was governed by a conservative military regime, established by a coup in 1973, and many women participated in this regime through a series of women's voluntary organizations. Although many women joined in order to access the welfare and social services they provided, most of the volunteers who led and ran the organizations were upper-class women who had no need for welfare and participated out of genuine belief in the mission and ideals of the military government. Much like the female Opus Dei journalists during the 1960s, these women supported a regime that preached strict adherence to traditional Catholic gender roles while simultaneously violating those roles by working outside their homes for the regime. Also similarly, the many publications these women produced illuminate their ability to reconcile their conservative worldview with their work outside their home as philanthropy intended to implement that worldview across Chile. While the Opus Dei journalists were confined largely to promoting their organization's ideas among a limited pool of urban elite readership, the women's associations, particularly the National Female Secretariat and CEMACHILE, were an apparatus of the military government. As such, they not only promoted but also defined and legitimated the regime's ideology to Chilean women across regional and class boundaries, still within the limits of a traditional understanding of gender roles.

On September 11, 1973, the democratically elected socialist Popular Unity (UP) government of Salvador Allende was overthrown in a violent military coup. By 1974, General Augusto Pinochet was appointed President of Chile, beginning a dictatorial military regime that would last until the next free, democratic elections were held in 1990. The Pinochet regime was

legislated by the three chiefs of the armed forces and the director general of the Carabineros,⁸⁸ with Pinochet serving as both President of Chile and chief army commander until 1980, when the regime passed a new constitution.⁸⁹ It was ideologically against democratic political participation and political parties, seeking instead to instill a new system based on civil movements and interest groups influencing the governing coalition.⁹⁰ This created a system of limited pluralism in which a variety of elite interests, including the armed forces, the Carabineros, National Party,⁹¹ and special interest groups, such as the Chicago Boys and the Greminalists,⁹² could all exert influence through personal connections to or membership in Pinochet's cabinet.⁹³ Ideologically, the Pinochet regime promoted traditional values of Faith, Family, and Fatherland, despite its strained relationship with the Chilean Catholic Church over human rights abuses and extreme violent repression.⁹⁴ Economically, it began an intensive modernization project based on neoliberal principles of free market capitalism, a clear break from the industry nationalization project begun under the UP.⁹⁵

The early 1980s was a turning point for the regime. Throughout the 1970s, support for the regime was generally high, and the economy was improving.⁹⁶ However, by 1982, the

⁸⁸ The Carabineros are the Chilean national police force.

⁸⁹ Carlos Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 13.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁹¹ The National Party was the ultra-right-wing party in Chile.

⁹² The Chicago Boys were a group of neoliberal economists, trained at the University of Chicago, that designed the regime's economic program. The Greminalistas were the members of a conservative Catholic movement started in the 1960s at the Universidad Católica by Jaime Guzmán as a counter force to the progressive student movements at the time. Jaime Guzmán was also, incidentally, a member of Opus Dei.

⁹³ Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*, 204.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 378-379.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8-13.

⁹⁶ Steve J Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973-1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 73-76.

country was at the height of its worst economic crisis since 1930,⁹⁷ and the regime was forced to implement an emergency housing program to address a severe housing shortage in poor, urban areas.⁹⁸ Moreover, the period from 1983 to 1986 was identified by historian Steve J. Stern as the period in which the regime lost the cultural war for legitimacy and popular support in Chile.⁹⁹ Resistance to the regime grew throughout the decade, due to state repression, worsening poverty and inequality. In 1988, in a plebiscite to determine whether Pinochet should extend his rule for an additional eight years, 56% of voters said “no,” bringing about constitutional reform in 1989 and the return of free elections in 1990. The women’s voluntary associations were active throughout this period, from the founding of the regime to campaigning for the “yes” vote in the 1988 plebiscite. However, this chapter focuses primarily on the early 1980s, when the Pinochet regime had not yet lost but was struggling to maintain popular support. At this critical juncture, the regime relied heavily on the National Female Secretariat and CEMA-Chile’s work indoctrinating Chilean women with regime ideology and justifying repressive and economically-damaging policies to shore up remaining popular support.

The activities of the women of the National Female Secretariat (hereafter noted as the SNM) and CEMA-Chile served to bolster, promote, and defend state policies and ideology through the cultural power of Chilean women. Establishing itself as a legitimate government was important to the regime to ensure voluntary civil participation and reduce the number of resources dedicated to coercion and repression; and workers, youth, and women’s voluntary

⁹⁷ Francisco E. González, *Dual Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Institutionalized Regimes in Chile and Mexico, 1970-2000* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 47-48.

⁹⁸ Pablo Allard et al., *Construyendo Chile: Políticas Públicas en Viviendas Sociales* (Santiago: Ediciones LYD, 2012), 29-30.

⁹⁹ Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 328.

associations were a powerful avenue to achieve this.¹⁰⁰ The SNM was founded by the Allende administration in 1972, but was immediately coopted by the military government in 1973.¹⁰¹ Under Pinochet, it became a vast network of voluntary social work and pro-regime journalism by predominately upper- and middle-class Chilean women led by First Lady Lucía Hiriart as its president.¹⁰² CEMA, on the other hand, had a longer, more complicated history. In 1954, drawing on a tradition of Catholic charity and paternalistic elite philanthropy,¹⁰³ First Lady Graciela Letelier Valasco began a practice of First Ladies sponsoring Mothers Centers across Chile, which were run under the auspices of the Catholic Church. Then, in 1964, the CEMA Foundation was officially founded by First Lady María Ruiz-Tagle de Frei, as a promotional and coordinating agency for the Mothers Centers to steer the organization away from pure private charity towards state sponsored welfare.¹⁰⁴ However, although Ruiz-Tagle de Frei brought the Mothers Centers' activities officially under the state authority and funding, she upheld the paternal, philanthropic roots begun by Letelier Valasco, actively recruiting well-to-do women as volunteers and trying to attract women from poor neighborhoods to use CEMA's domestic skills training and social services.¹⁰⁵

Under the UP, CEMA was increasingly politicized and began to preach, as official policy, a degree of gender equality through the Mother Centers. In response, the Pinochet regime rebranded CEMA as the respectable, upper-class private volunteerism organization it was

¹⁰⁰ Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*, 139-244.

¹⁰¹ Annie G. Dandavati, *Engendering Democracy in Chile* (New York, Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2005), 22.

¹⁰² Margaret Power, "Defending Dictatorship: Conservative Women in Pinochet's Chile and the 1988 Plebiscite," in *Radical Women in Latin America: Left and Right*, eds. Victoria González and Karen Kampwirth (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 306.

¹⁰³ Cynthia Sanborn and Felipe Portocarrero, *Philanthropy and Social Change in Latin America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2005), 5-7.

¹⁰⁴ Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 64-65.

¹⁰⁵ Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood*, 77.

initially.¹⁰⁶ Presided over by Hiriart, led primarily by military wives and staffed by upper-class volunteers, CEMA was meant to provide material support to poor women and foster support for the regime among them.¹⁰⁷ In both the SNM and CEMA, this was done through two primary categories of activities: social work, particularly in the realms of education and healthcare, and journalism, through SNM and CEMA sponsored publications that were regularly distributed to members throughout the country. Just as the Opus Dei journalists during the 1960s, the SNM and CEMA journalists¹⁰⁸ were able to promote their organizations' ideology through highly professionalized "voluntary" work without violating the conservative gender and social hierarchy ideology they were promoting. During the Allende administration, women across class divides organized against the president to protect their traditional understanding of gender and family structure.¹⁰⁹ Subsequently, they continued to safeguard these ideals through voluntary, though highly professionalized and time-consuming, philanthropic work for the SNM and CEMA-Chile.¹¹⁰

While the women's associations were officially part of the military government, Opus Dei was also very active in the Pinochet regime in an unofficial capacity. The regime had a conservative Catholic ideology that aligned well with Opus Dei's beliefs. The regime was influenced by Francoism's state structure and ideology,¹¹¹ and Francoism, in turn, was strongly

¹⁰⁶ Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 65.

¹⁰⁷ Gwynn Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile: Familial Ideals, Citizenship, and Political Struggle, 1970-1990* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 149.

¹⁰⁸ Although this chapter does not follow specific journalists, the SNM and CEMA publications were all written and edited by members of the organizations.

¹⁰⁹ Lisa Baldez, *Why Women Protest: Women's Movements in Chile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹¹⁰ From now on, these will be referred to collectively as the women's associations for brevity. If I am referring to specifically one or the other, they will be mentioned by name.

¹¹¹ Francesca Grez Cook, "El Hispanismo en las Mujeres Chilenas: las Influencias Franquistas en la Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer, Chile 1973-1989," *Izquierdas* no. 20 (2015): 59.

influenced by Opus Dei.¹¹² Within Chile, too, several of the regime's core beliefs, such as criticism of unrestricted democracy and political parties, use of presidential election via plebiscite, and emphasis on nationalism as the foundation for institutional order and stability, were all drawn from conservative journals in which Opus Dei members were heavily involved. These included *Portada* and *Qué Pasa*, both published in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In fact, Opus Dei member, *Portada* founding editor and Elena Vial's brother, Gonzalo Vial Correa, was appointed Minister of Education in 1978.¹¹³ Furthermore, Opus Dei's belief in a conservative social hierarchy, acceptance of neoliberalism, and silence on the regime's human rights abuses allowed it to flourish. By the end of the 1980s, it was fully integrated among Chilean elites, and many of the businessmen who helped consolidate the regime were also members.¹¹⁴ Although Opus Dei was not officially sponsored by or integrated into the Pinochet regime, its similar worldview allowed it to grow in size and influence over the two decades Pinochet was in power.

Just as there was an unofficial but significant Opus Dei undercurrent in the military government, there was a similar Opus Dei tone to the women's associations. Several important leaders of the SNM received scholarships to study in Spain during the 1960s. These scholarships were given by the Spanish Feminine Section, the ultra-conservative parallel organization to the SNM in Franco's regime, and the recipients brought Feminine Section ideology, influenced by Opus Dei as much as the rest of the Franco regime, to their work in the SNM.¹¹⁵ Additionally, there was a high proportion of Opus Dei female members who were also members of the

¹¹² Fabián Gaspar Bustamante Olgún, "La Formación de una Nueva Mentalidad Religiosa de la Elite Empresarial Durante la Dictadura Militar, 1974-1990: El Catolicismo Empresarial del Opus Dei," *Revista Cultura & Religión* 4, no.1 (2010): 103.

¹¹³ Huneus, *The Pinochet Regime*, 144-147.

¹¹⁴ Bustamante Olgún, "La Formación de una Nueva Mentalidad Religiosa," 106-116.

¹¹⁵ Grez Cook, "El Hispanismo en las Mujeres Chilenas," 64.

SNM.¹¹⁶ More importantly, though, the SNM and CEMA volunteer journalists in the 1970s and 1980s and the numeraria journalists of the 1960s promoted similar worldviews through their publications. Both Opus Dei women and the upper- and middle-class women who ran the women's associations, who dedicated significant time, energy, and resources to supporting the regime, by virtue of their roles in their respective organizations, supported traditional, conservative Catholic views on gender, family, and class hierarchies,¹¹⁷ and they tackled many of the same subjects, including women's roles in the modern world and education.

Despite their similarities and overlap, the women's associations and Opus Dei women were two distinct, independent conservative women's groups, albeit with significant ideological and membership overlap. While both groups wrote on traditionally feminine subjects, the voluntary associations' journalists addressed a wider variety of topics that were sometimes more loosely connected to their identities as women than the deeply feminized articles by the numeraria journalists. However, the main difference between their journalistic activities was not their respective ideologies or the topics they covered. Rather, they differed significantly in the type of organization to which they belonged. Opus Dei is a private, religious organization, albeit with sophisticated administrative and governing structures, that, during the 1960s, was still new to Chile and was sometimes at odds with the centrist Frei administration. As such, the numerarias' proselytization via journalism was subtler and aimed at a more limited, elite audience. The women's associations' volunteers, by contrast, as members of state-sponsored organizations producing state-sponsored publications, were able to broaden the scope of their

¹¹⁶ The specific numeraria journalists discussed in the previous chapter were still working journalists throughout the Pinochet regime, primarily at subsidiaries of *El Mercurio*, but I was unable to find any evidence of their involvement in or writings for or against the SNM. Monckeberg, *El Imperio*, 210.

¹¹⁷ It is important to note, however, that this does not necessarily include the lower-class members of the Mothers' Centers these women served, many of whom needed access to the welfare services the Centers provided in order to survive, regardless of individual ideological convictions.

work beyond subtly or indirectly affirming aspects of state ideology to publications that not only supported but also actively legitimized the ideological foundations of the regime.

The Pinochet regime, begun by a military coup, needed to rewrite Chile's immediate history in order to legitimize its existence, and women were key to this project. The regime's historical legitimacy relied on keeping the memory of the UP and a fear of anticommunism alive, long after the UP had been overthrown.¹¹⁸ Women, famously through the two Marches of the Empty Pots and Pans, were among the most prominent figures of resistance to the UP. The Marches, held in December 1971 and on September 5, 1973, just days before the coup, were understood by the women involved as demonstrations to uphold traditional family structures and to protect their children, in the face of growing food shortages and long ration lines imposed by the government.¹¹⁹ Thus, from its inception, there was a clear basis for the military regime to claim legitimacy as Chile's salvation from the Marxist threat of the UP.¹²⁰ However, as the regime went on and many women continued to struggle to feed their families,¹²¹ the women's organizations continuously reminded the Chilean women that, no matter the state of Chile under Pinochet, their alternative was much worse.

In a 1983 pamphlet celebrating its tenth anniversary, the SNM reminded its readers that it was initially created to offer the women who "with such selflessness and responsibility fought to liberate Chile, during the Marxist era" the opportunity to help rebuild Chile, now that the military government had dethroned the Marxist UP.¹²² Having sufficiently reminded readers why

¹¹⁸ Huneeus, *The Pinochet Regime*, 143-144.

¹¹⁹ Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, 176-180.

¹²⁰ Allende and the UP administration were a democratically elected socialist government, not a Marxist government. However, it was referred to as Marxist in Pinochet regime rhetoric and ideology, including throughout the women's associations' publications.

¹²¹ Baldez, *Why Women Protest*, 78.

¹²² Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer de Chile, *Diez Años de Voluntariado, 1973-1983*, Santiago de Chile: 1983, 3.

it existed, the SNM then listed its objectives for the coming years, the first of which was “to spread patriotic and familial values.”¹²³ This implied that not only did the SNM originate in the need to rebuild the nation after the anti-patriotic and anti-family UP destroyed it, but also that this work was not yet finished: there were still parts of Chile where the new patriotism and family values of the military regime had not penetrated. On the tenth anniversary of its founding, the SNM sent out a pamphlet that connected its origin to the necessity to rebuild after the UP, keeping the specter of the immediate past alive. In doing so, it also asserted that the SNM and, by association, the military government were just as necessary in 1983 as they were in 1973 to continue this reconstruction project and keep the Marxist threat at bay.

In addition to defining Chile under Pinochet by what it was not—Marxist—the women’s associations positively defined what Pinochet’s Chile was: a free, western, Christian nation. The Pinochet regime’s ideology drew heavily from the Francoist idea of *Hispanidad*, a philosophy based on celebrating Spanish (i.e. Christian, European) heritage of the Hispanic world.¹²⁴ As such, the military government emphasized Chile’s identity as a Christian nation and association with Spain and the West in speeches and publications, such as Pinochet’s *Declaration of Principles of the Chilean Government* in 1974.¹²⁵ Furthermore, although the military government had a strained relationship with the Chilean Catholic Church, the Vatican during this period was fairly conservative, particularly after the election of John Paul II in 1978, allowing the Pinochet regime to claim to be aligned with international Catholicism and the Catholic Church despite its

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹²⁴ The concept of *Hispanidad* does not originate with the Franco regime and has had a variety of tones, objectives, and interpretations over time. However, a version of *Hispanidad* praising Spanish heritage and culture across the Spanish speaking world, and highlighting the remaining cultural, spiritual, and political ties between Spanish and white, Hispanic political elites across Latin America, was heavily incorporated into the Franco regime’s ideology. This version of *Hispanidad* was subsequently used by the Chilean military leaders to define their regime as well.

¹²⁵ Grez Cook, “El Hispanismo en las Mujeres Chilenas,” 59-71.

relationship to the church in Chile.¹²⁶ The women's associations were in a uniquely powerful position to define this understanding of their nation through their publications because of the long tradition in Chile, as well as throughout Latin America, of seeing women as maternal caretakers of the nation and Chilean women's leading role in opposing the UP government.¹²⁷ This gave the women's associations' message strong validity and, by speaking to Chilean women specifically, spread their message among a demographic whose belief in the new Chile held particularly strong symbolic power.

The ideological understanding of the Chilean nation under the new military government that the women's associations disseminated had particularly strong symbolic legitimacy and sway because it came from them, but it was not their own, unique message by any means. Rather, they echoed the official state line of a free, western, Christian Chile. In "Valores Patrios y Valores Familiares," published in 1982 as part of a series of *Cuadernos de Difusión*, the SNM highlighted Chile's Christian and western national character, directly stating "Chile belongs to Western Christian culture, and, thus, inherently values of dignity and human liberty."¹²⁸ By identifying Chile with the West, Christianity, and a traditionally western emphasis on freedom, the SNM distanced the regime, once again, from the Marxist UP. Given that communism was commonly juxtaposed with western freedoms, this reaffirmed the regime's chosen national self-identity as a Western, Christian state. Furthermore, by signaling out freedom, specifically, as the value Chile necessarily had by virtue of being a western nation, the SNM downplayed the severe

¹²⁶ Bustamante Olguin, "La Formación de una Nueva Mentalidad Religiosa," 106.

¹²⁷ Par Kumaraswami and Niamh Thorton, *Revolucionarias: Conflict and Gender in Latin American Narrative by Women* (New York: P. Lang, 2007), 124-127.

¹²⁸ Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer de Chile, "Valores Patrios y Valores Familiares," *Cuadernos de Difusión No. 7*, 1982, 6.

lack of freedom in Pinochet's Chile. There were no examples of freedoms included, but none were needed. Chile was a western nation. Western nations were free. Therefore, Chile was free.

Later, the article made the comparison to Marxism explicit while again addressing and referencing freedom. The SNM explained that the issue with Marxism was that it “lacked a notion of God, fatherland, of liberty and human dignity” and, therefore, Marxists were not real Chileans because they did not respect “any of the national values of our [Chilean] traditions, and instead obey...Soviet Imperialism, contrary to the essential principles of western Christian culture.”¹²⁹ This was followed by the assertion that “because of this, Chile affirms that the right to disagree must have certain limits” to protect from guerrilla violence and totalitarianism.¹³⁰ The SNM set up Pinochet's Chile as diametrically opposed to Marxism and Marxist Chileans as a foreign threat to the nation. Then, the authors of this pamphlet used this assertion to justifying curbing patriotic Chileans' freedoms, despite maintaining that freedom was an integral aspect of Chilean national identity, to protect that same freedom from total annihilation under Marxist rule. Just as the SNM was able to legitimize the regime's founding and ongoing existence in reference to the immediate past under the UP, these women were also able to promote the regime's self-image to the women of Chile while justifying inconsistencies in that image through continued use of Marxism as a point of comparison.

While the women's associations published articles that ideologically defined the regime at large, they also promoted the specific state ideology on the proper role of women and their place in Chilean society. The regime explicitly promoted women's central social roles as that of wife and mother and aimed to return women's work to the realm of domestic, non-productive

¹²⁹ Ibid., 10.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

labor: running their households and raising children, and, if need be, earning a complementary income from home.¹³¹ Yet, the number of women in the workforce steadily increased over the course of the regime,¹³² particularly during the 1980s, as many rural women found work in the booming fruit economy.¹³³ In the face of growing women's participation in the labor economy, the women's associations published articles offering a view on women in the work place that recognized it as a condition of modern society, glorified maternal and domestic work, and set the parameters for acceptable working women's behavior.

Through various forms of publications, the women's associations clearly and consistently presented the role of wife and mother as the ideal to which all Chilean women should strive. In 1983, CEMA published an interview with Pinochet, conducted by a CEMA volunteer, about women's place in modern society, the women's associations' work, and Pinochet's assessment of the modern Chilean woman. When asked "What is the most important social labor that women have developed?" Pinochet responded "The most transcendent work a woman has is the task of motherhood...children today are formed for Chile, whose future we are forging with such force. His mother must teach him love and respect for the motherland, and the high values that make-up our national identity."¹³⁴ This was an unequivocal endorsement of motherhood, delivered from Pinochet himself. Although neither the question nor the answer excluded the possibility of being a working mother, Pinochet's answer that woman's most transcendent "work," not duty, role, or responsibility, was motherhood implied that motherhood was a full-time occupation that

¹³¹ Scott D. Crago, "Perquenco's Travelling Guitarists and the Administrative Inconsistencies of the Pinochet Dictatorship's Indigenous Policies," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 50, no. 1 (2018): 71-72.

¹³² Peter Winn, *Victims of the Chilean Miracle: Workers and Neoliberalism in the Pinochet Era, 1973-2002* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 58.

¹³³ Heidi Tinsman, "Politics of Gender and Consumption in Authoritarian Chile, 1973-1990: Women Agricultural Workers in the Fruit-Export Industry," *Latin American Research Review* 41, no. 3 (2006), 7-31.

¹³⁴ Fundación CEMA-Chile, "En Busca de un Mundo Nuevo, que te dé Seguridad," *Cema-Chile*, 1983, 8.

should take precedence above all else and, therefore, likely would not leave room for another occupation. Furthermore, his response valorized motherhood as woman's most important work because it was the foundation for the nation's future success. Though the interview never explicitly stated that women should remain in the home, it glorified an understanding of motherhood as a woman's primary and most important occupation that often would, in practice, preclude working outside the home as well. Similarly, that same year, in a profile of CEMA's Mother of the Year, published in *Revista Aniversario CEMA-Chile*, the winner's professional title was listed as "mother and spouse," and skills such as weaving, sewing, and cooking appeared under her education.¹³⁵ Thus, CEMA was asserting, just as Pinochet had in his interview, that wife and mother were their own, full occupations that were to be celebrated, in this case through the Mother of the Year award. The profile took this a step further than the interview had by listing the educational attainment required for this occupation. To become a doctor, one must go to medical school. To become mother of the year, one must learn to cook and sew. Through messages from Pinochet himself to profiles honoring hardworking, successful, stay-at-home mothers, CEMA's readers were bombarded with the message that their highest aspiration in life should be to motherhood.

Although domestic motherhood was clearly the preferred form of womanhood for both the Pinochet regime and the women's associations that disseminated its message, the associations also recognized that, despite their best efforts to discourage it, many women did work outside the home. In response, they wrote about the acceptable limits and conditions for working women. In "Valores Patrios y Valores Familiares," the SNM scolded the generalized "young office mom" for waking her sleeping child when she got home from work to play with

¹³⁵ Fundación CEMA-Chile, *Revista Aniversario CEMA-Chile*, 1983, 41.

him, admonishing her for her “lack of respect for the child,” and reminding her that “a child isn’t an ornament, nor his parents’ toy.”¹³⁶ The mother was not framed as heartlessly abandoning her child, as she may have been previously (by Aguirre, for example, in “La mujer ante el problema de ser mujer” in 1965). Instead, she was “eager with maternal love”¹³⁷ when she returned from work, and, therefore, could not help but wake her child up to play. Nonetheless, her work life was hurting her child, and she was not taking her responsibility as a mother seriously, treating her child like a toy. She may not have been heartless, but she certainly appeared thoughtless and misguided. The fact that this hypothetical mother was specifically a young mother further added to this thoughtless, misguided impression, overall presenting a distinctly negative, if vaguely sympathetic, image of a working mother. Additionally, by using the example of a mother who clearly loved her child, but whose job took up all her time, leaving only late at night for expressing her love, the article asserted that both mother and child would be happier if she remained in her proper place at home.

The article did explicitly recognize some women had no choice but to work for a living.¹³⁸ However, it ended with a clear assessment of how to be a working mother, asserting that “what is very important...is that the working woman continues to feel that the natural center of her life is her home and not her office” and, as such, “although she must work outside the home...she will always find a way to devote herself to her family, and be a positive influence in her home environment.”¹³⁹ According to the SNM, if women absolutely needed to work they could, but only if they were still wives and mothers first. The message was clear: do not be the

¹³⁶ Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer de Chile, “Valores Patrios y Valores Familiares,” *Cuadernos de Difusión No. 7*, 1982, 31.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

young working mother, waking her child up at night. In other words, maintain the ideals of traditional femininity and domestic work, even when fundamentally violating them by working outside the home.

The SNM and CEMA-Chile were two organizations coordinated by and through the Chilean state under the military government of General Pinochet and the armed forces. They were also run by voluntary labor of Chilean women. Although they often supported lower-class women seeking the social and material welfare these organizations provided, the women who ran the SNM and CEMA-Chile were primarily upper-class women who did not need to work, nor did they have any need for the services their organizations offered. Instead, they were deeply, ideologically committed to the goals and beliefs of the Pinochet regime, and, thus, volunteered significant time and energy to supporting the regime. Many of these women had also been central to the opposition movement against Salvador Allende and the UP government prior to the 1973 military coup. The cultural power and legitimacy they had through traditional, conservative understanding of all women collectively, regardless of individual identities, as the maternal safekeepers and caretakers of the nation's moral wellbeing, that enabled them to be such effective protestors of the UP administration, carried over into their work for the women's association under Pinochet. Through various publications, disseminated through the Mothers Centers, the volunteer journalists of the SNM and CEMA-Chile promoted the regime's ideological definition of the Chilean nation generally, and understanding of Chilean women specifically, lending these definitions legitimacy as women speaking to other women, thereby garnering support from a sector of the population whose opinion held special symbolic power and sway.

Chapter Three

Selling the New Chile: The Role of Women's Associations in Defending State Policies in the Early 1980s

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the volunteer journalists of the SNM and CEMA-Chile helped to legitimize the ideological foundations of the Pinochet regime broadly, both defining what it was and what it was not, and they promoted, defined, and justified its specific ideology regarding the role of women in Chilean society as constructed by the regime. Like the numeraria journalists, the women's associations' volunteers advocated for the benefits and wider adoption of their organizations' worldview. However, in the case of the women's associations, it was possible to do this much more clearly and directly as they promoted the very foundation of the new Chilean nation, rather than a fledgling private organization targeting only a select portion of the population. The women's associations' journalists differed from the numeraria journalists in another key way. The numeraria journalists' ideology was generally filtered through artist interviews or think pieces on current societal trends. They discussed women's roles, Chilean youth, and population growth in broad strokes, but only Vial's articles on education reform addressed specific government policies directly. The women's associations, on the other hand, not only supported and legitimized the regime's overarching ideological foundations, but also directly supported and defended the state policies that this ideology engendered. They still grounded this work in traditionally feminine subjects, including education, healthcare, family planning, and home economics, but through their discussions of these gendered subjects they were able to advocate for, publicize, and justify, sometimes in the face of popular opposition, specific state policies and initiatives, in an effort to ensure their effective implementation and shore up support for them among Chilean women.

The women's associations, just like the numeraria journalists two decades before, in addition to literally writing about gender roles and motherhood, also addressed topics that could easily fall within the domain of motherhood and childcare. And, just as in the 1960s, education reform was one such topic. During the Allende administration, the government passed another extensive education reform. Known as the National Unified School (ENU) program, the Allende reform proposed one planned, unified school system, run and funded by the state, that all students would attend, in order to break down class barriers in education and increase access for the most disadvantaged students.¹⁴⁰ The ENU was met with a negative reaction from many Chileans. Common concerns included the fact that the nation had just completed a series of extensive education reforms under the Frei administration, and beginning another would be more disruptive than helpful, and that the quality of education would necessarily decrease in a mass education system.¹⁴¹ However, the ENU also faced strong backlash from conservative Chileans, and especially from Poder Feminismo, the conservative women's movement behind the March of the Empty Pots, because it threatened their families by revoking their rights as parents to educate their children as they saw fit.¹⁴² Indeed, the concept of "freedom of education" and the right to send one's children to private school was deeply ingrained in Chilean society.¹⁴³

In response to this, upon coming to power, the Pinochet regime immediately began dismantling the UP education reforms. The new regime fired all university faculty and secondary school directors who were considered too sympathetic to the UP, established a system of school check-ups from military personnel, and switched teachers' contracts to temporary contracts,

¹⁴⁰ Fischer, *Political Ideology and Education Reform*, 78-79.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 114-115.

¹⁴² Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*, 132-133.

¹⁴³ Fischer, *Political Ideology and Education Reform*, 83.

effectively revoking their workers' rights.¹⁴⁴ The regime also ended UP programs aimed at enabling lower-class students to attend university, instead emphasizing the importance of the technical education track in secondary school as ideal and terminal for lower-class students.¹⁴⁵ The regime's own objectives in regards to education were primarily to indoctrinate the younger generations with moral and patriotic values, depoliticize the education system, and reverse the democratizing trend begun by the Frei and Allende administrations through a competitive meritocracy.¹⁴⁶ Additionally, although there was no specific women's association dedicated to working with or as teachers, the SNM's and, more so, CEMA's training programs for adult women and afterschool programs for adolescents, functioned, in part, as a secondary education system parallel to the official education system, continuing their members' moral and domestic skills after school daily and after leaving school as an adult. Education under Pinochet clearly and consciously broke with the educational trends of the previous two administrations. In direct contrast to the UP, it promoted meritocracy, conservative state values, and a traditional hierarchy in access to education, and it utilized the women's associations to continue these educational policy goals beyond the classroom.

These educational policy objectives, along with specific programs created to pursue them, were consistently promoted by the women's associations. Unlike their channels for disseminating messages on women's roles or defining the new regime, which relied heavily on long form articles, messages about education were delivered through pamphlets and flyers advertising specific programs. For example, the SNM sent out flyers to the Mothers Centers in 1983, advertising a scholarship for low income students who lived too far from the nearest

¹⁴⁴ Pedro Castro, *La Educación en Chile de Frei a Pinochet* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 1977), 203-211.

¹⁴⁵ Fischer, *Political Ideology and Education Reform*, 131.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

secondary school to commute but could not afford to board. The fact that this flyer was distributed through the Mothers Centers indicated that the SNM expected and encouraged mothers to take an interest in their children's education and advocate for their best interest, highlighting the strong connection between conservative views of women's roles and motherhood and women's justification in speaking on education policy. The flyer listed three requirements to receive this scholarship: the student had to live somewhere without its own educational option, be from a socio-economic background that "justifies this benefit," and "*poses an excellent academic record.*"¹⁴⁷ Thus, this program, though benevolently offering poor, rural students the opportunity to continue their education, reflected both the class hierarchy and merit-based aspects of the Pinochet education system. First, the fact that only top students were eligible indicated that this was a purely merit based scholarship intended to benefit only a very few students, rather than a broader socio-economic based program to pave the way for lower-class social mobility as earlier administrations had attempted to implement. Furthermore, the flyer specified that the student must not have another "center of education"¹⁴⁸ available. A student would not qualify, therefore, if they had access to a "center of education" but not the form of education they hoped to pursue, such as a university track within secondary school. Thus, the program offered very high achieving and highly isolated students the opportunity to continue their education, promoting meritocracy within the limits of the type and level of educational achievement the regime deemed acceptable for them.

¹⁴⁷ Fundación CEMA-Chile, *Programas Asistenciales para Estudiantes*, 1983. Italicized in original.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

Another 1983 SNM flyer advertised an afterschool program for children in “extreme poverty” whose mothers “must work outside the home.”¹⁴⁹ The goal, as advertised, was to decrease vagrancy and drug addiction among impoverished minors, while the program’s benefits included “habit formation” and “family orientation.”¹⁵⁰ Unlike the scholarship program, which was run by the Ministry of Education and Scholarships and only advertised by the SNM, this program was run by the SNM itself. In doing so, it was providing a much needed after school service to working parents. However, it also used this opportunity to continue to promote state family and moral values. Teaching “habit formation” implied that these children were not forming good habits at home, and “family orientation” implied that their own families were not proper families with the ability to pass on proper family values. In the face of their family’s failure to teach them these values, the SNM would step in instead. Thus, while the schools promoted official state values during the day, the SNM ensured that the most “at-risk” children would have those values reinforced during off hours. Because this program was run by the women of the SNM, they had unique social authority to run these programs, decide whose families were fit and unfit, and indoctrinate children who were not their own through their roles as national mothers, caretakers of the whole nation’s wellbeing. Neither flyers were accompanied by a long article or essay on the importance of meritocracy, the social hierarchy, or learning state-sponsored moral and familial values from a young age, but the design and underlying assumptions of both flyers communicated to women across Chile that these were state priorities.

Education as a public policy issue fundamentally pertains to the raising of a nation’s children, and it is an issue that can be easily defined, by the state or by women themselves, as a

¹⁴⁹ Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer de Chile, *Centros de Atención Diurna C.A.D.*, 1983.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

“women’s issue” via their responsibilities as mothers. Similarly, healthcare, an issue that pertains to children’s wellbeing, along with the rest of the population’s, often falls within women’s domain. During the Pinochet regime, this was even more the case because of the intense feminization of healthcare through the volunteer work of the women’s associations in clinics and hospitals and through the regime’s public emphasis on maternal and infant care. Chile’s high infant and maternal mortality rates had been state concerns throughout the 20th century, and they were key considerations in the development of the Frei administration’s family planning program.¹⁵¹ The Pinochet regime continued this trend by making the improvement of infant and maternal care state objectives. The regime increased healthcare funding targeting “impoverished infants and pregnant mothers,” despite drastically decreasing healthcare funding overall.¹⁵² During the 1960s, Chile had a national health system that covered more than 80% of the population,¹⁵³ but, in the late 1970s, the military government slashed the NHS budget, leading to health expenditures that were 10-20% lower at the end of the decade than they were in 1970.¹⁵⁴ The infant and general mortality rates did decrease, a fact that the regime promoted to highlight its own success and mask the deepening poverty throughout the country during the same period, particularly because the infant mortality rate is one of the key indicators used by the United Nations Development Program to assess a country’s development.¹⁵⁵ However, the number of cases of infections and respiratory diseases significantly increased during the military government’s reign, and there was a severe disparity between rural and urban medical

¹⁵¹ Blofield, *The Politics of Moral Sin*, 110.

¹⁵² Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*, 154.

¹⁵³ Warren C. Robinson and John A. Ross, *The Global Family Planning Revolution: Three Decades of Population Policies and Programs* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2007), 107.

¹⁵⁴ John Dixon and Robert Scheurell, *Social Welfare in Latin America* (London: Routledge, 1990), 69-70.

¹⁵⁵ James F. Petras, *Democracy and Poverty in Chile: The Limits to Electoral Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 35.

services.¹⁵⁶ Overall, during the Pinochet regime, the public image and rhetoric of healthcare was distinctly feminized through an emphasis on infant and maternal care, while behind this rhetoric lay a mixed legacy of genuine improvement in these areas paired with decreasing healthcare in other areas of medicine and a growing service divide between urban and rural populations.

The women's associations were central to the Pinochet regime's healthcare policies, both by promoting and celebrating gains in maternal and child healthcare and by working, on the ground, to make up for cuts in healthcare expenditures. The 1983 edition of *Revista Aniversario CEMA-Chile* published a letter to Hiriart from a deaf-mute child, thanking Hiriart personally for the medical care she had received from CEMA, writing "now I can thank you and CEMA-Chile with my own mouth for everything you've done for me and my family, and with my own mouth declare you mother of the helpless children of Chile."¹⁵⁷ Although this letter was written by a child honestly thanking Hiriart and CEMA, not by a CEMA volunteer, their choice to include this particular letter in the *Revista Aniversario*, out of all those that were sent in, demonstrated a conscious decision to remind their readers of the regime's dedication, through the women's associations, to caring for sick, injured, and disabled children across Chile. Hiriart was, after all, the "mother of the helpless children of Chile," once again reiterating the special authority of the women's association volunteers to make pronouncements on what was best for Chilean families and to assess state policies related to women and their families as mothers of the entire nation.

This was, to some extent, a fair assessment. The women's associations included a vast array of women volunteering in healthcare in many capacities. There were at least nineteen different women's voluntary associations dedicated to healthcare, ranging from emergency room

¹⁵⁶ Dixon and Scheurell, *Social Welfare*, 69-70.

¹⁵⁷ Fundación CEMA-Chile, *Revista Aniversario CEMA-Chile*, 1983, 126.

volunteers to the Chilean League against Epilepsy to three different associations to care for children with hemophilia.¹⁵⁸ These women's unpaid labor ensured the healthcare system continued to run despite significantly decreased funding, and their labor acted as a tempering force against the negative effects of these budget cuts. For example, as infection rates increased, the Ladies in Pink, the association of emergency room volunteers, organized a meningitis vaccination campaign.¹⁵⁹ The women's associations' work providing medical care and promoting free medical care were both evident in a *La Artesanía de un País es la Más Fiel Exponente de su Cultura*, a book published by CEMA in 1982, in which it advertised its Homes for Peasant Mothers to offer medical care for rural pregnant women. CEMA boasted that, to date, it had opened 60 homes and served 9,536 mothers without a single infant death.¹⁶⁰ This informed the readers of how successful the healthcare programs had been, thanks to the work of CEMA and, by extension, the regime, as well as revealing the fact that it was the women's associations who were tasked with making up the growing deficit in rural healthcare services. Not only did the women's associations promote the regime's success in the realms of infant and maternal care within an increasingly strained and underfunded healthcare system, but they were also responsible for ensuring that the system ran at all in the face of systematic strain.

At the same time that the Pinochet regime was promoting the decrease in infant mortality rates, it was also advocating a pro-natalist policy regarding the national birth rate. Initially, the regime was pro-fertility regulation. In 1974, in the face of high maternal mortality, abortion, and malnutrition rates, it announced a series of educational programs for couples to "decide freely

¹⁵⁸ *La Mujer Chilena y su Compromiso Histórico* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Renacimiento, 1985), 12-13.

¹⁵⁹ *La Mujer Chilena*, 137.

¹⁶⁰ Fundación CEMA-Chile, *La Artesanía de un País es la Más Fiel Exponente de su Cultura* (Santiago de Chile: 1982), 20.

and reasonably about having a family” and provided free fertility consultations throughout the country.¹⁶¹ Although this was a more limited program than was pursued by the Frei administration in 1964, the Pinochet regime’s 1974 policy followed the past decade’s trend of recognizing the need to provide family planning resources in order to address a serious public health crisis. However, in 1978, the regime began a new, pro-natalist campaign that ended all contraceptive education and consultation programs. The new 1979 ODEPLAN guidelines acknowledged the benefits of population decrease but officially absolved the government of any role in controlling this, reaffirmed the state’s commitment to the unalienable right to life (a reference to the state’s anti-abortion policy), discouraged the use of oral or implant contraceptives, and strictly regulated access to all contraceptive methods.¹⁶² Induced abortion had been illegal but common practice for decades, but, throughout the 1980s, prosecutions of induced abortions, steadily, though not dramatically, increased; and, in 1989, one of the regime’s final acts was to criminalize therapeutic abortion as well.¹⁶³

The reasons behind this sudden reversal in family planning policy in the late 1970s were both ideological and political. Ideologically, this was part of the regime’s efforts to completely embrace neoliberalism by decreasing the state’s role in all aspects of society. The elimination of family planning resources coincided with large-scale cuts in healthcare spending in general.¹⁶⁴ Politically, the changes also came at a time when the regime’s relationship with the Chilean Catholic Church was becoming increasingly strained over the regime’s human rights abuses, and the Chilean Church in the late 1970s and early 1980s maintained a highly conservative stance

¹⁶¹ Ximena Jiles Moreno, *De La miel a los implantes: historia de las políticas de regulación de la fecundidad en Chile* (Santiago de Chile: Corporación de Salud y Políticas Sociales, 1992), 186-187.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 187-190. ODEPLAN is the Chilean Office of National Planning

¹⁶³ Robinson and Ross, *The Global Family Planning Revolution*, 117.

¹⁶⁴ Moreno, *De La miel a los implantes*, 198.

towards family, marriage, and birth control.¹⁶⁵ Thus, the regime adopted a conservative family planning policy in the late 1970s in an effort to win political support from the Church without addressing accusations of human rights abuses.

After the regime implemented its pro-natal policy, the women's associations' publications strongly advocated for the new policy among Chilean women. Family planning, an issue intrinsically connected to motherhood, was well within the domain of traditional "women's issues," and the women's associations promoted a highly traditional, Catholic stance when discussing it. In "Valores Patrios y Valores Familiares," the SNM opened a discussion on birth control by defining a mature, well-formed sex life as one in which the couple understood sex as "a biological force set out by the Creator for the generation of life."¹⁶⁶ Thus, the authors immediately established the conservative Catholic teaching that the only admissible purpose of sex is for procreation as a primary assumption on which the rest of the discussion would be based. Next, the SNM affirmed that "the problem of birth regulation...is circumscribed to the private sphere," in keeping with the regime's emphasis of minimal state involvement in people's lives.¹⁶⁷ However, this was immediately followed by a reminder that, although the government had no authority in couples' decisions whether or not to use contraceptives, all Catholic couples were obligated to make their decision in accordance with "the clear and precise rules given by...the Supreme Pontiff, which only permits birth control by natural methods."¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, when making this decision, the SNM urged its readers to consider that "to close the doors of life to our children to enjoy it ourselves, is too easy a temptation" and that arguments in favor of

¹⁶⁵ Bustamante Olguin, "La Formación de una Nueva Mentalidad Religiosa," 106.

¹⁶⁶ Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer de Chile, "Valores Patrios y Valores Familiares," *Cuadernos de Difusión No. 7*, 1982, 26.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

doing so “are only the disguise of a refined selfishness.”¹⁶⁹ This both painted using contraceptives as a selfish choice no moral women would make, but also likened it, softly, to killing their future children by “closing the doors of life” on them. This is a common, Catholic anti-abortion argument as well, and, indeed, the discussion concluded with a reminder that, while birth control was an individual choice, abortion was “expressly condemned...both for moral and for legal reasons.”¹⁷⁰ The SNM parroted the 1979 ODEPLAN policy to its readers exactly: contraceptives were technically permissible but strongly discouraged, abortion was strictly illegal, and the state would have minimal involvement in family planning overall, and it did so through a discussion that was entirely predicated on and aligned with traditional Catholic understandings of sex and family.

In addition to supporting the regime’s pro-natal policies, the women’s associations also downplayed the need for a more extensive family planning program. One of the primary concerns fueling state family planning programs, including the Pinochet regime’s 1974 program, had been the high maternal mortality rate and the high rate of illegal abortions in Chile. However, in the introduction to its 1983 *Revista Aniversario*, CEMA journalists subtly assigned the blame for these issues elsewhere. In discussing the organization’s “special preoccupation” with the centers for pregnant mothers, the authors explained that “some arrive from secluded places, on horseback, in wagons, in boats, in hard vehicles that produce severe pain. The statistics taught us that, before, many babies died because of this...the mothers’ injuries and the loss of unborn creatures were many.”¹⁷¹ It may have been true that many rural mothers lost their babies and suffered difficult births because of the lack of rural healthcare infrastructure, but it

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Fundación CEMA-Chile, *Revista Aniversario CEMA-Chile*, 1983, 8.

certainly was not the central factor behind the high “loss of unborn creatures” in Chile. The rest of the article made no mention of concern for urban mothers, where the maternal and infant mortality rates were also high among the lower classes, nor did it discuss any need for a more thorough program to address the many “mothers’ injuries” or “loss of unborn creatures” mentioned earlier. CEMA did not directly address the amalgamation of high rates that had been driving state promotion of family planning for over a decade prior to the 1978-1979 reforms and deemphasized the existence and extent of Chile’s maternal and infant health crisis. It, therefore, deemphasized the need for contraceptive access and education, by instead putting forward a picture of benevolent CEMA workers successfully solving this crisis, caused simply by poor rural mother’s unsafe methods of transportation, one mother’s center at a time.

While the Pinochet regime’s political and social ideology conformed to highly conservative views, heavily drawn from conservative Catholic ideology in the case of its family planning policy, and based on maintaining the traditional status quo, its economic policy was aimed at instating a modern economic revolution in Chile based on free market capitalism and minimal state involvement. Furthermore, the economic modernization project lent the regime a degree of long-term legitimacy by giving it a reason to exist after the political order had been reestablished.¹⁷² Even if many people were no longer convinced Chile was under constant threat from Marxists, the regime was still necessary to bring the Chilean economy into a new era. The Pinochet regime also promoted consumerism as a national ideal and characteristic of the new national culture, which both supported the regime’s economic policy and deemphasized partisan and class identity differences within the nation.¹⁷³ In the late 1970s, it appeared as if these

¹⁷² González, *Dual Transitions*, 35.

¹⁷³ Tinsman, “Politics of Gender and Consumption,” 19.

economic policies were working, creating substantial macroeconomic gains, referred to as the Chilean Miracle, but, by 1982, Chile was at the height of its worst financial and economic crisis since 1930. That year, Chilean currency lost 100% of its nominal value over the course of just two months.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, many of the macroeconomic gains hid the regime's economic policy's more sinister effects on inequality and deepening poverty throughout the country. Working-class purchasing power and consumption fell dramatically, leaving them well below their 1970 level by 1989. The real value of average wages fell 20% and the real value of minimum wage fell 40% in 1982 alone.¹⁷⁵ In 1990, 60% of the population was estimated to be relatively worse off than in 1970, and an estimated 41.2% of the population was living in poverty, one third of which qualified as extremely impoverished.¹⁷⁶ The Pinochet regime's economic modernization project gave it a reason to exist beyond dubious claims of reestablishing political order ten years after the initial coup and a so-called Chilean Miracle to tout at home and abroad, but it also created a situation of serious and ever increasing poverty among much of its population that was impossible to ignore.

Given that, for many women, the regime's economic failures were an undeniable lived experience, the women's associations made an effort to defend and justify the economic policy to their members. Moreover, in a society that emphasized women's central role as caring for their families and running their households, consumerism and household economics were well within the acceptable range of feminine topics for the women's associations to weigh in on. Their support for the regime's economic policy was, to some degree, evident within their flyers and pamphlets addressing education and healthcare. By offering after-school programs and

¹⁷⁴ González, *Dual Transitions*, 47-48.

¹⁷⁵ Petras, *Democracy and Poverty in Chile*, 33.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

medical services run by the SNM and CEMA, which were privately funded despite being officially part of the state apparatus, they both served as examples of the success of private enterprise and picked up the slack left by state budget cuts based on the neoliberal ideology of minimal state involvement. However, as the economic crisis heightened in the early 1980s, the women's associations also addressed the issue more directly in their publications. In the early 1980s, the SNM published its third issue of a periodical called *Juanita Campesina*, and this issue was dedicated to teaching women how to start their own home garden.¹⁷⁷ In the introduction, the SNM explained that keeping a home garden was important because it was cheaper to grow fresh produce at home than to buy it. It reflected the national economy as families produced goods through their labor that they could use however they chose: either eating or selling them for profit. Moreover, it would teach children the value of hard work in supporting the household economy.¹⁷⁸ Thus, the SNM simultaneously offered a solution for families struggling to afford produce, highlighted this as supporting and reflecting free market capitalism, rather than an economic necessity in lieu of being able to buy their groceries, and advocated that the women reading this article use their home garden to pass on these economic values to their children. The SNM also reminded its readers how much economic help they had offered them in the past by publishing a list of SNM and Minimum Wage Program joint initiatives from 1975-1976 in its tenth anniversary pamphlet, including "lectures on...consumer education" for men and women on minimum wage and "consumer education for housewives" and informing the readers that these were ongoing programs.¹⁷⁹ By reminding readers of all the work the SNM had done over

¹⁷⁷ Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer de Chile, "Huerto Casero," *Juanita Campesina*. A copy of this issue of *Juanita Campesina* appears in a microfilm reel of SNM materials dated from 1980 to 1984, but the exact date of this publication was not given, and I was unable to find a specific publication date for it elsewhere.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 3.

¹⁷⁹ Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer, *Diez Años de Voluntariado, 1973-1983*, Santiago de Chile: 1983, 14.

the past ten years to enable them to become smart, successful consumers and informing them that these programs were still available to them, the SNM effectively implied that if they were not yet savvy consumers it was their own fault for lack of trying, not the state's.

While the SNM pointed the finger at women themselves for their economic problems in its tenth anniversary pamphlet, CEMA placed the blame for the economic crisis on the world economy, out of the regime's control. An article called "Entre Resesión y Recesión" appeared in a magazine published by CEMA in 1983, simply titled *CEMA-Chile*. Most of the article was dedicated to detailing how desperate the economic situation was, for women, in particular, under the UP, ending with the assertion that "the world is in a recession and Chile also suffers its effects, but years ago there was no world economic problem and Chile was going through the most serious catastrophe in its economic history."¹⁸⁰ It then reminded its readers that not too long ago the Chilean economy was in the midst of its "most serious" economic crisis ever, not because of uncontrollable international factors, but because of Marxist economic policies. During a severe economic crisis, threatening one of the foundations of the regime's legitimacy, the women's associations used their publications to reiterate the benefits of the regime's economic policies and ideology and to shift the blame for the crisis away from the government to the Chilean people. CEMA and the SNM asserted that there were small ways Chilean women could alleviate their suffering without any change to state policies, that these policies were good and their values should be passed on to the next generation, and that if the reader was suffering it was, in part, their own fault, despite the women's associations' tireless efforts to educate them on the enlightened ways of consumerism. Finally, if all else failed, the women's associations could

¹⁸⁰ Fundación CEMA-Chile, "Entre Recesión y Recesión," *Cema-Chile*, 1983, 35.

always fall back on yet another reminder that, no matter how dire things seemed, at least Chile was now free from Marxism.

From 1973 to 1989, Chile was ruled by an authoritarian military government that prioritized spreading its social, political, and economic ideology throughout the country. To achieve this, it relied, in part, on a network of women's voluntary associations. These women were employed constantly in unpaid positions as journalists, as well as educators and social workers, in defense of a regime that understood their fundamental role as women to be that of mothers and housewives. In this seemingly contradictory work, these women addressed issues connected, in various ways, to their traditional feminine identities. Their legitimacy in speaking on these topics was firmly grounded in conservative understandings of femininity and women's roles. However, the women's associations went beyond simply upholding a traditional image of proper womanhood. They spoke on state policy, defending and justifying it to readers across Chile. Though the volunteers who wrote these materials were primarily upper-class women, their work was sent to upper- and middle- class volunteers and lower-class Mother's Centers members alike. Working within and in defense of a political regime that fundamentally believed women should be apolitical, stay-at-home wives and mothers, the women of the SNM and CEMA-Chile seemingly violated this identity by taking on the time-consuming, non-domestic, and inherently political work of bolstering and maintaining this regime through their writing, as well as through the social and medical services they provided. But, like the female journalists of Opus Dei before them, by grounding their work in "women's issues" and supporting a regime that would protect their traditional understanding of family and gender roles, these women were able to hold these contradictory identities—conservative woman and political journalist—simultaneously.

Conclusion

During the late 1960s, the Chilean government was controlled by a politically centrist administration that increased funding for social welfare and for new organizations, such as CEMA and family planning centers. At the same time, liberation theology was strong among the clergy of the Chilean Catholic Church, lending additional social welfare and support to the poor, and liberal social movements, from the hippie youth movement to protests for greater access to education, flourished. In the early 1980s, Chile was run by a conservative military dictatorship that violently repressed opposition and cut social welfare expenditures, from healthcare to public housing, and the country was facing an economic crisis. In these two drastically different national contexts, the female Opus Dei journalists of the 1960s and the voluntary association journalists of the 1980s both worked to promote their organizations' ideologies and increase their support bases, and, in both cases, this work took them outside the traditional gender roles they themselves were working to uphold. The Opus Dei journalists performed their "perfect vocation" both in their homes, as far as can be judged based on the limited evidence available, as well as in their professional work by promoting their organization and its worldview. However, they always approached this through distinctly gendered subjects and rhetoric, simultaneously living and advertising their beliefs on gender and family roles, as members of Opus Dei. In the 1980s, the women of the SNM and CEMA-Chile fulfilled a very similar role, spending significant time away from their homes to write magazines and pamphlets on the military regime's vision of the new Chilean nation and its *raison d'être* for existing: to save Chile from Marxists, as well as its vision for the ideal, modern, Chilean woman. Like the Opus Dei journalists, the SNM and CEMA-Chile volunteers took advantage of women's traditional place in Chilean society to lend moral backing to their arguments. While the Opus Dei journalists framed themselves as universal

mothers when writing on education and youth culture, emphasizing their legitimacy in weighing in as women and therefore maternal figures if not literally the mothers of the children discussed, the women of the SNM and CEMA-Chile went a step farther, speaking as national mothers defending and defining the entire nation. The SNM and CEMA-Chile also directly promoted specific state policies, explaining to their readership why these policies would benefit them and, if they were not seeing those benefits, explaining how it was their fault, not the state's. Yet, just like the Opus Dei journalists, here too they confined themselves to gendered issues that they both had authority to write on, as women, and would be relevant to their female readership. Despite the disparate contexts they operated in, the mechanisms each group used to situate their work and reconcile it with the traditional gender roles they were promoting remained largely constant.

While the ways they negotiated their contradictory roles closely mirrored one another, there was a significant difference between the Opus Dei journalists and voluntary associations that stemmed from the differences in the contexts in which they worked. Opus Dei and the voluntary associations were, in some ways, in exact opposite positions. In the 1960s, Opus Dei was a minority group, often in opposition to Frei administration policies and mainstream liberalizing trends in Chilean society. As such, the Opus Dei journalists were writing to an audience of conservative, elite Chileans who also disagreed with liberalization. This was a fairly small target audience, also a minority among the mainstream political and cultural trends of the time. Furthermore, Opus Dei's promotion in the actual content of the Opus Dei journalists' articles was often subtle, rarely directly mentioning their organization by name or addressing specific policy issues. The voluntary associations, on the other hand, were one arm of the regime in power at the time they were writing, and, specifically in the early 1980s, their publications were disseminated at a time of growing opposition to the regime. Thus, their work was not to

sway people to a minority, dissident opinion, as the Opus Dei journalists did, but to convince people that the regime already in power was best for Chile and specifically for Chilean women. Their audience was not a small number of other conservatives, as it was for Opus Dei, but rather the entire nation, arguing for the regime against all possible dissent. Their work had a much broader reach and scope, but they had a much broader task: they needed to justify the entire regime, from its ideological foundations to the need for its continuing existence to specific policy choices, sometimes in direct conflict with the best interests of many Chilean women and their families, such as in the case of economic policy. Moreover, they needed to justify the regime to all Chilean women, and, through them, to all of Chile. As apparatuses of the state, the SNM and CEMA-Chile had more resources at their disposal, more personnel and, therefore, the ability to have a broader scope to their work than the Opus Dei journalists. Yet, their position in Chilean society at the time, compared to that of Opus Dei a decade and a half earlier, meant that they also needed a much broader scope to be successful in their mission.

Despite their differences in the type of organization they were involved in and the national contexts they operated in, both the Opus Dei and voluntary association women dedicated extensive time and energy, in their professional journalism careers and informal volunteer journalism, to safeguarding and furthering their conservative worldviews, particularly regarding family and gender roles. However, their degree of success in this mission is harder to gauge. Opus Dei's membership did not drastically expand until the 1980s, and it did not have enough power or influence to really affect national politics until the 1990s. On the other hand, it is possible that their articles swayed some upper-class Chileans to join their organization or, at least, increased awareness of Opus Dei and support for its ideology. However, even if this were the case, it would be very difficult to prove that the articles written by female Opus Dei

journalists, specifically, were behind this increase. Thus, the degree to which these women were or were not successful must remain highly ambiguous.

On the other hand, there are several national statistics that can be used to compare the beginning and end of the Pinochet regime, in an attempt to begin gauging the voluntary associations' impact. Despite their publications in favor of stay-at-home motherhood, the proportion of women who worked outside the home in Chile increased 11% between 1970 and 1990, and the female agricultural labor force rose from nearly non-existent in 1970 to 50% of the entire agricultural workforce in 1990.¹⁸¹ Despite the SNM and CEMA-Chile touting the great success of the regime's healthcare policies in solving the maternal and infant care crisis and their promotion of pro-natalism, 38.8% of pregnancies still ended in abortion in Chile in 1987.¹⁸² While Tinsman has argued that women, especially rural women, largely bought into consumer culture, they primarily purchased items that made housework easier to aid them in working outside the home,¹⁸³ which was certainly not the voluntary associations' intent. However, if Chilean women, by and large, did not seem to buy into the arguments promoted by the SNM and CEMA-Chile in favor of specific policies, the results appear more mixed regarding broader state ideology. National polling in 1974 indicated that, even when accounting for people's fear of the state when choosing their response and number inflation, the project to rhetorically legitimize the regime through memories of the UP era, to which the voluntary associations contributed, was fairly successful.¹⁸⁴ It became increasingly difficult to convince people that the Pinochet regime was best for the nation as the memory of the UP faded, economic crisis set in, people

¹⁸¹ Winn, *Victims of the Chilean Miracle*, 58.

¹⁸² Robinson and Ross, *The Global Family Planning Revolution*, 118.

¹⁸³ Tinsman, "Politics of Gender and Consumption," 13.

¹⁸⁴ Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 73-74.

disappeared from the streets, and the state remained silent on bodies floating in the Mapocho River in Santiago.¹⁸⁵ Yet, still, when the plebiscite to determine the regime's fate was held in 1988, the majority of female voters voted in favor of Pinochet. Like with the Opus Dei journalists, it is difficult to assign any of these facts to the efforts of the SNM or CEMA-Chile specifically. However, the fact that these organizations' audience traversed the entire nation and transcended social class to address a specifically female audience, combined with the enduring support for the regime among Chilean women, may point to at least some degree of success for the voluntary associations in legitimizing and maintaining support for the regime overall, if not necessarily for specific regime policies.

Regardless of the degree to which either group was successful in their efforts, the women of Opus Dei and of the voluntary associations ardently believed in a deeply conservative understanding of their societies and their place, as women, in it, and they felt strongly enough about this to dedicate a portion of their lives to spreading this belief through their work as journalists, whether professional or not. Often in academic scholarship, conservative women's agency is diminished in a narrative of powerful men—be they politicians or clergy—or individual husbands dictating beliefs that are not authentically the women's own. Instead, this thesis explores how right-wing women expressed and promoted their beliefs on their own terms and reconciled the contradictions that arose from their activities in doing so. Additionally, while much of the existing scholarship has focused on conservative women during the 1970s, especially the anti-Allende protest movements, and the 1980s, this thesis draws comparisons and continuities between the work of conservative women in this period in support of the Pinochet regime and similar work done earlier, in the 1960s, by a distinctly different group of

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 75-76.

conservative women: the female members of Opus Dei, thereby discussing right-wing women's political engagement as a ongoing phenomenon, rather than arising at specific moments of national political distress.

Right-wing women's influence did not end with the Pinochet regime. Opus Dei became instrumental in setting a conservative moral agenda among elites and the political right in Chile in the 1990s, particularly regarding strict abortion and divorce law,¹⁸⁶ which have historically been key issues for conservative women. Furthermore, in the 1999-2000 presidential election, Joaquín Lavín, member of both Opus Dei and the right-wing Independent Democratic Union Party, founded by key Pinochet regime member Jaime Guzmán, received the majority of women's votes nationwide.¹⁸⁷ Clearly, Opus Dei, right-wing political parties, and, it would seem, right-wing women within these groups, remained strong and influential in Chile into the post-Pinochet democratic era. Future research should investigate how right-wing women's activities during this period fit into the continuum of right-wing women actively working to support and spread a conservative worldview in Chile, maneuvering between this work and their beliefs in traditional gender roles, in relation to the women of the SNM, CEMA-Chile and Opus Dei before them.

¹⁸⁶ Blofield, *The Politics of Moral Sin*, 95.

¹⁸⁷ Bacchetta and Power, *Right-wing Women*, 285.

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