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Branding the Chilean nation : socio-cultural change, national identity and international image

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Chapter 2

Shaping Chile's Traditional Self-Image of Exceptionality

Introduction

> Having come from the Kingdom of Chile and finding out that it is so little known in Europe, to the point that often people have not even heard its name, I felt compelled to make known the land that so much deserves it.[1]

With words that tell a truth even till today, vibrating with the emotion of his distant land, Alonso de Ovalle embarks upon writing the first historical and descriptive book about Chile published in the old continent. His patriotism —embryonic if we consider that Spaniards had arrived in the southernmost cone of America only 70 years before his birth— leads him to display what might resemble current marketing techniques in order to disseminate the virtues of his birth place. Born in Chile in the year 1601 to a family of landowners, Alonso ran away from his parents when he was seventeen: he wanted to become a Jesuit priest against their will. He was sent to Rome and once in Italy he devoted himself to finding priests who would come to the newly opened lands. However, he faced a big problem: ignorance, just like today, when Chile tries to make itself known in order to attract diverse benefits to its territory and people.

In a spontaneous way, obviously not intentionally using the sophisticated branding techniques developed at present, Ovalle narrated the virtues of his country to the

[1] A. de Ovalle (1646) *Histórica Relación del Reyno de Chile y de las Missiones y Ministerios que Exercita en la Compañía de Jesús*, p. 3.

world. Firstly, he stated that 'in all that I have written here I adhere to the truth'.[2] Then he tried to convince his European readers that Chile is quite similar to what he has seen in their continent and even superior, as the Kingdom of Chile does not have dangerous lightning, or hail storms.[3] As for its wildlife, Chile has no poisonous snakes or scorpions, and 'a man can very well rest under a tree lying on the grass not fearing a dangerous spider might bite him'.[4] In my view, Ovalle's depiction resembles in various ways contemporary Chilean nation-branding efforts although more in the line of nation-building as will be seen below.

In the same way as Ovalle considered Chile's nature was worth praising and Alonso de Ercilla —author of the saga about Chile's conquest called *La Araucana*— regarded the bravery of Amerindians with admiration, many nineteenth century Chileans also thought highly of their nation. A long way away from the world's centres of power, quite cut off from its continental neighbours and of difficult access during winter, Chileans —and foreigners— believed that such isolation made them different from the other former colonies.[5] Furthermore, Chileans from the early republic up to now believe their country to be different from others in terms of the psychological traits and social behavioural patterns of its people. In order to study the country's self-image of exceptionality, Chapter 2 revises four characteristics which feedback on the self-perception of being distinct, while stemming from it and increasing such feeling. These traits —isolation, order, endeavour and democratic/constitutional rule— were chosen because they have been historically fashioned and encompassing, and thus formed along with the maturation of the nation. Besides, these features have been and are important for Chile's nation-building path, the development of its internal and international image and the nation-branding process from the early days of the conquest up to the twenty first century.[6]

The present chapter starts by quoting poet Gabriela Mistral and conqueror Pedro de Valdivia who, in few words summarize the Chileans' self-perception: in spite of the

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2 A. de Ovalle, *op. cit*., p. 4.

3 A. de Ovalle, *op. cit*., p. 11.

4 *Ibid.*

5 See for example 'Cartas de Jamaica' in http://www.patriagrande.net/venezuela/simon.bolivar/index.html

6 Several historians, such as R. Krebs, G. Vial (2009), R. Couyoumdjian, A. de Ramón and S. Vial, point out directly or indirectly, that these factors were pivotal in the formation of Chile as a nation-state.

difficulties to tame its nature, till its farms and form its society, Chile was worth the effort. In the pages that follow I will describe its arduous conquest mainly given the ferocity of the Araucanians, who for centuries resisted the invasion of the Spaniards first and of Chileans later. The Arauco war —among other factors— installed in the embryonic nation an orderly, military mentality, historically deepened and fostered by the development of the *haciendas*, the hierarchical society, the advent of the Basques and the development of the Portalian state. This was quite important for Chile's colonial development.[7]

In Chapter 2 I also deal with the remoteness syndrome, a consequence of Chile's geographical isolation and its distance from the colonial and current world powers. These factors account for the contradictorily national character, withdrawn and retracted whilst at the same time a craver of news and trends from the outside world. Isolation does not only refer to other countries but also to Chile's regions. Indeed, some of them are very cut off even today. Surprisingly, Chile's regionalism is minimal, the feeling of belonging to a wider national community being stronger. In the final section of Chapter I look into the issue of democratic rule in the nation's image. From the early days of the republic up to today, Chile has normally witnessed the peaceful and constitutional power transfer from one democratically elected President to another, although there have been important periods of non-democratic governments as well as successful and failed revolution attempts. Thus, while not impeccable, in my view, Chile's democratic credentials are quite solid.

Chapter 1 presents a summary of what are often considered as the identity traits of Chileans. Chapter 2 brings in several historical events, features and institutions that contributed to forge them. Besides studying the historical evolution of Chileanness, the chapter also tackles other issues to which I shall be paying special attention throughout the thesis, i.e. the country's social evolution and its national image, both in the sense of the Chileans' self-perception and how the country was and is perceived by others. In Chapter 2, image, identity and social change are tightly braided through historical events.

[7] H. Ramírez Necochea (2007) *Obras Escogidas*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones, p. 40.

The Captaincy-General of Chile[8] was a war colony, a fact that contributed to develop a national and international image, that of Chile as the *Flandes Indiano.* The war partly resulted in a people that learned to live in harsh conditions and with a certain military order. The development of the *hacienda* contributed to pacify the land and regulate its society. The latter, being hierarchical, fostered social obedience. Also *mestizaje*, an extensive outcome, levelled the Chilean people considerably, thus preventing social upheaval and contributing to make of Chile an orderly place. The development of Chile's early republican institutions marked the country with other traits, i.e. political stability and order, law abidance and the sense of a strong central political authority within a democratic regime. This historical event also had an impact on Chile's international reputation and self-image: Chile, a model republic[9] and exceptional nation. The chapter shows the transformation of the country's political regime up to recent times. Finally, as explained in section 2.2, the country's geographical condition of considerable isolation has triggered the remoteness syndrome. During Chile's republican life the initial core territory of the former colony started annexing other lands through war or human settlements. Thus, towards the beginning of the twentieth century, Chile's territory was considerably larger than originally, during the years of Spanish rule.

2.1 Nation-Building and the Culture of Order and Endeavour

In section 2.1 I describe the development of Chile in its first centuries of existence, during which the need and liking for order, effort and endeavour started to forge the national psyche, groundwork to its nation-building process. To begin with, I quote the words of Gabriela Mistral and Pedro de Valdivia —which attest to what in my opinion might account for an early nation-branding effort. This section goes on to describe the problems confronting the *conquistadores*: difficult access, isolation, few Spaniards facing fierce natives and, to top it all, little gold or silver to compensate for

[8] Some of the colonies within the Spanish Empire in America were named Captaincy-Generals. This term designated territories which needed special supervision for several reasons, namely their strategic location, being piracy targets or having rebellious natives. Along the centuries of Spanish rule, there were four Captaincy-Generals: Venezuela, Guatemala, Cuba and Chile.

[9] T. Halperin, 'Two Centuries of South American Reflections on the Development Gap Between the United States and Latin America' in F. Fukuyama (ed.) *Falling Behind. Explaining the Development Gap Between Latin America and the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 18.

such hard toil.[10] Next, I describe the early development of *mestizaje* and the *hacienda*, both of which contributed to the organization and appeasement of the central valley and the formation of a hierarchical society.

> Chileans cannot narrate the history of their nation as a romantic poem. Its history has often been an epic rhyme or, in military language, a forced march. Such life might deserve as a symbol the mountain range's hard rock.[11]

These words by Gabriela Mistral emphasise the difficult road that Chile has had to follow to become a nation. But at the same time, Chileans like to remark that the effort was not in vain as time and again they stress the beauty of its landscape, the uniqueness of its geography and the exceptionality of their nation. In Ricardo Krebs's view, although love for one's native land is a common human psychological trait, in Chile it developed early on and in depth. In fact, 'affectionate patriotism' became a habitual feature in writings by Chileans.[12]

Following the foundation in 1541 of the city of Santiago by Pedro de Valdivia, the leader of Chile's conquerors, he described the country's territory to the Spanish King in these terms: 'this land is such that for living in, and for settling, there is none better in the world'.[13] Thus he wrote to Emperor Charles V in what may be considered a first attempt of nation-branding in its classical stance. Valdivia was the military leader of the Spanish *conquistadores* who in 1540 opened up Chile to European colonisation. It is easy enough to imagine how Valdivia and his men took pleasure on the softer tones of the Chilean landscape of the Central Valley after having survived the crossing of the Andes and the arid terrain south of Copiapó. The Spanish conquerors and their descendants did not feel Chile as a foreign land but identified themselves with their new home very early on: 'they had conquered Chile, and Chile had conquered them'.[14]

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10 I. Allende, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

11 G. Mistral in Sonia Montecino (ed.) (2003) *Revisitando Chile. Identidades, Mitos e Historia*. Santiago: Comisión Bicentenario, p.16. In Spanish the text reads as follows: "El chileno no puede contar como un idilio la historia de su patria. Ella ha sido muchas veces gestas o, en lengua militar, unas marchas forzadas. Esta vida tal vez tenga por símbolo la piedra cordillerana".

12 R. Krebs (2008) *Identidad Chilena.* Santiago: Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, pp. 16 and 17.

13 Pedro de Valdivia to Emperor Charles V, 4 September 1545. *Cartas de Pedro de Valdivia* (1970) Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico, p. 36.

14 R. Krebs, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

In my opinion, in his letter to the King, Valdivia was marketing the land which he had been given in command, making it look as worth conquering, so as to be able to continue its occupation. In fact, Valdivia needed to describe the newly established colony with its brightest colours because it soon became obvious that Chile was going to be

> one of the least important lands discovered (for the Spanish Crown). It lacked the great mineral wealth that lured fortune seekers to Mexico and Peru. It contained no great native empire whose realms could be conquered for the Spanish Crown, whose people could be brought to swell the population of Christendom and whose labour could be employed in mines or fields to support the invaders. It offered nothing of fable cities or mysterious treasures to stir the imagination of adventurers. Furthermore, it lay far off, on the most distant corner of South America, on the far shores of the great South Sea. It could be reached only by way of the dreaded passage around Cape Horn, or the still more dangerous narrow strait which Magellan discovered, or by sailing for long days against wind and current along the forbidding desert south of Peru. From Spain's other colonies it was walled off by sea and mountains and desert, all formidable barriers even today with improved means of travel.[15]

Valdivia probably realised all of the above and was not blind to the systematic and violent clashes with the local natives, which would be needed in for them to submit to the Spaniards.[16] In fact, the conquest of Chile was a particularly difficult task —the region would be known as the Flanders of the New World evoking the war campaigns the Spanish Empire fought over in Europe to subjugate the Low Countries. The almost permanent state of hostilities of the Chilean territories made the Spaniards impose a military state which —in my view— imbued the emerging Chilean society with an initial pull towards order and discipline. During the first decades of the conquest both Spaniards and Araucanians or *Mapuche*[17] engaged in constant warfare, which obliged

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15 G. McBride (1971) *Chile: Land and Society.* Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennicat Press, p. 61.

16 S. Collier and W. Sater (2004) *A History of Chile.* 1808-2002. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 4.

17 In this study, both names will be used interchangeably. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there is a debate on how to name these natives. It seems that upon arrival in the sixteenth century, the Spaniards called them Araucanos and the natives started calling themselves *Mapuches* from the eighteenth century onwards. Some other scholars suggest that the *Mapuches* were a especially war-prone subgroup of the Araucanians. For further information about the debate, see G. Vial (2009) *Chile. Cinco Siglos de Historia. Desde los Primeros Pobladores Prehispánicos, hasta el año 2006*. Santiago: Zig-Zag, pp. 100-118.

the Spanish Crown to invest heavily in its Captaincy-General.[18] This was a burden for the royal coffers,[19] as even public policies had a military-strategic orientation in order to subdue the rebel Amerindians.[20]

The overriding preoccupation of Valdivia's immediate successors was war. The Spaniards were well aware of the belligerent nature of the natives living mainly south of the Bío-Bío River and admired them as several early chroniclers testify. In 1558 Jerónimo de Vivar, who fought alongside Valdivia, describes the ferocity of the natives. [21] Poet Alonso de Ercilla —who wrote during the Spanish Golden Age— sung praises to the bravery of the Mapuche in his well-known epic poem *La Araucana.*[22] Diego de Rosales recorded in his *Historia General del Reino de Chile* (1674), that although all governors had wanted to put an end to confrontations, such 'ferocious, valiant and haughty Indians' [23] as those found in Chile had made it impossible. To highlight the bravery of the Araucanians, he recounts how a 'soldier of considerable corpulence, great arrogance and big moustache'[24] was seized by a female native who held him down and almost killed him.

José Bengoa explains in his book *Historia de los Antiguos Mapuches del Sur* that the Araucanians were not used to the violence of European warfare and thus responded with all their might.[25] Nevertheless, the Mapuche had always been ferocious and had stopped the Inca conquest in Chile. In fact, Jaime Eyzaguirre states that the *Mapuche*' ferocity had stirred hatred of other native tribes as had happened in Mexico with the Aztecs. Thus, in Chile several of the non-Araucanian natives joined the Spaniards fighting the former as a common enemy.[26] The Iberian erroneously assumed the

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18 R. Couyoumdjian, A. de Ramón and S. Vial, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, p. 344 and J. Eyzaguirre (1973) *Historia de Chile*. Santiago: Editorial Zig-Zag, p. 153.

19 C. Gazmuri (1999) *El "48" Chileno. Igualitarios, Reformistas, Radicales, Masones y Bomberos.* Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, p. 15.

20 Gobernadores de Chile (1540-1810) in . http://www.memoriachilena.cl//temas/index.asp?id_ut=gobernadoresdechile:1540-1810

21 J. de Vivar (1966) *Crónica y Relación Copiosa y Verdadera de los Reinos de Chile*. Santiago: Fondo Histórico y Bibliográfico José Toribio Medina. http://www.memoriachilena.cl/archivos2/pdfs/MC0008847.pdf

22 De Ercilla y Zúñiga, Alonso, *op. cit.*

23 D. de Rosales (1877-1878) *Historia General de el Reyno de Chile: Flandes Indiano*, p. 214.

24 D. de Rosales, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

25 J. Bengoa (2003) *Historia de los Antiguos Mapuches del Sur Desde Antes de la Llegada de los Españoles hasta las Paces de Quilín. Siglos XVI y XVII.* Santiago: Catalonia, p. 216.

26 J. Eyzaguirre (1973), *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Amerindians would surrender to their might after the first years of confrontation, but they soon learnt otherwise. Even worse, being few and all scattered over the territory, they faced a second generation of *Mapuche* warriors who had grown up in the missions, understood the invaders' language, learned to ride as soon as they started walking, got to know their military strategies and weapons, and had come to terms with the violence and destructiveness of the European war style.[27]

Thus prepared, the second large offensive of the *Mapuche* commenced towards the end of the sixteenth century. The southern cities founded by the *conquistadores* were turned into military fortresses constantly besieged by the Indians. During the battle of Curalaba in December 1598, Governor Martín García Oñez de Loyola was beheaded. Having forced the Spaniards to withdraw, the Araucanians fixed the final dimensions of colonial Chile, forcing them to abandon the cities they had built south of the Bío-Bío River retaining for themselves the territory between the latter and the Toltén River. Although reluctantly admitted by the Spanish imperial rule, the Araucanos' zone was indeed a separate country until almost the end of the nineteenth century, well into independent republican life.[28] And it was not in vain that two governors, Valdivia and Oñez de Loyola, were killed in battle by the Indians. As mentioned in section 1.1, Chile was going to be known as a place of combat –*tierra de guerra*— [29] an idea that came to be reinforced during the nineteenth century due to the five wars that the little nation fought against much powerful enemies. Joaquín Fermandois has said that the institutional organization of a country has an impact in its exterior performance. In the case of nineteenth century Chile, its relative institutional stability allowed the nation to be quite successful in its exterior performance,[30] which in this case meant winning wars. This factor has remained as part of Chile's international image. Even up to today this country is considered expansionist by some of its continental neighbours.[31]

By 1603 Chile had become the first colony in Spanish America to acquire a permanent army,[32] in this case directly financed by the Crown through the Viceroyalty

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27 J. Bengoa, *op. cit*., p. 216.

28 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit*., p. 5.

29 R. Krebs, *op. cit*., p. 100.

30 J. Fermandois (2005) *Mundo y Fin de Mundo. Chile en la Política Mundial 1900-2004*. Santiago: Editorial Universidad Católica de Chile, p. 28.

31 For example, almost every time that Chile's armed forces buy new armament or renovates its military equipment, Peru and/or Bolivia accuse Chile of starting a unilateral arms race.

32 http://www.ejercitodechile.cl/nuestro_ejercito/reino-chi.php

of Peru. Frequent incursions into *Mapuche* territory took place through the centuries, as well as attacks from the Indians into the pacified region: this is what was to be known as the Arauco war,[33] a long conflict that can be divided into three periods. The first one (1553-1656) was violent and permanent.[34] The following (1657-1875) was characterised by a latent conflict. Nevertheless, the peril of being attacked by the natives did not disappear and trying to pacify them became a 'chimerical illusion'.[35] This fostered the feeling of being in a permanent state of siege, a sentiment present not only in the southern cities but in the northern ones too, as far as Santiago and La Serena.[36] It is during this period of less intensity that commerce along the war frontier developed.[37] The final period was short (1875-1883) and violent, ending with triumph of the Chilean army: after fighting for approximately three hundred and fifty years, the *Mapuche* were defeated.[38]

During the early colonial period fighting and the presence of an army had several identity and social implications. Firstly, as mentioned before, it forged Chile as a war country,[39] a historical experience that was engraved into the people's minds[40] and created a society that was aware of being militarily deployed,[41] introducing into the embryonic national consciousness admiration for military order and discipline. Even further, as Cristián Gazmuri puts it, the Arauco war provoked such desires for pacification that social order became —and still is— a duty, an absolute must.[42] Secondly, there was a permanent inflow of military personnel, consisting of young single males, which obviously fostered *mestizaje*. Well before the end of colonial times, Chile was basically

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33 See for main studies D. Barros Arana, J. Bengoa, J. Eyzaguirre (1973), R. Couyoumdjian, A. de Ramón and S. Vial and R. Krebs.

34 R. Couyoumdjian, A. de Ramón and S. Vial, *op. cit.,* p. 346.

35 D. Barros Arana (2000) *Historia General de Chile.* Santiago: Centro de Investigación Diego Barros Arana and Editorial Universitaria, p. 171. It is worth reading the narration by Diego Barros Arana of an episode between several Araucano tribes living close to the city of Concepción and the Spanish governor Antonio Gill y Gonzaga who tried to pacify them by offering villages, houses and other material possessions. After much talking and agreeing on peace, the Indians rebelled anyway and destroyed the villages the government had built for them: the 1657-1875 period of the Arauco was full of failed attempts to stop the war.

36 R. Krebs, *op. cit*., p. 25.

37 R. Krebs, *op. cit*., p. 103.

38 R. Couyoumdjian, A. de Ramón and S. Vial, *op. cit*., vol. 1, p. 346.

39 G.Vial, 'Los Elementos de la Identidad Nacional' in A. Soto (ed.) (2003) *Chile en el Siglo XX. Camino al Bicentenario.* Santiago: Universidad de los Andes, p. 29.

40 R. Krebs, *op. cit*., p. 25.

41 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit*., p. 21.

42 *Ibid*.

a '*mestizo* society'[43] not only due to the presence of an army in the southern frontier, but also, as we shall see, because of the development of landed estates or *haciendas*. The final result was that towards 1800 few communities of Amerindians survived north of the Bio-Bío River, and those that did were not completely native, either in their genes or culture.[44] In fact, unlike what happened in Mexico, relatively few Indians lived in Chile when the Europeans arrived. Thus, while central Mexico had some 25.3 million inhabitants [45] on the eve of the conquest, estimates for Chile have established that some 800 thousand to 1.2 million[46] lived here at the time of Valdivia's arrival. A consequence of this fact is that *mestizaje* in Chile was far easier than in other places of the empire —such as Mexico. This contributed to develop the previously mentioned *mestizo* society, which helped to diminish the risk of social upheaval caused by ethnic rivalries as happened in other American colonies.[47]

As becomes apparent, Chile's conquest was not an easy task at all. Those who arrived during the first century of the Spanish invasion came to work and to work hard, 'not to pick up gold or easy privileges offered by glittering empires (…). Ours was a scenario of effort and perseverance'.[48] The existence of regular natural disasters, earthquakes in particular, contributed to increase the difficulty of building up the Captaincy-General.[49] As a matter of fact, it was not only the *Mapuche* that were an important obstacle to the construction of the colony: as we shall see, the disruption caused by buccaneers was considerable, to the point of contributing in a significant way to the development of the Chileans' country-at-war mentality.[50] This opinion is shared by Gonzalo Vial who says that earthquakes and pirates were just different forms of war.[51] All these factors, which fostered instability, made the inhabitants of the colony

43 G. Vial in A. Soto, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
44 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit.,* p. 8.
45 B. Keen and K. Haynes (2004) *A History of Latin America.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p. 9.
46 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
47 M. Reid (2007) *Forgotten Continent. The Battle for Latin America's Soul*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 55-56.
48 M. Laborde (2004) *Santiago, Región Capital de Chile. Una Invitación al Conocimiento del Espacio Propio.* Santiago: Publicaciones del Bicentenario, p. 80.
49 R. Mellafe (1986) *Historia Social de Chile y América.* Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, pp. 279-288. In his study Mellafe counts up to 282 disasters between 1520 and 1906: 100 earthquakes, 46 episodes of serious flooding, 50 droughts, and 82 epidemics. For further studies on natural disasters in Chile see R. Urrutia de Hazbún and C. Lanza Lazcano (1993) *Catástrofes en Chile 1541-1992.* Santiago: Editorial La Noria.
50 R. Couyoumdjian, A. de Ramón and S. Vial, *op. cit.,* p. 344.
51 G. Vial (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 228.

crave for order and stability.[52] Moreover, it is my opinion that instability is one of the reasons why Chileans preserved legalism, a typical Spanish trait, very strongly.[53] In fact, Chile's attachment to law and rules is present throughout the colonial era and beyond, from the start of its republican existence onwards.[54]

The *conquistadores* were laying the foundations of a new nation. As will be seen in section 2.2, it was being forged as a veritable island, not surrounded by water but by such harsh geography that set apart the slim piece of land which would later be known as Chile.[55] Through the centuries to come Spain spent money in the Captaincy-General rather than getting funds for the empire's exchequer. Despite the cost, it was important to ensure the subjection of the colony as a defensive wall against the English, French and Dutch pirates who strove to lay hands on the immense wealth of the Viceroyalty of Peru. Chile was of little importance in itself to the greater Empire save for being a ditch that safeguarded the goose that laid the golden eggs,[56] the Crown being aware that Peru would be at the mercy of foreign powers if Chile was occupied by one of them.[57]

Although the Arauco war conditioned the life style and development of the colony during the sixteenth and part of the seventeenth century, other activities took place concomitant to warfare. In fact, the mobilization of Amerindian labour was an urgent matter for the conquerors. Valdivia allocated natives among the Spaniards through the system of *encomiendas* —an extremely controversial institution from its very beginning—[58] by means of which the Indians were meant to be Christianised and civilized in return for work. Such work ranged from gathering gold to ploughing the land. As the scarce gold existing in Chile was quickly collected, agricultural activities augmented in importance. Farming was not a sure bet. Flanked and crossed from side to side by mountains, Chile is a slope from the Andes to the sea. This makes agriculture more difficult, facilitates erosion and transforms its rivers into torrents which, when their banks collapse, tend to flood the soil they irrigate. To top it all, because of the country's temperate weather, its agricultural produce was not exotic, and thus,

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52 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
53 G. Vial (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 25.
54 M. Colacrai and M. E. Lorenzini, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
55 A. de Ramón (2003) *Historia de Chile. Desde la Invasión Incaica hasta Nuestros Días (1500-2000).* Santiago: Catalonia, p. 15.
56 J. Eyzaguirre (1973) *op. cit.*, p. 153.
57 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
58 For this purpose see —among others— G. McBride (1971), J. Eyzaguirre (1973), G. Salazar (2007), R. Couyoumdjian, A. de Ramón and S. Vial (1992).

not very appreciated in the European markets.[59] A comment by Armando de Ramón as regards the landowners and the development of the agricultural activity in Chile may be quite illustrative:

> On them (landowners) fell the price crisis that affected the nation from 1635 on to the end of the seventeenth century. They were the ones most damaged by the violent earthquakes that battered central Chile. They had to face the terrible situation of the loss of all their investments and the obstacles to starting anew given the ruin of the agricultural system of the region. They did not even have the consolation of participating in the epic battles of their ancestors (…), war that gave fame to so many of the first *conquistadores*.[60]

In spite of such complications, agriculture and ranching grew steadily in importance as an economic activity. Most of the increasingly productive soil was initially clayish and thin, on hilly terrain, and generally dependent on rainfall and snowmelt from the Andes and the Cordillera de la Costa. In the centuries to come the construction of important irrigation systems —starting with the 1820 Maipo Canal— began transforming the arid dry land into the fertile valley of the twentieth century.[61]

Going back to colonial times, in that era the land owning process sprouted directly from endowments, land grants and concessions mainly made by the local governments.[62] This set in motion what came to be a crucial feature in the formation of Chilean culture and nationality: the *haciendas*. As George McBride states in his book *Chile: Land and Society*, almost every Chilean analyst mentions the *hacienda* as a very influential feature in the forging of the nation from the early Spanish days up to the time when he first published his book at the beginning of the twentieth century.[63] As Mario Góngora pointed out, the reason for this is that Chile, and especially central

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59 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit*., p. 15.

60 A. de Ramón, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

61 From the 1830s to the 1880s some 400 canals were built through private enterprise, some big, others small or medium sized, as stated by A. Fontaine Aldunate (2001) *La Tierra y el Poder: Reforma Agraria en Chile (1964-1973).* Santiago: Zig-Zag, p. 10. In my view, in spite of such technical improvements it is quite astounding to think that Chile is focusing today in becoming a 'nourishing power nation' when the proportion of arable land is 3 percent only.

62 A. Fontaine Aldunate (2001), *op. cit.*, p. 7.

63 G. McBride, *op. cit.,* p. 171.

Chile, was articulated and ordered around the *encomiendas* at the very beginning and around the *hacienda* immediately after.[64]

The large landed estates were located from the northern end of the colony down to the southern frontier with the Araucanians, with its core region between the cities of Santiago and Concepción. They were endowed with an 'indestructible cohesion'[65] and were thus central in establishing in Chile a long-standing, stable and agrarian way of life. Most *haciendas* were very isolated from one another and from the main urban centres. Generally, those who worked within their boundaries did so for life. Food, drink, clothing and a Christian education, were all obtained within these great landed estates. The *patrón* or landowner was a pivotal element for the unity and stability of the whole social mesh typical of these *latifundia*. Established as the sole and undisputed authority in a vast rural area, the *patrón* enhanced order, directed the rural labour, paid the wages and acted as a primary judge in territories that were distant from any formal court of law.[66] To a certain extent, each *hacienda* became a miniature replica of Chilean society, hierarchical and authoritarian.[67]

The *hacienda* was to prove one of the most stable and enduring of Chilean institutions —in Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt's opinion it was the agrarian organization that most influenced the formation of a nation in all of Latin America—[68] leaving long-lasting marks on the national psychology. These self-contained communities are considered as the 'cradle of the Chilean race',[69] acting as some sort of melting pot of the diverse ethnic and social groups existing in Chile from the first colonial period: *mestizos*, Indians, poor Spaniards, some of them soldiers who once served on the war frontier close to the Bio-Bío River, and a few blacks, *zambos* and mulattos. As for the landowners, they were normally *criollos* (Spanish Americans, many of them *mestizos* too) or *peninsulares* (individuals from the Iberian Peninsula), who lived in the countryside with their nuclear and extended families.[70]

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64 M. Góngora, (1974) *Origen de los Inquilinos en Chile*. Santiago: Instituto de Capacitación e Investigación en Reforma Agraria, ICIRA, p. 38.
65 B. Subercaseaux Z, *op. cit.,* p. 169.
66 A. Fontaine Aldunate (2001), *op. cit.*, p. 15.
67 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit.*, p. 21
68 'A. Jocelyn-Holt: Otra Mirada al Chile de 1920 y sus Haciendas', *La Tercera*, 6 July 2008.
69 A. Fontaine Aldunate (2001), *op. cit.*, p. 14.
70 M. Góngora (1974), *op. cit.*, pp. 33.

The *hacienda* greatly contributed to make Chile a stable and fairly orderly place —which is one of the issues addressed in this section. Actually, for three hundred years, there was not one single peasant rebellion in Chile,[71] a situation quite different from other places in Latin America. In Jocelyn-Holt's view, this fact attests to the general good behaviour of the landowners towards those working and living within their landed states.[72] The development of these estates helped to enforce the Spanish dominion over the territory through private enterprise, and was also a useful tool for pacifying the still rebel natives. A letter sent in 1767 to King Charles III by Governor Antonio de Guill y Gonzaga attests to this. After failing to pacify the natives living close to the city of Concepción using friendly methods, he recommends to the emperor that they should be wiped out and that the survivors —mainly women and children— should be taken to *haciendas* located as far as Copiapó in order to force them get into the colonial system.[73]

The *haciendas* also helped to support the colony in economic terms, both because of the trade they promoted and the food they supplied throughout the country. Moreover, they contributed to the forging of the mentality of the new embryonic nation in the rural society and to the growth of a relatively homogeneous population in which only a vague ethnic division was of importance, that between the *mestizo* majority and the more definitely European upper class consisting of *criollos* and *peninsulares*.[74] Both factors —*mestizaje* and the aristocratic elements— had considerable importance in the development of Chile's society. In the first place —as already mentioned— a society based mainly on an ethnically mixed population made it easier for the colony to become

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71 'Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt: Chile Redescubierto', *La Tercera*, 2 August 2008.

72 A. Jocelyn Holt, *La Tercera,* 6 July 2008, *op. cit*.
During several months of 2008 there was an interesting debate in Chile over the role of landowners, triggered by the screening of a soap opera called "El Señor de la Querencia" that presented those proprietors as abusive and quite sinister. Jocelyn-Holt was of the opinion that precisely the landowners of the nineteenth and twentieth century had made possible the development of republican Chile. The article here quoted states '¿Cómo se entiende pues, que señores y patrones tan atávicamente retrógrados, poco menos que feudales, permitieran partidos políticos, prensa libre, instituciones laicas, educación pública y tanto más? El mito fustigador, periódicamente desenpolvado (durante la Reforma Agraria cundió como yesca), se cae a pedazos cuando lo cotejamos con la evidencia'. To be able to access the oposite view as regards the haciendas, a good example is Gabriel Salazar's book (1989) Labradores, Peones y Proletarios: Formación y Crisis de la Sociedad Popular Chilena del Siglo XIX. Santiago: Editorial Sur.

73 D. Barros Arana, *op. cit*., p. 176.

74 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit.,* p. 8.

a cohesive nation-state long before several others in the region[75] Furthermore, the relative absence of sharp ethnic divisions helped envision the idea of an homogeneous republican citizenry, thus contributing to the forging of the independence movement in Chile.[76] The *mestizo* majority and the creole aristocracy, forming a hierarchical society headed by a small and cohesive upper class that led a majority of poor and illiterate peasants,[77] were the core of Chile's basic social structure, which would remain quite unchanged well into the nineteenth century.[78]

The composition of the upper class —which initially included Europeans only, but soon accepted *mestizos*— proved to be very important in the formation of Chile's nation-building process, especially as regards the culture of order and endeavour. As we shall see here, scholarly investigation has shown that, although not belonging to Spain's nobility, the *conquistadores* came from the upper rungs of that nation's social ladder, thus replicating in Chile the hierarchical organization of their motherland. In fact, most of the first Europeans came from three Spanish regions —Extremadura, Andalucía and a few from Castile— as well as from other parts of Europe, namely, modern Germany and Italy[79] and, apparently, were either *segundones* —i.e. non-firstborn offspring of nobles with no right of inheritance— and *hidalgos,* i.e. members of the lower and provincial nobility, freed from paying taxes. Thus, although poor, they came from families with some social ranking in their native land. The replication of their hierarchical social milieu in a patriarchal Chilean society[80] resulted abusive in some cases, benevolent in others,[81] most times exerting a strong and ordering influence over the rest of society, which enabled it to achieve a relatively harmonic social coexistence.[82]

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75 M. Reid, *op. cit*., p. 21.

76 A. Knight (2005) *Revolución, Democracia y Populismo en América Latina.* Santiago: Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, p. 123.

77 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit*., p. 15.

78 S. Collier (2003) *Chile: the Making of a Republic, 1830-1865. Politics and Ideas.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 5.
In Collier's opinion, it is very likely that the illiteracy ratios towards 1830 were 90 percent. The 1854 census stated that 13.5 percent of Chileans could write and read —figures that are not too different from those for southern Europe on the same period.

79 B. Vicuña Mackenna (1903) *Los Orígenes de las Familias Chilenas.* Santiago: Librería, Imprenta y Encuadernación de Guillermo E. Miranda, pp. 5-6.

80 J. Eyzaguirre (1973), *op. cit.,* p. 398.

81 G. Vial (2009), *op. cit*., pp. 255-256. As an example Vial refers to two well know female *encomenderas*, Isabel Osorio de Cáceres y Catalina de los Ríos y Lisperguer known as 'La Quintrala', a charitable owner the former and a real psychopath the latter.

82 J. Eyzaguirre (1973), *op. cit.,* p. 398.

Throughout the seventeenth century, as the great landed estates developed, the social stratification and differentiation among the same *conquistadores* became sharp because several of the first conquerors —mainly Andalusians and *Extremeños*— adopted lifestyles far beyond their economic means, falling down the social ladder.[83] Towards the eighteenth century, the composition of the colonial elite changed with the arrival of Spaniards migrating to the colony, at least half of them[84] coming from the Basque country.[85] Industrious and austere, they soon bought their land from the impoverished Iberians. Not having prejudices against trade —many Castilians thought it was not an honourable occupation, better suited to Portuguese and Jews, whom they considered despicable— the Basque newcomers quickly came to dominate the national commercial traffic, making enough money to be accepted within the flanks of the upper class by acquiring landed estates and through convenient marriages.[86]

The combination of the old Castilian and new Basque gentry, plus some very few families of Irish, Portuguese, French and Italian ancestry, merged in what was to be known as the Basque-Castilian aristocracy which had a fundamental role in the formation of Chile. In Enrique Mac Iver's opinion, its origins were humble, most Basque families descending from rustic, tough and hardworking Basque mountaineers.[87] On the contrary, Maria Rosaria Stabili argues that all the Basques were *hidalgos*.[88] Regardless of their origin, their role in the formation of Chile was to be decisive, for example, in the development of the independence movement. In fact —as happened in most Ibero-American nations— most of its leaders were from the elites and they were the ones who continued to organize the new-born state.[89]

The input of the Jesuits who arrived in Chile was also of the utmost importance: most of them were Basque, and there were a few Bavarian. At the same time as they Christianized the emergent Chilean society, they also brought along a powerful culture

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83 M. R. Stabili (1996) *El Sentimiento Aristocrático. Elites Chilenas Frente al Espejo (1860-1960)* Santiago: Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana and Editorial Andrés Bello, pp. 220-221.

84 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit.,* p. 18.
Approximately 24,000 Spaniards migrated to Chile between 1700 and 1810.

85 Hence the famed Spanish writer Miguel de Unamuno's observation that the two greatest creations of the Basques were the Jesuits and Chile.
http://www.filosofia.org/hem/194/alf/ez2302a.htm

86 M. R. Stabili, *op. cit*., pp. 221-223.

87 E. Mac Iver (1900) *Discurso Sobre la Crisis Moral de la República.* Santiago: Imprenta Moderna, p. 10.

88 M. R. Stabili, *op. cit*., p. 221.

89 A. de Ramón, *op. cit*., p. 66.

of labour and industriousness. They were responsible for the education of white and *mestizo* creoles in the same spirit that animated them, i.e. 'contemplatives in action'. They can be considered the boosters of Chile's greater agriculture, which started in the seventeenth century, as well as of industrial production and mining.[90]

The stability of the countryside and the absence of sharply defined ethnic castes, left little room for the upheavals felt in other places of Spanish America all through the duration of the empire and after the colonies gained their independence. There were hardly any elements that could disturb order. All those living in the Captaincy-General were relatively poor —the upper class had fairly rustic life styles—[91] there were few slaves, few indigenous communities north of the frontier for rapacious looting by the whites and no major regional tensions and divisions. Besides, the whole colony shared basic values such as Catholicism, adherence to a hierarchical order and desire for a peaceful existence. There were hardly any subcultures, and two main cultural streams: the somewhat European stream of the elite and the *mestizo* stream —primitive, submerged in a magical universe— of the peasantry.[92] Interestingly enough, Chile's rugged geography and history prevented the formation of semi-nomadic cowboys – the Argentinean *gaucho* and the Venezuelan *llanero* —suspicious of any formal hierarchy, living on the fringes of the legal system and prone to follow local *caudillos*— thus contributing to regional socio-political instability.[93]

> The Chilean nationality may have been formed in the colonial era; the modern nation as such dates its birth very precisely from the Creole revolution. The Chileans' habits of political *behaviour* were to be influenced for generations to come by attitudes and practices inherited from the colonial past, but the framework of political *ideas* was now radically transformed'.[94]

In fact, once the monarchical design was overruled, it was basically agreed that the republican system was to be the framework for the establishment of Chile's government.

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90 M. Laborde, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

91 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit.*, p.16.

92 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

93 To read more on this topic see C. Gazmuri, *op. cit.*, p. 20. Also J. L. Borges refers to this issue in his work 'Evaristo Carriega' in J. L. Borges (2004) *Obras Completas.* Buenos Aires: Editorial Emecé. Also see D. F. Sarmiento (1845) Civilización y Barbarie: Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga y Aspecto Físico y Costumbres y Hábitos de la República Argentina. Santiago: Imprenta del Progreso.

94 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit.*, p. 40. The italics are the authors' own.

The quest of the new nation's early leaders for a fitting political system, after a few years of political chaos spanning from 1823 to the end of the decade, was comprehensively settled by conservative politicians in the 1830s. This gave the country a record of institutional permanence and stability unusual in the upheaval-prone Hispanic America of the nineteenth century.[95] A key figure for the achievement of such stability and order was Diego Portales who, as minister to the government of President José Joaquín Prieto, set the foundations of what was going to be known as the Portalian state.[96]

The genesis, rise and fall of the so-called Portalian conception of the state has a crucial and fundamental role in the forging of Chile from 1830 until 1891, and —in later years— even until 1920. There has been much debate and academic discussion on the Portalian model, mostly framed within the conservative-liberal controversy, from the nineteenth century onwards,.[97] Thus, most historians —from Ramón Sotomayor Valdés in his 1873 *Historia de Chile 1831-1871*,[98] to Alberto Edwards's 1928 *Fronda Aristocrática*,[99] to Mario Góngora in 1981[100] — have supported the conception of a government for Chile as outlined by President Prieto's influential minister.

At the other end of the spectrum some of the most violent detractors of Portales have been José Victorino Lastarria[101] and Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna,[102] in 1861 and 1863 respectively. In more recent times Portales' worst critics have been Sergio Villalobos in his *Portales. Una Falsificación Histórica*[103], and Gabriel Salazar who, in his book of 2009, declared that he intended to write Portales' historical epitaph.[104] Salazar thinks that the Portalian model is the only one ever-present in Chile as the

95 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit*., p. 1.

96 To access a compilation of Portales' writings, and thus study his political thought and world vision, see R. Silva Castro (ed.) (1952) *Ideas y Confesiones de Portales*. Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico.

97 R. Krebs, *op. cit*., p. 39.

98 R. Sotomayor Valdés (1962) *Historia de Chile Bajo el Gobierno del General Don Joaquín Prieto. Santiago*: Fondo Histórico Presidente Joaquín Prieto.

99 Edwards, Alberto (1928) *La Fronda Aristocrática en Chile*. Santiago: Imprenta Nacional.

100 M. Góngora (1986) *Ensayo Histórico sobre la Noción de Estado en Chile en los Siglos XIX y XX.* Chile: Editorial Universitaria.

101 J.V. Lastarria (1861) *Don Diego Portales, Juicio Histórico*. Santiago: El Correo.

102 B. Vicuña Mackenna (1974) *Don Diego Portales*. Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico.

103 S. Villalobos (2005) *Portales. Una Falsificación Histórica.* Santiago*:* Editorial Universitaria.

104 G. Salazar (2007) *Mercaderes, Empresarios y Capitalistas. Chile Siglo XIX.* Santiago: Editorial Sudamericana, p. 591.

basic state structure that has consistently threatened the sovereignty and needs of the Chilean people.[105]

Rather different is Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt's view. For him the existence of a Portalian state is a mistake as Portales never planned the creation of a political system. He was a dictator —albeit not a dictatorial *caudillo* in the Latin American sense— who hunted for order after a period of political upheaval following Bernardo O'Higgins's government. Thus Portales was essentially a pragmatist who realised that a republican structure within a restricted democratic scheme, with a strong presidential institution and a weak parliament, would give Chile the political and social stability that it needed.[106]

Regardless of the diverse connotation that authors give to the Portalian system, it is a fact that its impact on the organization of the country has been crucial. However, it is only fair to acknowledge that neither all the merit —nor all the blame, in Salazar's opinion— belongs to Portales. Armando de Ramón considers the Portalian regime more as the combined effort of a series of highly talented men, such as Andrés Bello, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Manuel Renjifo, Mariano Egaña, Joaquín Tocornal, Antonio Varas and Manuel Montt.[107] Not all of them supported Portales but, due to his early death, they ended getting involved in the process of the rise and consolidation of his political scheme.

Portales considered that it was necessary to reinstall an old political idea, remodelling it in accordance with the country's new political situation, i.e. unrestricted obedience to the Spanish Monarch, was now due to the President of the Republic. From 1830 onwards, Chile was ruled by a strong central government, far removed from the militarism and *caudillo* rule of the times of the war of independence —a warlordism which did not disappear in most of the newly created South American nations. 'The notion of Chile as a *república modelo*, "model republic", an example to her turbulent neighbours, became increasingly widespread in educated circles (…) The backward Spanish colony had become a proud little nation'[108] in open contrast with most of the other former colonies. In fact, although generally wealthier, more populated, better

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105 G. Salazar (2005) *Construcción de Estado en Chile (180-1837) Democracia de "los Pueblos". Militarismo Ciudadano. Golpismo Oligárquico.* Santiago: Sudamericana, p. 8.

106 A. Jocelyn-Holt (1998) *El Peso de la Noche: Nuestra Frágil Fortaleza Histórica.* Santiago: Planeta, pp. 129-142.

107 A. de Ramón, *op. cit*., p. 73.

108 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit*., p. 103.

located and developed, they were nevertheless in the midst of political havoc. This is fundamentally the opinion of Simón Bolívar, one of the leaders of the South American rebellion against Spain. As early as 1815 he wrote that Chile alone had an auspicious future due to its stability and lawfulness.[109] This observation shows how the country enjoyed a fame of exceptionality from early times.

To a certain extent, the first republican governments were somehow a prolongation of the enlightened despotism that had refurbished and refashioned the Spanish Empire in the later colonial period.[110] Nevertheless, despite all the emphasis on order, the Chilean conservatives did not embrace despotism as a political idea[111] and did not intentionally look back to the colonial regime. Their government was neither reactionary nor retrograde[112] but authoritarian,[113] aimed at restoring the power of a central authority which had diminished in the whole of Hispanic America during the wars of emancipation.[114]

There was a search for peace and order, which implied the 'creation of institutions that decreased the spaces for the irrational and the arbitrary, subjecting social life to established, calculable and dirigible procedures'.[115] This meant the formation of stable institutions —an elected Presidency of the Republic being the main one— whose power derived from this public office as defined by law.[116] It also implied the impersonality of public office, which was one of the factors that gave political stability to Chile's republic during the nineteenth century.[117] Another relevant factor was the strengthening of civilian supremacy and constitutional regulation.[118] For a few decades a method to obtain order was repression, which —compared to what the twentieth century witnessed in terms of a grim record of tyranny worldwide— 'was

[109] S. Bolívar (1815) 'Carta de Jamaica', *op. cit.*
[110] B. Bravo Lira (1994) *El Absolutismo Ilustrado en Hispanoamérica, Chile (1760-1860), de Carlos III a Portales y Montt*. Santiago: Editorial Jurídica de Chile, pp. 183-430.
[111] S. Collier, *op. cit*., pp. XVIII-XIX.
[112] R. Krebs, *op. cit*., p. 39.
[113] G. Salazar and J. Pinto (2002) *Historia Contemporánea de Chile*. Santiago: Lom Ediciones, p. 15.
[114] R. Couyoumdjian, A. de Ramón and S. Vial, *op. cit*., vol. 3, p. 186.
[115] See S. Serrano (1994) *Universidad y Nación. Chile en el Siglo XIX*. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria.
[116] A. Valenzuela (1995) 'Chile: Origins and Consolidation of a Latinamerican Democracy' in L. Diamond, J. Linz and S. M. Lipset (eds.) *Politics in Developing Countries*. London: Lynne Rienner, p. 83.
[117] R. Couyoumdjian, A. de Ramón and S. Vial, *op. cit*., vol. 2, p. 337.
[118] R. Krebs, *op. cit*., p. 106.

not monstrously bloody, although it certainly had its rough edges'.[119] A final element that contributed to order and is worth mentioning was electoral intervention by the executive branch of government, thus indirectly ensuring that the Congress was chosen by the President and his Ministers.[120]

As I said before, none of this behaviour is democratic. Nevertheless, in my view, it is understandable given the mentality of the young republic, historically and geographically marked by war and disaster. As Cristián Gazmuri puts it, social and political order had become a supreme value forged through the centuries. On the contrary, chaos, anarchy and uncertainty were rejected.[121] Another social trait that had become an age-old value was the idea of isolation, which will be addressed in section 2.2. Like the culture of order and endeavour that was formed during centuries, there also emerged a mind-set of seclusion and inaccessibility, adding to the exceptionality of Chile's self-image and mentality.

2.2 Finis Terrae: Geographic Isolationism and the National Character

Section 2.2 explains how a remoteness syndrome —derived from the fact of being so far away from Spain and quite isolated from the other colonies— developed in Chile from the early years of the conquest. The new territories annexed along the nineteenth century —Chile's current northern regions after the war of the Pacific; the former Araucanian zone after 1880; and the extreme south towards the mid-century — completed what today forms the national territory. Nevertheless, this fact did not diminish the country's perception of being a remote and marginal land.[122] The isolation of each region along the country and the diversity of the population that settled in them might have made Chile a country of deep regionalism. However, quite on the contrary, Chile is a fairly cohesive country with a strong central government until today.[123]

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119 S. Collier, *op. cit.,* p. 28. To exemplify the point, the author explains that, whilst during Chile's Conservative governments no more than 90 people were sentenced to death, during Juan Manuel de Rosas dictatorship (Argentina) more than a thousand were thus sentenced.

120 R. Krebs, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

121 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

122 H. Ramírez Necochea, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

123 Senador Víctor Pérez: Centralismo como Fuente de Desigualdad, 26 October 2007. http://www.senador.cl/prontus_senado/antialone.html

That Diego de Rosales thought that Chile was 'at the end of the world'[124] is not surprising given the distance from Europe and the dangers of the trip to reach Chilean soil. That the same was stated by Samuel Haigh almost three hundred years later,[125] when the means of transport had greatly improved, certainly shows that distance and its consequent isolation might be considered a permanent Chilean characteristic. At least this is the opinion of Cristián Gazmuri who speaks of a 'remoteness syndrome'[126] present in the national psyche as a clear perception of living in an island-like territory in spite of being continental. Bernardo Subercaseaux refers to this in his book *Chile o una Loca Geografía*: 'We know that in its northern edge Chile is separated from the world by a wide deserted extension. On the south it looks down to the southern pole. On the west, there is the ocean as far as half across the world; and on the east, the immense mountain. Such a country is an island'.[127]

Aside from the Philippines, Chile was the most remote of all the Spanish possessions. Established as a Captaincy-General, it developed as a minor, poor and uncared-for agrarian colony on the fringe of Spanish America, its isolation enhancing what became after 250 years a distinctive embryonic national culture[128] and provincial mentality.[129] It was far away not only from the metropolis but also from the rest of South America: the long thin land was separated from the Viceroyalty of Peru by more than a thousand kilometres of unfriendly desert; the towering Cordillera de los Andes segregated it from the pampas of the River Plate; and beyond the colony's coastline, the widest ocean in the world acted as a water fortification. The first geographical distribution of the southern cone of Latin America subdivided it into horizontal sashes of land traversing from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic. It was mainly Pedro de Valdivia who designed a totally different division of the grounds lying ahead to be conquered.[130] His letters to Charles V describing Chile, give account of a land which starts in Atacama, passing through the southern rain forest to end in the Magellan

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124 D. de Rosales, *op. cit.,* p. 508.

125 S. Haigh (1917) *Viaje a Chile Durante la Epoca de la Independencia.* Chile: Imprenta Universitaria, p. 6.

126 'C. Gazmuri: Lejanía, Aislamiento, Pobreza y Guerra. La Mentalidad Histórica del Chileno', *El Mercurio*, 22 April 2006.

127 B. Subercaseaux Z. (2005) Chile o una Loca Geografía. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, p. 59.

128 S. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit*., p. 1.

129 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit*., p. 21.

130 J. Eyzaguirre (1973), *op. cit.,* p. 69 and B. Subercaseaux Z. (2005), *op. cit.* p. 42.

Strait. The country that we know today as Chile obeys in its basic geopolitical distribution to a 'Valdivian' design.[131]

In the 1830s the actual national territory stretched from Chile Chico in the Copiapó area to the Bio-Bío River with Concepción as the main city. This encompassed a combination of metal rich north and fertile central valley. The territories that lay north of Copiapó were taken from Bolivia and Peru in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883) and the Araucanian region was subdued in the 1880s. Valdivia and Chiloé, although belonging to Spain since colonial times, developed in quite a different way from the heartland of the colony due to the distance imposed by the *Mapuche* 'impasse' on the continuity of Chile's continental soil. A small German settlement in Valdivia and the Llanquihue Lake towards the 1850s gave a boost to the development of the area.

As to the southernmost parts of the country, in 1881 Chile and Argentina signed a treaty which stated the latter's sovereignty over Patagonia (East of the Andes) and Chile's control of the Magellan Straits. Efforts were made to settle the Chilean Patagonia in the 1920s. Concerning the Magellan Strait, there were several colonizing attempts during the Spanish period, but all failed due to the harshness of the weather and terrain, the next to impossible development of agriculture and the difficulty to supply the outposts with food.[132] The area was finally annexed in 1843 and was used as a penal settlement up to 1867.

The administrative organization of the Spanish empire was centralized. Republican Chile adopted this legacy,[133] a fact that was often criticized by the opponents to the Conservative regime, adducing that it stifled local initiative. Although this was true, it is difficult to think of Chile taking a different path: to counteract the deep-rooted hegemony of Santiago and the three adjacent provinces of Colchagua, Aconcagua and Valparaíso, which accounted for almost 50 per cent of the nation's population,[134] was close to impossible.

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131 A. de Ramón, *op. cit*., p. 16.
132 J. Eyzaguirre (1973), *op. cit.,* pp. 71 and 94-95.
133 H. Gundermann in S. Montecino, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
134 S. Collier, *op. cit*., pp 26-27.

'Chile's geographical wall forms part of its identity: insularity, where variety produces uniqueness and often rarity: the Chilean "case"'.[135] Along its 15 regions,[136] Chile is normally divided into three big areas: north, centre and south, each of them presenting its peculiarities. Regionalism certainly existed and exists at the level of resentment and complaint, but —except for some low-impact regional separatist movements— it has not been articulated as a coherent political programme. A common national identity within and in spite of sharp geographic diversity, are fundamental elements when understanding Chile and its people.[137] Land-locked territories, non-coastal isles, guarded by rugged mountains and torrential rivers, many regions along the nation are still fighting against isolation.[138]

Chile's colonial north was basically contained in what today is known as *Norte Chico*, with its semi-desert terrain which confined agriculture to a few valley-oases. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the frontier moved towards the southern borders of the Atacama wilderness mainly due to the development of the area as a specialized mining zone. Neither Chile nor Bolivia had had real concern over the exact location of the common border in that barren region until the discovery of silver, guano and nitrate transformed the wasteland into tremendously valuable ground.[139]

In 1874, after strong tussling, the frontier was fixed at 24°S, Chile promised to abandon any claims over the Atacama Desert and Bolivia agreed not to raise taxes on the Chilean company operating in the extraction of nitrate. Problems started in 1878 when Bolivia's dictator decided to increase these taxes and pulled Peru into a common war front against Chile due to a secret treaty signed between both nations. The so-called 'War of the Pacific' started in 1879 and ended in 1884. The final borders between the three countries were established with Bolivia in the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and

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135 C. Gay in L. Mizón (2001) *Claudio Gay y la Formación de la Identidad Cultural Chilena*. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, p. 71.

136 Two new regions were created in 2006: number XIV –Región de Valdivia— and number XV – Región de Arica y Parinacota.

137 L. Mizon, *op. cit*., p. 66.

138 The Patagonian Andes, the presence of rivers that carry much water and other geographical accidents have made it very difficult to build roads that connect Chile's far south with the rest of the country. In 1976 the Austral Highway was built, helping to connect remote areas. Nevertheless, there still are towns and villages quite out of reach, whose inhabitants get their supplies, medical attention, etc. in Argentina rather than in Chile. They often feel closer to that nation than to their own with the consequent sovereignty peril that this implies.

139 'Chile y Bolivia: la Guerra del Salitre', *Punto Final*, 24 October- 6 November 2003.

Commerce of 1904 and with Peru in the 1929 Treaty of Lima.[140] Having acquired the territory that produced the nitrate that the whole world needed, Chile had its virtual monopoly and for once the name of the country was widely known around the world as never before. This opportunity and the wheat boost production of a few decades earlier —a situation that will be analyzed below in this chapter— gave a preponderant place to Chile in the world market.[141] In my view, both époques show that the country has had international fame and a good image in world terms, only that it has been intermittent and short lived.

One of the main characteristics of the north of Chile is the harshness of its terrain, one of the world's most inhospitable. This probably explains the rugged and taciturn character of northerners: as Benjamín Subercaseaux puts it, 'a landscape that explains men and men who say nothing'.[142] A second important trait of the region is the variety and richness of the historical processes that have taken place there: from Palaeolithic tribes through to the British industrial revolution and the early surge of a capitalistic elite and a proletarian class. [143]

In the North it is possible to find some of the few native or first living native people of the country: the Aymaras. On the other hand, the region definitely has a

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[140] The limit with Peru is called *Línea de la Concordia*, and was defined by the Treaty of Lima of 1929. This imaginary line is located 10 km to the north of the route of the railroad from Arica to La Paz and is represented by 80 landmarks distributed between the coast and a fixed point to the north of the town of Visviri (*hito de Visviri*). There the Chilean, Bolivian and Peruvian frontiers converge in a tripartite landmark. The common border with Bolivia was established in a treaty signed in Santiago in 1904. This limit extends through 850 km in a north-south direction from the *hito de Visviri* to the tripartite landmark of Zapaleri (22 48 ' South latitude), the meeting point of Chile, Bolivia and Argentina. The layout of the limit is firstly determined by the dividing line of mountain waters, towards the western and eastern sides of the Andean mountain range. Secondly, the layout of the limit is also determined by several straight lines that join landmarks distributed between Visviri and Zapaleri. As for diverse minor problems that existed between Chile and Bolivia as regards short sections of the border, they were solved in the Mixed Commission of Chile-Bolivia Limits, in April 1992, at La Paz. In four opportunities Chile has offered to give Bolivia access to the sea. The first was in 1895 during Jorge Montt's tenure, the second was in 1950 under President Gabriel González Videla, and the remaining two occurred during General Augusto Pinochet's regime, in 1975 and 1987. None of these offers developed any further.

[141] G. Vial (2009), *op. cit.*, pp. 870-884.

[142] B. Subercaseaux Z. (2005) *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[143] For further information about Chile's north and nortinos life style, see S. González, 'El Mundo de las Casas de Lata. La Vida en la Pampa Salitrera' in R. Sagredo and C. Gazmuri (eds.) (2005) *Historia de la Vida Privada en Chile. El Chile Moderno de 1840 a 1925.* Santiago: Taurus.

foreign air about it. Spanish, Greeks, Croatians, Chinese, Italians and British, as well as Bolivians and Peruvians, have come and gone —some remain— mainly attracted by this mineral-rich region. As regards the nationals of Bolivia and Perú, their presence and relative importance in certain economic spheres is basically disregarded. It is as if our northern cities, Arica especially, lived only from the Chilean input.[144] All this is quite understandable in an on-going process of 'Chileanization' of a formerly foreign region annexed through war.[145]

The development of agricultural activity in the central valley demanded great effort and sacrifice. When it became evident that Chile's main source of prosperity was not going to come from the gold fields, the descendants of the *conquistadores* and first colonizers focused on farming production. A few years after the central basin land had been put to work by their Spanish owners, the civilizing effects were quite obvious: houses and stockrooms, livestock spread all over the lands of Colchagua and Maule, not to mention those valleys previously farmed by the *mitimaes*, i.e. Inca colonizers: La Ligua, Longotoma, Quillota, Aconcagua, Santiago, Maipo, Talagante and Melipilla.[146]

Towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the progress made by the farming economic sector was considerable. Several factors played a role in bringing about such success. Chile's peculiar role as front wall to the Spanish empire on the Pacific forced the Viceroyalty to invest greatly in the constructions of fortifications and ports such as Valdivia, Valparaíso and Penco so as to ensure the secure shipments of silver from Potosí to Panama. The establishment of these docks fostered food exports from Chile to Peru through Callao and brought for the first time some wealth among farmers and merchants. [147]

Wheat production steadily increased until it took control of the agricultural activity of the central valley by the 1860s, promoting the clearing of new lands and, through exports, connecting Chile with the developed world.[148] Chile had been a marginal wheat producer in an out-of-the-way zone of the planet. Nevertheless, the gold fever

144 H. González in S. Montecino, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

145 For more information on the development of Chile's northern regions see J. Podestá (2004) *La Invención de Tarapacá. Estado y Desarrollo Regional en Chile.* Iquique: Universidad Arturo Prat.

146 For further information on the development of Chile's agriculture see G. Salazar and J. Pinto, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3.

147 A. de Ramón, *op. cit.,* p. 36.

148 J. Bengoa in A. de Ramón, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

that sprung in California and Australia gave a boost to the wheat growing business around the globe. Chile, posted in such remote latitudes, had for once a preponderant position in the Pacific Ocean[149] given that the wheat market grew and that Chile's mills were top range in the world.[150] In order to facilitate the demands of wheat exports, new railways were built and sea ports were either opened or improved.[151] By 1875 the railway had connected Santiago to Concepción and by 1888 the latter with Puerto Montt, crossing the Araucanía which had been recently annexed to the national territory. It was November 23, 1913 that the first train that went from Iquique to Puerto Montt took off, a landmark in the nation's history. The construction of the railway was a milestone in Chile's progress and interconnectivity, real bridges linking isle-like lands locked in by geography.[152]

The lands to be found south of the Bío-Bío River are a particularly good example of geographical isolation and the exertion of great effort in the conquest and settlement of a territory, both under the Spanish empire and the Chilean state. To start with, Valdivia had been abandoned by the Spaniards in 1599, after the indigenous rebellion of Curalaba.[153] In 1643 Dutchman Elijah Herckmans, tried to re-settle the city but was repealed by the natives and thus forced to return to Brazil (its north-eastern region was then occupied by the Netherlands). The Dutch adventure had the effect of re-igniting the Viceroyalty of Peru's interest in the port. In 1645 a formidable expedition —the greatest yet seen in the Pacific[154]— was sent towards the south of Chile. Guarded by more than 900 soldiers, a new fortress was built on the ashes of the

[149] A. J. Bauer (1970) *Expansión Económica en una Sociedad Tradicional.* Santiago: Universidad Católica de Chile, p. 148.

[150] A. J. Bauer, *op. cit.,* p. 143.

[151] A. de Ramón, *op. cit*. p. 81.

[152] For a first hand narration of the railway construction and the opening of the Araucanía, the very entertaining and informative chronicles written by Gustave Vernior, a young Belgian engineer who worked in it, are worth reading.
G. Vernior (2001) *Diez Años en Araucanía,* 1889-1899. Santiago: Pehuén.

[153] The *Mapuche* survival in the face of a much more powerful adversary is partly due to the adoption of some of the European war 'techniques': the use of horses, metal weapons, acquisition –though scarce— of fire arms. This does not diminish the bravery and excellent war strategies shown by the Araucanians when defending their territory and their people from the foreign invaders.

[154] A. de Ramón, *op. cit*., pp. 85-86.

previous attempts[155] and it remained serving the Spanish empire until it surrendered to the rebellious Chilean troops in 1820 together with the Osorno area.[156]

Some 30 years later a colonization plan of those territories was organized mainly based on the transportation of German families, in the hope that the influx of new people would hasten the development of that fertile land.[157] In fact, the region was scarcely populated and was severely hit by earthquakes, the economic crisis prompted by the war against the Chilean patriots plus the looting and confiscation of goods that took place in the 1820 occupation. The great executives and supervisors of this migration were Vicente Pérez Rosales and Bernhard Philippi. They convinced the German authorities of fostering the immigration that approximately 20 years later meant that there were some 7,800[158] to 8,600[159] German nationals in Chile. In the surroundings of Valdivia and the Llanquihue Lake, cities were built —Puerto Montt, Puerto Varas and Puerto Octay— the forest was cleared, commerce increased and considerable industrial activity was generated, especially in Valdivia. This was due to the industriousness shown by the newcomers and also to the high economic and cultural level of a considerable proportion of the migrants.[160]

Although the *animus occupandi* of the Magellan Strait was in blueprint since the beginning of Chile's republican life, it was not seriously attempted until several facts alerted the republican governments: the voyage of the Beagle (1826-1832) and the occupation of the Falkland Islands by the British (1833) prompted important colonization expeditions. All of them were disastrous and it was only in 1848 that a stable post was established: Punta Arenas, until today one of the southernmost cities in the world. To go and live in those latitudes was a risky adventure and the Conservative governments declared it a free port, thus fostering commerce. Also the surge of Punta

155 On the reconstruction of the city of Valdivia, see J. Eyzaguirre (1973), *op. cit.,* p. 164.

156 For more information about the activities of pirates and filibusters along Chilean costs, see F. Frías Valenzuela (2001) *Manual de Historia de Chile. Desde la Prehistoria hasta 1994.* Santiago: Editorial Zig-Zag, pp. 96-102.

157 V. Pérez Rosales (1852) *Memoria sobre la Colonización de la Provincia de Valdivia.* Valparaíso: Imprenta del Diario.

158 G. Guarda (2006) *La Sociedad en Chile Austral Antes de la Colonización Alemana (Valdivia, Osorno, Río Bueno, La Unión) 1645-1850.* Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Católica, p. 70.

159 A. de Ramón, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

160 G. Guarda, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

Arenas helped to reinforce Chile's claim over the Antarctic territory, currently a sovereignty issue of great importance for this country and many others.[161]

The national migration —mainly of *Chilotes* (inhabitants of the archipelago of Chiloé) who went to work in the enormous *estancias*— plus foreign immigration, made the region a copy of Babel: Austrians, Russians, Spaniards, British and most of all Croatians, gave to the southern tip of the world a cosmopolitan air, as also happened in the Valparaíso and Iquique of the 1900s. Tough people, hardened by the bitter cold and inhospitable environment, 'the Chileans from this place are serious and reserved (…) Nevertheless, one feels the strength and steadiness of the individuals born in this unploughed land'.[162]

Until the 1970s Magallanes seemed like a different country.[163] And we could say the same about the Atacama region and the Araucanía,[164] not to mention insular Chile: Chiloé's extremely particular culture, Easter Island —located in the fringes of the Polynesia—, the Juan Fernández archipelago that inspired Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe adventures, and the extra-continental Antarctica. Nevertheless, all these regions are Chile, in spite of the persistent and pervading attempt of the central valley to present itself as the genuinely Chilean region.[165]

It is worth remembering that the Captaincy-General of Chile only included one third of the territory the country had by the end of the nineteenth century, between

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161 One of the 12 nations that signed the Antarctic Treaty System for the peaceful administration of the iced continent, Chile claims territorial sovereignty over a sash of Antarctica, overlapping with those of Argentina and Great Britain. The South American nations regard themselves as the successors to territories considered part of the former Spanish empire and acknowledge the Spanish intentions of occupying Antarctica based on the Royal Patents Charter of 24 January 1539, by means of which the Spanish King granted Pedro Sancho de Hoz the governorship of areas south of the Strait of Magellan. Even further, Argentina and Chile trace their rights to Antarctic territory to the 1493 Papal Bull Inter Caetera of Pope Alexander VI by means of which the world-spheres of influence of Portugal and Spain were demarcated. Also the 1494 Treaty of Tordesilla between the same European nations moved the boundary 270 leagues further west and is invoked as valid doctrine for territorial possession.

162 B. Subercaseaux Z. (2005), *op. cit.,* p. 275.

163 Sergio Lecaros M., (President *Compañía Manufacturera de Papeles y Cartones*, one of the biggest companies in Chile) interviewed on 11 December 2006.

164 Francisco Monge S., (Chilean cultural heritage curator, president of the firm 'Monge and Edwards Art and Patrimony') interviewed on 28 July 2010.

165 H. González in S. Montecino, *op. cit*., p. 184.

Copiapó and Concepción, plus Valdivia and its environs and Chiloé. The rest of the territory was either under control of the *Mapuche* Indians or were provinces disputed with Chile's neighbours. The central basin, a zone of the size of Uruguay, was what assured the unity of the country when the new regions were annexed. In spite of the ever present propensity to centralization, Chile's main originality

> lies in the extreme differentiation of its members. There is nothing special about variety in enormous countries such as the United States, for example; but it is miraculous in the redoubt of our planet called Chile. Everything is there: geologic baldness, harsh forest, long flower-gardens, snow and everlasting ice-drifts (…) Chile might be the most plural thing in the whole planet'.[166]

Pedro de Valdivia, Alonso de Ovalle, Gabriela Mistral are just three among many writing in praise of Chile's exceptional geographical beauty. Simón Bolívar, Juan Bautista Alberdi, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento did so extolling this country's peaceful and orderly socio-political behaviour. Section 2.3 will explore the myths and realities contained in Chile's self-image of political exceptionality.

2.3 Democratic Rule in the Nation's Self-Image

In section 2.3 I shall describe how Chile has perceived itself —from a very early date in its independent life— as an orderly place that had the benefit of political stability. A democracy almost from the start, whose National Congress is the fourth oldest in the world,[167] it was nevertheless an imperfect democratic regime. Thus, as in most early Western republican systems, only literate men with a certain amount of property were allowed to vote, a scheme that started changing towards the 1870s in line with the

[166] G. Mistral in B. Subercaseaux Z. (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 18.
The text in Spanish reads as follows: "Cuenta usted a Chile especialmente en su originalidad mayor, que es la diferenciación acérrima de sus miembros. Nada tiene de extraordinaria la variedad en los países descomunales: los Estados Unidos, por ejemplo; pero resulta milagrosa en la reducción del planeta llamado Chile. Todo está allí: calvicie geológica, selva dura, largos vergeles, nieves y témpanos últimos. (La pluralidad se confunde con el concepto mismo de la hermosura en lo que toca a la Venus-tierra,) y Chile tal vez sea la cosa más plural del planeta".

[167] The first is the British House of Commons, the second is the French Parliament and the third the American Congress. For further information see http://www.camara.cl/camara/historia_congreso.aspx

most advanced democracies at the time, the United States, France and Switzerland.[168] In addition, electoral intervention was a common procedure during the nineteenth century elections[169] and the presidential system installed in Chile, especially during the 1830s to the 1860s, was authoritarian.[170]

'Commonplaces are usually at least half true, and often more than half true'.[171] This is the case with the *cliché* that Chile was the byword for political stability in nineteenth century Latin America. Chile was perceived by the outside world as a model of political order. Tokens of it are Bolívar's Letters from Jamaica[172] and some of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's writings[173] as well as Juan Bautista Alberdi's.[174] Also foreign historians and political leaders lauded Chile's political exceptionalism.[175] In fact, Chile's democratic institutions and procedures set the country apart from several of its European counterparts and Latin American neighbours:[176] the institutional normality of their political institutions made Chileans feel proud of their small and

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168 S. Valenzuela (1985) *Democratización Vía Reforma. La Expansión del Sufragio en Chile.* Buenos Aires: Ediciones del IDES, p. 7.

169 Elecciones, Sufragio y Democracia en Chile (1810-2005), in Memoria Chilena. http://www.memoriachilena.cl//temas/dest.asp?id=eleccionesintervencion

170 La Construcción del Estado Republicano (1823-1831), in Memoria Chilena. http://www.memoriachilena.cl//temas/index.asp?id_ut=anarquiaoconstrucciondelestadorepublicano%281823-1831%29

171 S. Collier, *op. cit*., p. XV.

172 S. Bolívar (1815) 'Carta de Jamaica', *op. cit.*
The text in Spanish reads as follows: "El reino de Chile está llamado por la naturaleza de su situación, por las costumbres inocentes y virtuosas de sus moradores, por el ejemplo de sus vecinos, los fieros republicanos del Arauco, a gozar de las bendiciones que derraman las justas y dulces leyes de una república. Si alguna permanece largo tiempo en América, me inclino a pensar que será la chilena. Jamás se ha extinguido allí el espíritu de libertad; los vicios de la Europa y del Asia llegarán tarde o nunca a corromper las costumbres de aquel extremo del universo. Su territorio es limitado; estará siempre fuera del contacto inficionado del resto de los hombres; no alterará sus leyes, usos y prácticas; preservará su uniformidad en opiniones políticas y religiosas; en una palabra, Chile puede ser libre."

173 D. F. Sarmiento (1845) *Civilización i Barbarie: Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga i Aspecto Físico i Costumbres i Hábitos de la República Arjentina*. Santiago: Imprenta del Progreso, p. 4.

174 J. B Alberdi (1856) *Organización Política y Económica de la Confederación Argentina.* Paris: Besanzon, p. 104.

175 See B. Loveman (2001) *Chile: The Legacy of Hispanic Capitalism.* New York: Oxford University Press, p. 3 and A. San Francisco (2007) *La Guerra Civil de 1891.* Santiago: Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, pp. 65-67.

176 A. Valenzuela (1995) 'Chile: Origins and Consolidation of a Latin American Democracy' in L. Diamond, J. Linz and S. M. Lipset (eds.) *Politics in Developing Countries*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

unimportant nation.[177] The empire of Brazil also had a good name for stability, but it was not a republic and was a slave holding society. On the contrary, Chile's first law to strongly restrain slavery dates from 1811,[178] almost immediately after independence from Spain. By the end of the century, Chile had achieved a record of constitutional government which made it quite unique in Spanish America.[179] Its citizens were very pleased with their distinctive tradition, when its institutional stability was compared with those of 'semi savage' Latin American republics.[180] Chileans felt superior to most neighbouring republics —a judgement that was validated by the opinion of foreigners who had been to Chile and other Hispanic American countries.[181] Also news arriving into the country bringing information about the political upheaval of the neighbourhood[182] —instability in Bolivia, Peru, and Argentine being of special interest due to their proximity— made Chileans with pride.

An important question to ask is why democracy worked in Chile unlike in other countries of the region. In fact, few historical elements prior to the inauguration of the Republic of Chile look helpful when trying to understand the political development of this nation. Firstly, the creoles had a limited role in the conducting of political affairs during the colony, the main military and executive positions being held by Spaniards.[183] Thus, unlike the case in the colonies of the United States, it is not possible to say that the group that would become the post-independence political elite had experience of either self-rule, or political participation.[184] In terms of culture, the Chilean society had

177 S. Valenzuela, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

178 By initiative of a notable Chilean intellectual and politician —Manuel de Salas— the 'Freedom of Belly Act' was passed on 11 October 1811. This law stipulated that all the children of slaves born from that moment on were free individuals. Years later, on 11 October 1823, José Miguel Infante introduced a Bill stipulating the full abolition of slavery, which was approved on 24 July of that same year. At the time there were some three to four thousand slaves in Chile.

179 B. Loveman, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

180 S. Collier, *op. cit*., p. 167.

181 See E. Poepping (1960) *Un Testigo en la Alborada de Chile. 1926-1929*. Santiago: Editorial Zig-Zag and P. Treutler (1958) *Andanzas de un Alemán en Chile: 1851-1863.* Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico.

182 M. Reid, *op. cit*., pp. 22-23.

183 In fact, the only participation of Chilean creoles in the public administration was circumscribed to the city councils. http://www.memoriachilena.cl//temas/index.asp?id_ut=elcabildocolonial

184 J. Robinson, 'The Latin American Equilibrium' in F. Fukuyama (ed.) *Falling Behind. Explaining the Development Gap Between Latin America and the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 161-193. Also see M. Graham (1916) *Diario de su Residencia en Chile (1822) y de su Viaje al Brasil (1823): San Martín - Cochrane - O'Higgins.* Madrid: Editorial América, pp. 40-41. C. Welzel and R. Inglehart (2005), *op. cit.,* pp. 5-9 and pp. 40-41.

little knowledge about the European Enlightenment,[185] considered by some political theories to be necessary in the development of the nineteenth century democratic regimes.[186] Also, Chile's society was very conservative, not tending to quick changes.[187] In addition, prior to setting out on its way to democracy, the former colony had not experienced the economic development that some pundits regard as crucial in the expansion of democratic values.[188] Finally, the country did not have at that stage a developed middle class claiming for democratic prerogatives.[189]

In Arturo Valenzuela's view, the Chilean case of democratic development challenges most political theories that tackle this issue: what is clear is that there is no clear explanation applicable to it. Nevertheless, there are two aspects that Valenzuela rescues. Firstly, in Chile the first years of successful democratic practice 'over a period of time encourages the development of certain norms of political conduct and reinforces belief in the legitimacy of the rules of the game':[190] in other words, nothing succeeds like success. Secondly, in Chile —as in Great Britain— democracy developed not against the will of the conservative landed elites but at their instigation. As for the first aspect, Valenzuela argues that the successful administrations —both political and economic— of the first Presidents generated trust in the nascent state. Secondly, Portales's idea of a strong central power and presidential figure —debatable as it is— proved to be practical: it did pacify and order the nation. As regards the elite's support of a democratic republic, it also obeyed to practical reasons. After the anarchy period running from 1823 to 1831, the creoles realised that the conservative system functioned well. They experienced the benefits of forming political coalitions and negotiating through a spirit of compromise and came to realise the advantages of extending suffrage as a strategy to gain votes for their inter-elite political groupings.[191]

Although on the whole I agree with Valenzuela's views, I differ in some aspects and would add a few points. I will first mention the role played by six Chilean leaders of

185 C. Gazmuri, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
186 A. Valenzuela (1995) 'Chile: Origins and Consolidation of a Latin American Democracy' in L. Diamond, J. Linz and S. M. Lipset (eds.) *Politics in Developing Countries*., *op. cit.*, p. 83.
187 M. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
188 C. Welzel and R. Inglehart (2005), *op. cit.,* pp. 5-9.
189 M. Aylwin, C. Bascuñán, S. Correa, C. Gazmuri, S. Serrano and M. Tagle, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.
190 A. Valenzuela (1995) 'Chile: Origins and Consolidation of a Latin American Democracy' in L. Diamond, J. Linz and S. M. Lipset (eds.) *Politics in Developing Countries*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
191 A. Valenzuela (1995) 'Chile: Origins and Consolidation of a Latin American Democracy' in L. Diamond, J. Linz and S. M. Lipset (eds.) *Politics in Developing Countries*, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-91.

the emancipation period and the early Republic and then I will refer to some of the nascent nation's identity traits. As Valenzuela says, the development of a democratic political system defies quantification, being a complex process that owes much to fortuitous events and variables. In the Chilean case this has proved to be quite true. To start with, I believe that there were a few figures whose intervention or stepping down was crucial to forge a constitutional order and avoid the ills of *caudillismo*. Firstly, General Bernardo O'Higgins, undisputed leader and hero of Chile's emancipation, openly declared that he wanted to work within the legal boundaries of a constitution.[192] Three years later he voluntarily renounced his position as first Supreme Director of the nation in 1823 to avoid a possible civil war. He exiled himself to Peru where he died years later, never coming back to the country.[193] Secondly, José Joaquín Prieto, President of the Republic, military hero of the Lircay battle, voluntarily ended his constitutional period, and continued serving in the public administration as a Senator and Mayor of the city of Valparaíso.[194] Finally, Manuel Bulnes, also a military hero at the battle of Yungay (1839) against the Peru-Bolivia Confederation, served his tenure, left his office and kept on working in the public administration as Senator.[195]

At the other end of the spectrum there are two key figures in the independence war —José Miguel Carrera[196] and Manuel Rodríguez—[197] who played pivotal roles in the anti-Spanish resistance and died in tragic circumstances: the first was shot; the second, murdered. In my opinion, both figures might have endangered Chile's political stability: of rebellious temperament, individualistic and prone to operate outside the margins of law, having the economic means and ascendency over sectors of the elite, they could have become *caudillo* leaders if their early death had not prevented it. On the contrary, O'Higgins, Prieto and Bulnes, who could have easily done so, voluntarily

192 B. O'Higgins (1820) *Manifiesto del Capitán General de Ejército Don Bernardo O'Higgins.* Santiago: Imprenta de Gobierno.

193 B. O'Higgins (1823) Carta de Bernardo O'Higgins al Pueblo de Chile. Valparaíso. http://www.memoriachilena.cl/archivos2/pdfs/MC0001629.pdf

194 José Joaquín Prieto Vial (1786-1854). http://www.memoriachilena.cl//temas/index.asp?id_ut=manuelbulnesprieto%281799-1866%29

195 Manuel Bulnes Prieto (1799-1866). http://www.memoriachilena.cl//temas/index.asp?id_ut=manuelbulnesprieto%281799-1866%29

196 José Miguel Carrera Verdugo (1786-1821). http://www.memoriachilena.cl//temas/index.asp?id_ut=josemiguelcarreraverdugo%281786-1821%29

197 Manuel Rodríguez Erdoíza (1785-1818). http://www.memoriachilena.cl//temas/index.asp?id_ut=manuelrodriguezerdoiza%281785-1818%29

decided to act within the established law.[198] As mentioned above, the progression of Chile towards democracy resists scientific measurements and is a multifaceted route partly dependent on chance, casual happenings and variables, as shown by these examples. Whatever the explanations might be, the fact is that from very early on Chileans started to consider themselves as exceptional mainly as regards the rule of law and the good functioning of their republican institutions.

As will be seen in this section, Chile's first decades of autonomous life were far from pacific —it was not until the 1860s that severe disruption eased. Nevertheless, it is my view that the roles played by the aforementioned military leaders were crucial to prevent the occurrence in Chile of the dictatorships, revolutions and coups that characterized the nineteenth century political history of neighbouring Argentina, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador.[199] It is also my opinion that Chile did not have a 'lucky star': in my view, some of Chile's identity traits had an important role to play in attaining political stability. Valenzuela considers that Chileans had little or no identification with their nation up until the war against Peru-Bolivia Confederation (1837-1839).[200] On the contrary, as I have attempted to prove in this chapter, I consider that they did have patriotic affection for their land and clear idiosyncratic features, which helped to establish a stable republic. Thus, earthquakes, pirates and the Arauco war encouraged among the early settlers and their descendants a liking for order and abiding by the law. Given that the *Mapuche* dominated most of the southern lands, Chile's small territory, its fairly homogeneous population in ethnic terms, as well as the pacifying effect of the *haciendas*, also contributed to a reasonably peaceful colonial coexistence. Lastly, in my view, the post-independence survival of the Castilian-Basque elite,[201] mostly unimaginative, orderly and law abiding,[202] also contributed ultimately to the establishment of a conservative and authoritarian government that was key to achieving stable democratic institutions.

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198 A text by Bernardo O'Higgins attests to this: 'I ordered the establishment of a temporary constitution in order to circumscribe my powers until a congress was elected'. To access the whole text in Spanish, see B. O'Higgins (1820) Manifiesto del Capitán General de Ejército Don Bernardo O'Higgins. Santiago: Imprenta de Gobierno.

199 For more information see M. Reid, *op. cit*., pp. 16-27.

200 A. Valenzuela (1995) 'Chile: Origins and Consolidation of a Latin American Democracy' in L. Diamond, J. Linz and S. M. Lipset (eds.) *Politics in Developing Countries*, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

201 In other former colonies, such as Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico, the high class was severely decimated during the wars of independence. See C. Gazmuri, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

202 G. Vial (2009), *op. cit*., p. 604.

As mentioned above, political stability was not accomplished overnight. For decades the conservative and liberal political ideologies fought to gain in prominence and effective political power. It was not until the 1860s that order —the driving motto of Conservatives— and political liberty —the guiding axiom of Liberals— reached a point of reconciliation.[203] Besides, it is important to remember that, like in almost every republican democracy in the world at the time, Chileans who mattered for political purposes were educated males. In fact, the 1833 constitution bestowed the right to vote on literate men over 21 years old if married and over 25 if single, provided that they owned a given amount of assets, be they property, income or capital from trade. It is evident that in a society with such high levels of illiteracy as Chile's, the possibilities of having the right to vote were quite slim.[204]

By current Western liberal standards, a census-based republican democracy based on census has dubious democratic credentials. Nevertheless, things are quite different if we take account of world political trends of the time when we zoom in on the young nineteenth century republics. In fact, although it is quite clear there was no rule of the people as in the rule of the majority of the population, it is also true that that majority was not prepared to participate in politics by the 1830s or even 1840s.[205] Furthermore, a text published in 1861 in *Revista del Pacífico* asserts that most *inquilinos* of the *haciendas* had no idea —or had a very vague idea— of who the *Godos* and Patriots were[206] and ignored the existence of a President of the Republic, courts of justice or any higher authority beyond the realms of his land.[207] Thus it is no wonder that the only Chileans who mattered in political terms were the members

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203 See S. Collier, *op. cit*., pp. 122-144 and C. Collier and W. Sater, *op. cit*., pp. 104-124.

204 G. Salazar (2005) *op. cit.,* p. 443. Gabriel Salazar radically opposes this view, considering that "the permanent prohibition of the Patrician class to give a vote to the poorer producers and vendors or to the illiterate was an offence for people who lead a hard working existence". Given that the analysis of this highly interesting topic goes beyond the aim of the current work, it will not be possible to comment any further on it.

205 A. de Ramón, *op. cit*., p. 78.

206 Godos —Goths— was the name given to the Spaniards in Chile in the independence years. Patriots were those supporting the cause of emancipation. See the text in 'Revista del Pacífico. Publicación Literaria i Científica' (1861) Valparaíso: Imprenta y Librería del Mercurio de Santos Tornero, p. 102 in http://books.google.cl/books?id=KrkrAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA102&lpg=PA102&dq=godos+revista+del+pac%C3%ADfico&source=bl&ots=1UVrTHLbqh&sig=zOdWqetYw7uHcEg085ndJMsm-E&hl=es&ei=vXHRTNmnCoKBlAeU5em3DA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBYQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false

207 'Revista del Pacífico. Publicación Literaria i Científica' (1861) Valparaíso: Imprenta y Librería del Mercurio de Santos Tornero, *op. cit*., p. 740.

of the educated elite. Nonetheless, a century after independence the panorama had changed. The growth of a well prepared middle class, an increase in public education, foreign immigration as well as internal country-to-city migration, acted as a seed-bed for full scale democratic participation.[208]

'Posterity should feel no condescension, big or otherwise, toward the upper class Chilean writers and politicians of the early republic'.[209] What is more, Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt is of the opinion that Chile's elite was able to rule the country for some three hundred years because it did so in a non-violent way.[210] As regards electoral intervention and its systematic manipulation of the elections by the Executive, it was practised by all political sectors. In fact, once the Conservatives lost power to the Liberals in 1871,[211] it was impossible for them to gain it back due to vote-buying by the latter.

Chileans generally believe that in Chile, save for the world famous 1973 military coup, the democratic regime has never been rescinded. Although this is a misconception, there is no doubt —as shown above— that Chile's democracy is long-standing and has been quite solid,[212] both by Latin American and world standards. Thus, the assertion that Chile's political stability is just a myth —in Gabriel Salazar's opinion— [213] is, in my view, a misinterpretation of historical facts. Nevertheless, Salazar is not the only one to challenge Chile's democratic exceptionalism. Brian Loveman does not deny it, but qualifies it by saying that Chilean governments have recurrently made use of undemocratic extraordinary authority.[214]

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208 A. de Ramón, *op. cit*., p. 78.

209 S. Collier, *op. cit*., p. XX.

210 A. Jocelyn-Holt, *La Tercera*, 6 July 2008, *op. cit.*

211 In the 1860s an important reshuffling of Conservatives and Liberals took place. The Radicals made their appearance, coming from the 'red' sector of the Liberals and having close bonds with the freemasonry. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the Nationals (or Monttvaristas) took over the more authoritarian branch of the Conservatives. As for the Conservative and Liberal regrouping, members of both factions triggered the merging of Conservatives and Liberals. This was to prove quite flimsy and split apart shortly after the first Liberal President of Chile —Federico Errázuriz Zañartu— was sworn in.

212 A. Angell (2005) *Elecciones Presidenciales, Democracia y Partidos Políticos en el Chile Post Pinochet.* Santiago: Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, p. 23.

213 G. Salazar (2005) *op. cit*., pp. 14-15.

214 B. Loveman, *op. cit*., p. 3.

Joaquín Fermandois argues that Chile's democracy has functioned in blocks of time rather than as an uninterrupted continuum.[215] Thus, in the nineteenth century, from 1830 onwards, all Presidents were elected, following the constitutional ruling of the young republic. Even those who were military men remained in office for the period established by the Constitution,[216] and thus contributed to the consolidation of Chile's institutional system and to prevent the development of *caudillismo* from an early age.[217] Although constitutional governments were not interrupted, it is also true that coup attempts and conspiracies were quite frequent, not to mention Portales' assassination in 1837.[218] Also, the nineteenth century witnessed several political uprisings against the constitutional governments but none of them prospered .[219] The gravest ones took place in 1851 and 1859 and were mostly circumscribed to some provinces. Although they did not have the backing of the republican armed forces, they accounted for a few thousand dead.[220] The century ended with a short but violent civil revolution that put an end to José Manuel Balmaceda's presidency[221] and was the only such rebellion that escalated to the level of a general confrontation.

As for the twentieth century, Chile's 1920s were roaring not only because of the popular dance craze, jazz music and flapper fashion, but also political instability. Democratic rule was interrupted in 1924 when President Arturo Alessandri had to go into exile and a series of military juntas took power. 1925 saw Alessandri come back and finish off his constitutional term. It is interesting to note that this period of political turbulence, albeit triggered by Chile's problems, coincided with times of political upheaval and the advent of non-democratic regimes in other countries in Europe and Latin America, such as Spain (Miguel Primo de Rivera lead a military coup in 1923 and seized power), Italy (Benito Mussolini gained control of the government in

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215 'Joaquín Fermandois. Bicentenario II: el Cuento del Orden', *El Mercurio*, 13 July 2010.

216 José Joaquín Prieto Vial, President from 1831 to 1841 and Manuel Bulnes Prieto, President from 1841 to 1851.

217 A. San Francisco (2007) *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

218 A. Valenzuela (1995) 'Chile: Origins and Consolidation of a Latin American Democracy' in L. Diamond, J. Linz and S. M. Lipset (eds.) *Politics in Developing Countries*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

219 A. San Francisco (2007), *op. cit.,* pp. 54-55.

220 See G. Vial (2009), *op. cit*., pp. 649-650 and 657-662.

221 The civil war was not triggered by a military coup. Rather, it originated in a constitutional dispute between two political groups, the presidential and parliamentarian, which ended in a bloody confrontation when President Balmaceda approved the national budget without Congress participation.

1922 after his march on Rome) and Peru (Augusto Leguía lead a coup in 1919 and remained as President until 1929).

Back in Chile, only two years later General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo was elected President and, although democratic in origin, his tenure is generally considered to be a dictatorship. He was forced to step down in 1931 and was briefly replaced by Juan Esteban Montero, who remained in office until 1932. Once again, Chile's period of political instability coincided with a wave of coups, mainly triggered by the Great Depression. Thus, Argentina went through several military interventions from 1930 onwards; that year Peru suffered a coup led by Luis Miguel Sánchez Cerro, and Brazilian Getulio Vargas seized power in his country. These facts show that, although Chile has traditionally been isolated in the *finis terrae*, it has always been connected with world affairs. Chile is not a nation that can be fully understood by itself.[222]

In 1932 Chile witnessed a succession of very short governments jointly known as the Socialist Republic. Former President Arturo Alessandri was once again elected for the post that same year and democratic rule was not interrupted until 1973: Chile was the only Latin American nation in which open competition among political parties defined the occupancy of the presidency and congress and not coups, assassination or revolutions.[223] In fact, Chile's lack of political stability between 1920 and 1932 gave way to forty years of legally elected civilian governments. Such stability was partly achieved thanks to the role played by the Radical Party which, as a member of the ruling Popular Front left wing coalition, considerably moderated the impact of the petitions of the working class parties.[224]

The negotiation spirit of the Radicals was not a characteristic exclusive to them: it was shared especially by the Conservatives: 'used to looking attentively into every issue, to calculating its pros and cons, conservatives and radicals fit very well in the parliamentary spirit: debate, negotiation and compromise'.[225] This attitude gave way to what has been called the 'state of compromise' which can be defined as an agreement between the oligarchy, the middle class sectors already heavily involved in formal politics, and the urban popular sectors organized in trade unions. Such agreement

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222 J. Fermandois, *op. cit.,* p. 16.
223 B. Loveman, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
224 A. de Ramón, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
225 B. Bravo Lira (1978) *Régimen de Gobierno y Partidos Políticos en Chile 1924-1973.* Santiago: Editorial Jurídica de Chile, p. 56.

referred fundamentally to the strong belief of the main political currents of the need to exert political power in a shared manner and to set up a state led economic system.[226]

Brian Loveman interprets slightly differently the state of compromise. In his view, Conservatives, Liberals and some Radicals were able to win the congressional elections by ensuring votes in the countryside. Such dominance depended on the prevention of rural unionization and the keeping out of external political influence. In turn, the left wing sectors were 'allowed' to rule the country from the Presidency, always checked by the Congress. [227] Although Gonzalo Vial does not use the wording 'state of compromise', the central thesis of his posthumous book refers to Chile's capacity of reaching agreements as the bases of its political steadiness. Thus, during the Radical governments, the diverse sectors reached a consensus 'which made the country march ahead (...) It might not appear to be an optimum solution —we can even deem it the lesser evil. But everyone —except a few eccentrics— end up by accepting it since, in a given moment, there happens to be no better solution'.[228]

Whilst the equilibrium lasted —and both the Left and Right had political power— Chile's negotiated steadiness was possible. Things changed dramatically in 1964 with the advent of Eduardo Frei Montalva to the Presidency. Firstly, the Radicals lost considerable weight and could not exert their role of political hinge, the Radical Party being more pragmatic than doctrine-oriented. On the contrary, the Christian Democracy (DC, its initials in Spanish) was ideological and the Right —which voted for Frei— did not negotiate its participation in a DC tenure.[229] Thus, the pragmatism of Chile's political system of the previous four decades fell to pieces since 'consensus repels ideology because the former is **realistic**'.[230]

Although Chile had experienced violence for political reasons, several violence-free decades had gone by and the nation had developed a pragmatic style of political negotiation as practised during the state of compromise. Thus, the political polarization that brewed during the 1960s, which escalated to extreme confrontation during Unidad Popular government, resulted in the military coup of 11 September 1973

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226 A. de Ramón, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
227 B. Loveman, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
228 G. Vial (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 9.
229 See A. Valenzuela (1978) *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
230 G. Vial (2009), *op. cit.*, p. 9. The bold is from the author.

and the suicide of President Salvador Allende. Both events were like a dent in Chile's traditional politics of agreements. Allende's election had been constitutional, Chile becoming yet again 'a model', as it was 'the first Latin American country to elect an avowed Marxist as President'.[231] Nevertheless, Allende's term of office was marked by a system of governing that did not compromise with the opposition[232] and by the violation of the Constitution, which had become an 'empty shell' in the opinion of some,[233] leading to a coup and a military government.

> It is not difficult to see why the *11 de Septiembre* means so much to Chile. It was no ordinary coup. It was a massive restructuring of Chilean society, the economy and the political system. And it was achieved partly with brutality on a substantial scale. Victors and victims had profound reasons to remember the coup and its aftermath.[234]

The coup d'état —which should be understood within the context of the Cold War— created two antagonizing Chiles. Half the country believed that Pinochet had saved the country from Marxism[235] and the other half viewed the military intervention as a tragedy.[236] Thus, the 1988 plebiscite presented two positions that were almost mutually destructive and morally opposed: the Yes/No options to a continuation of Pinochet as President of the country showed not only the sharp rift that Chile had experienced since the late 1960s but it also marked the national atmosphere that would dominate democratic life well until his death in December 2006. In fact, 'the central division in Chile in the initial years after the return to democracy was still between the supporters and opponents of the military regime. This is beginning to fade in intensity but it is still present'.[237]

Moreover, although the names of Allende and Pinochet are less heard in the right-left political discourse, deep down many of the topics that it deals with relate

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231 B. Loveman, *op. cit*., p. 4.

232 Patricio Prieto S., (President TLC Consulting, company which provides legal and economic advice for the establishment of free trade agreements) interviewed on 8 July 2010.

233 J. Fermandois in A. San Francisco and A. Soto (eds.) (2003) 'Chile y el 11 de Septiembre', *Revista de Historia de Chile y América,* 2(2), p. 22.

234 A. Angell interviewed in A. San Francisco and A. Soto (eds.) (2003) *op. cit.*, p. 254.

235 'Nieto de Pinochet Hace Férrea Defensa de su Abuelo por "Derrotar al Modelo Marxista"', *La Tercera*, 12 December 2006.

236 For further readings on this topic see C. Huneeus (2003) *Chile un País Dividido. La Actualidad del Pasado.* Santiago: Editorial Catalonia.

237 A. Angell, interviewed in A. San Francisco and A. Soto (eds.) (2003) *op. cit.,* p. 254.

to the dictatorship's legacy. This was made evident by Pinochet's demise, an event that stirred up semi-buried issues. First of all, it made the front page of some of the most important newspapers around the world[238] showing that the international memory of the 1973 coup had not faded.[239] Secondly, a reshuffling of pro and anti-Pinochet feelings took place among the citizens in general: although newspapers such as *The Economist* predicted that few would mourn him,[240] thousands of people visited the former General's remains; thousands too took part of protests against him; young people, many of whom had not been born in the early 1970s, participated in either side of the dispute: the interventions of Pinochet's[241] and General Prat's[242] grandsons are a good illustration of it.

Pinochet's death showed the evolution both left and right wing politicians had undergone since the reestablishment of democracy. On the aftermath of the 1988 plebiscite and the 1989 elections, the main rightist political parties had to elucidate how much to identify themselves with the military government: The *Unión Demócrata Independiente* (UDI) was very much attuned to it and *Renovación Nacional* (RN) adhered mainly to the economic legacy of the military.[243] As time went by, both parties slowly but surely uncoupled themselves from Pinochet's figure. In fact, the last time RN and the UDI sided openly with the ex-General was in August 2000, five months after he arrived from London and was stripped of parliamentarian immunity in order to be judged for a human rights violation case. The coming accusations for more human rights abuses, the 2004 Valech report and the Riggs Bank case[244] were the final push the Right needed for a further *despinochetización* process.

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238 The news made the front page in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post, The Sunday Telegraph*, *El País* and *Clarín* among others.

239 For further information on the Pinochet case seen from overseas: A. Sepúlveda and P. Sapag (2001) *¡Es la Prensa, Estúpido, la Prensa! Cuando Chile fue Noticia…por la Razón o la Fuerza.* Santiago: Copygraph.

240 'Adiós Pinochet. The Old Dictator is Dead. Few will Mourn', *The Economist*, 10 December 2006.

241 Captain Augusto Pinochet Molina, student at the Military Academy, delivered a highly political speech in defence of his grandfather at the latter's funeral. He did so without permission of his superiors and was expelled from the Academy for it.

242 The Army's ex-Commander in Chief, Carlos Prats and his wife Sofía Cuthbert were killed by the Chilean secret police in Buenos Aires in 1974. One of their grandchildren queued up with the people who went to pay respects to the remains of Pinochet but, instead of doing so, he spat on the coffin's glass in an act of repulse towards Pinochet.

243 A. Angell (2005) *op. cit*., p. 19.

244 'El Pinochet Intimo en su Ocaso', *Qué Pasa*, 9 December 2006.

When the ex-dictator's funeral took place, public opinion wondered who would show up. That hard-core *Pinochetistas* —such as Hemógenes Pérez de Arce[245] or Iván Moreira— [246] would attend the service was no surprise. That Carlos Larraín and Hernán Larraín (then Presidents of RN and UDI respectively) would, was uncertain. Yet they were present at the memorial ceremony, a fact that shone a spotlight on the whole detachment operation of the Right. Sure enough, several leftist politicians jumped to the arena ready to fight the dangerous lions of the past: 'I do not believe in the democratization of the Right', said Carlos Altamirano, who ironically added: 'at the end of the day, we are still governed by two Larraínes'.[247] The Alianza por Chile 'is once again *Pinochetized*' declared Camilo Escalona, President of the Socialist Party (PS). 'How could it have been otherwise', he added, 'given that the most prominent actors of the Right have a personal commitment to the Army's ex Commander in Chief and held high posts during his government (...) No wonder they have hastily gone back to take cover under Pinochet's umbrella'.[248]

The aftermath of the funeral was not easy for the Left either as the issue of Pinochet's legacy was discussed at large. For the so-called *autocomplacientes* —politicians who have come to terms with the idea that the successful free market economy system which is taking Chile out of poverty was fathered by the dictatorship— the dilemma is less acute: most of them admit it as a given fact and focus on the human rights abuses sadly perpetrated during the same period, a reality that highlights their disagreement with the system. As for the so-called *autoflagelantes*, they took advantage yet again to denounce out loud those events. These politicians cannot come to terms with the economic system but are forced to live with it. Mostly led by Carlos Ominami, a former socialist senator, they believe that the Concertación should have introduced deep reforms to the economic model.[249] They criticize economic liberals within the

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[245] Mr. Pérez de Arce is a Chilean lawyer better known for his Wednesday columns in *El Mercurio*. Although many claim that his views are dated, curiously enough his blog in the newspaper's on line edition was by far the most visited and commented. He stopped writing his column in January 2009.

[246] Mr. Moreira belongs to UDI and is a parliament deputy for the Metropolitan Region.

[247] Mr. Altamirano was the President of the PS during Allende's government. His comments about the 'Larraínes' refers to the Larraín family, part of the colonial and post colonial elite and active in politics ever since. 'Carlos Altamirano: El de Lagos Fue el Mejor Gobierno de Centroderecha del Último Siglo', *La Tercera,* 5 August 2007.

[248] 'Escalona: La Derecha Ha Vuelto a Pinochetizarse', *La Tercera*, 12 December 2006.

[249] The *autoflagelante* and *autocomplaciente* tendencies in the Concertación were always present within its ranks, but came to light by the end of the 1990's when the first signs of Chile's economic slowdown appeared together with a few examples of public dissatisfaction with the Concertación governments. In 1998 the UN Development Programme (UNDP) published a report denouncing

Left and demand hiking public spending and taxes, aiming at a more equitable further economic growth.[250]

> We need a proper academic analysis of those two figures (Allende and Pinochet) before we can start talking about 'the judgement of history'. I have my own views but I do not mistake them for the verdict of history. We need more historical research and writing before we can decide —if we ever can— on the positive and negative features of the regimes over which both men presided.[251]

With Allende and Pinochet dead, the Chilean society may break loose from the past and 'be able to look at the future with more optimism and a wish for appeasement",[252] a wish very deeply felt in this land from the early times of the Spanish conquest and its brutal clashes with the natives. In fact, as will be seen below, in the summary of Chapter 2 and its conclusions, the plea for order and stability is a marked trait of this country, which sprouted in the seedbed of the embryonic nation in colonial times and developed further during two hundred years of republican existence.

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growing discontent in Chile's society as a consequence of its path towards modernization. In May 1998, sixty Concertación leaders published a document called *Renovar la Concertación: la Fuerza de Nuestras Ideas*, in which they defended the liberal stance of the coalition governments, accepting that there was a need to improve the system and a need —albeit limited— for state intervention with that purpose. Few weeks later a second document came to print, this time representing an important number of Concertacionista leaders who did not agree with views of the other group. Much more critical of the state of affairs, *La Gente Tiene Razón* —as the document was entitled— called for further social democratization and regulation of the markets. From then on, the two factions were to be known as the *autocomplacientes* (self-complacent) and autoflagelantes (self-critical). In Gerard van der Ree's opinion, both tendencies show a healthy ideological discussion within the Concertación. It is my view that, after the Concertación's defeat in the 2009 elections, both sectors have polarized their positions endangering the coalition's unity. See Van der Ree (2007), *op. cit*., pp. 279-285.

250 'Carlos Altamirano: El de Lagos Fue el Mejor Gobierno de Centroderecha del Último Siglo', *La Tercera*, 5 August, 2007.
Although Altamirano is quite retired from the political arena, he can be considered a left wing *autoflagelante*. In an interview with *La Tercera*, he was quite severe in his criticism of the Concertación saying they had embraced neo-liberalism too passionately.

251 A. Angell interview in A. San Francisco and A. Soto (eds.) (2003), *op. cit.,* p. 255.

252 'Hija del General Prats: Muerte de Pinochet Permite Mirar al Futuro con Mucho más Optimismo', *La Tercera*, 10 December 2006.

Concluding Remarks

In Chapter 2 I started by exploring the Chileans' self-perception: in spite of the difficulties to domesticate its nature and build its society, Chile was worth the effort. In fact, the European subjugators were conquered by Chile despite war, earthquakes and pirates. Moreover, although Chile offered few easy material compensations —such as gold, silver or effortless agricultural wealth— the *conquistadores* did not go away, ethnic mixing began and the *mestizo* nation started to grow. The development of the *haciendas* and of a hierarchical society; the lack of acute regionalisms, the growth of a relatively homogeneous society plus the social control of the elite over the rest of the population; and finally the advent of the Portalian state, all these factors fashioned the typical Chilean social and political trends: respect for authority and law as well as dislike for unsteadiness.

The passing of time and the pace of history also helped to create another local facet, i.e. the remoteness syndrome, a consequence of Chile's geographical isolation and its distance from world powers from colonial times up to the present era. Throughout chapter 2 I attempted to explain the national character, contradictorily reserved and introverted, suspicious of whatever appears as novel and foreign, and at the same time, yearning for news and fads from the world. Next, I went on to describe each of Chile's regions, starting by its northern rugged land, rich in minerals and with a relatively mixed population given the migratory influx of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Also the extreme south was populated by foreigners to the point of extinction of the local natives. As for the zone encompassed between the Bío-Bío and the Toltén Rivers, the former *Mapuche* region, it also developed quite out of reach from the central valley. As is evident, isolation also refers to Chile's regions, some of which are quite isolated even today, which —nonetheless— has not fostered strong regionalisms. All in all, Chile is a fairly cohesive country with a strong central state.

The last section of chapter 2 deals with the issue of democratic rule in the nation's image. In fact, not many years after emancipation, Chile perceived itself and was recognized by other nations as an orderly place that had the benefit of political stability. Having the fourth oldest National Congress in the world, it was a democratic —albeit not perfect— republic almost from the start. In fact, initially the country had a censitary suffrage system (as most democracies at the time) and has undergone dictatorships and civil wars. This notwithstanding, Chileans like to consider themselves as exceptional especially regarding the rule of law and the relative good functioning of its political institutions.

The fact of being a permanent war zone throughout the centuries because of the Arauco war imbued the whole of the nascent society with a sense of military order. In the same line, the five wars fought against other nations in the nineteenth century contributed to generate admiration for order and the military life in general. The culture of order developed further within the *haciendas* and the Portalian authoritarian frame. In addition to the culture of order and endeavour, I concluded that, though confined to the end of the world, Chile has been in contact with it mainly through trade and the traffic of currents of thought and has taken part in the world's ideological tides. Despite being an isolated place and having isolated regions, the country's regionalism is minimal, mainly due to the early progress of a fairly cohesive central zone and the existence of a mostly homogeneous *mestizo* population. As regards Chile's exceptionalism, its democracy appears to have worked: there have been fewer years of dictatorial governments and anarchy than of democratic rule.

Chapter 1 presented a synopsis of what I consider the main identity traits of Chileans. Chapter 2 introduced several historical events and circumstances that contributed to their formation, namely the development of a culture of order and endeavour, a mentality of being isolated from the world, yet in an exceptional place. In Chapter 3 I will review the establishment of neo-liberal economic policies starting in the mid-1970s and the economic, political and social transformation that they triggered. As the following chapters will show, it is possible to establish four historical ruptures in the last few decades, which account for what Chile had become by the Bicentennial.[253] Throughout Chapter 3 I will deal with the first fracture, triggered by Pinochet and his team, which broke with the bureaucratic order structured around the state, influential and politicised corporative groups and a strongly regulated market, protective of the national industry *vis-à-vis* foreign trade.

[253] E. Tironi (2005) *El Sueño Chileno: Comunidad, Familia y Nación en el Bicentenario*. Santiago: Editorial Taurus, pp. 212-220.