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

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CHAPTER 5

National Identity and Cultural Change in Modern Chile

Introduction

In the past two decades many scholars have studied the profound social and cultural changes experienced by Chilean society since the mid-1970s.¹ Most of them agree that these changes are part and parcel of modernity. As we shall see in the coming sections, some of their basic empirical indicators are changes in the structure of families, urbanization, improvement in the material well-being of the population, wider access to education, an increase in the qualified labour force and the percentage of females working outside their homes. The fact that a divorced, agnostic woman was elected President of the Republic in 2006 comes to mind when talking about a shift in attitudes in modern Chile. And the fact that the right wing candidate won the 2009 presidential election also speaks of a shift in outlook: perhaps the memory of the years that have so divided Chileans —the Unidad Popular government and the military dictatorship— may be fading away.

Chile's newly acquired modernity is uneven as material progress has not reached everyone —at least, definitely not with the same intensity. Also, the modernization process itself contains pre-modern, modern and post-modern features. The aforementioned indicators of modernity were not achieved in one single decade but are the result of a long process that exploded in the last decade. Thus, whilst some

¹ See J.J. Brunner (1988, 1989, 1990, 1995), E. Tironi (1988, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2006), G. van der Ree (2007), P. Halpern, C. Huneeus (1987, 2000, 2003), P. Navia, E. Engel, J. Larrain (2001), O. Larrañaga (2003), B. Subercaseaux S. (1996, 1999), T. Moulian (1998, 2002) among others.

modernizing processes still have a long way to go before reaching full maturity (education, for example), others have entered a second or third phase of development.² Finally, there are so many discourses about modernity that it is not possible to either circumscribe the nation's process to just one of them or fix its beginning on a certain date, as explained in Chapter 1.

As argued in Chapters 3 and 4, it is possible to identify four historical ruptures in Chile's path towards modernity in the period addressed in this thesis (1973-2010). The first one took during the military government and was studied in Chapter 3; the second was the result of the restoration of democratic rule, and was addressed in chapter 4. As for ruptures three and four, they will be studied here. Broadly speaking, the third rupture came about during Ricardo Lagos' presidency. It resulted in the partial replacement of the traditional conservative order and values. This explains events such as the massive attendance of people to the photography session organized by world famous Spencer Tunick,³ the approval of a divorce law,⁴ the discussion of homosexuality as a sexual choice, the growing awareness of several dark zones of the Chilean society, such as domestic violence, paedophilia and child pornography, as well as a renewed interest in human rights violations during the military regime. In Tironi's opinion, all these seemingly unconnected events have a common thread: the emerging society, democratic, horizontal and transparent, that judges the conduct of the elites and governing forces.⁵

The fourth and final rupture relates to the individualism brought about by the modern liberal consumer society and installed about some three decades ago. With all the positive aspects and the influx of wealth brought in by the neo-liberal system, it has also fostered feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. And this is because the old institutions that were meant to protect the citizens for life —landowners in the countryside, trade unions, state agencies, and so forth— have seen their power greatly diminished. Thus, although the establishment of a free market has triggered

² O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins (2003) *Cuánto y Cómo Cambiamos los Chilenos: Balance de una Década*. Santiago: Cuadernos Bicentenario, p. 56.

³ Spencer Tunick is an American photographer famous for his pictures of naked individuals and multitudes. On 30 June 2002 he photographed some four thousand Chileans in Santiago, who voluntarily posed unclothed in the freezing winter at very early hours of the morning. Tunick had only been able to gather such numbers of people in Australia.

⁴ The Chilean divorce law was approved in 2004.

⁵ E. Tironi (2005) *El Sueño Chileno: Comunidad, Familia y Nación en el Bicentenario*. Santiago: Editorial Taurus, pp. 214-215.

the economic development of the nation and consequent social mobility, it has also left people with the feeling of uncertainty and loneliness. As I shall suggest, it is the family as an institution that has contributed to fill in the gaps and provide most of the emotional and economic support that individuals need. Thus, it is plausible that in years to come Chileans will ask for and seek more associative and affective links, a common dream and memory.

The advent of a new century and the approach of the celebration of the Bicentennial (2010) prompted reflection, particularly as the changes undergone by this country since the 1970s have been so drastic. In this chapter, I aim to sum up those changes, describe the society that Chile is becoming, and refer to the ill feeling that emerged mainly during the 1998 economic crisis, which highlighted the antagonisms brewing for a long time because of the current modernization process. In section 5.1, I start by describing what Chile has become in the last decades, mainly tackling issues such as the liberal modernization and the development of a consumer culture. Section 5.2 shows the development of the empirical indicators of modernity, and the issue of social mobility in Chile. Although undoubtedly Chileans are better off today than ever before in the whole of the country's history, there are still a considerable number of citizens who live in miserable conditions.

Section 5.3 tackles the issue of discontent, ill feelings and antagonism within Chile. Such feelings broke out with the Asian crisis, which showed that the country's indefinite progress was not a realistic hope. The economic failures also uncovered other aspects of development that had been somehow veiled by success, such as the inefficient educational system. Finally, it is at this time of psychological unrest that the third historical break-up mentioned at the beginning of the introduction —i.e. the replacement of traditional conservative order and values— became manifest, thus aggravating the ill feelings and antagonism within the country. Finally, section 5.4 addresses the issue of Chile's quest for an identity, which led the nation to a controversial celebration of its Bicentennial.

Country image, national identity and social change, the trio of concepts addressed in this thesis, interact a great deal in Chapter 5. Social change is the underlying and most important process described throughout the chapter, every alteration needing a consequent adjustment and thus triggering a chain of transformations. Firstly, there is the accelerated conversion of Chile's traditional and conservative society into a liberal consumer society. This fundamental modification implies several others such as the growth of cities, further education of the population and general —but not universal,

and certainly uneven— access to material goods. All these factors have introduced other variations such as an increase in social mobility. The greater freedom preached by Chile's increasingly liberal society triggered a revolution in values. Political and religious authorities having lost their leading power over people, the ethics of fulfilling one's duty towards others and society has been replaced by that of further exaltation of the individual; the replacement of collective utopias by the pursuit of self-interest, has also fostered a shift in values. Although not the only strand that has changed, a value issue that generates considerable clashes is sexual ethics. The drop in fertility and marriage rates, the increase of births out of wedlock, the debate over homosexuality, etc., are probably the topics that spark the most passionate debates. All these transformation have obviously triggered an important alteration in Chile's identity and image. As mentioned in previous chapters, the nation's identity is undergoing a process of adjustment, and consumption has become a new feature in it. By contrast, the loss of several values —such as austerity— long considered as part and parcel of being Chilean, stirs doubts about how far can transformations go and not replace what has traditionally been believed to be inherent to the Chilean identity. Social studies, such as the UNDP report, have said that Chile's image is diffuse and elusive.⁶ Nevertheless, opinion polls show that Chileans perceive a national identity and image although it appears to be different from the image that the members of the nation's intellectual elite long for.

5.1 Modernity and the Current Transformation of 'Chileanness': Who Are We?

The debate over modernity in Chile has normally focused on practical and empirical rather than on theoretical aspects. José Joaquín Brunner has suggested that the publications on modernization in Chile often account for specific experiences of modernity, which aim to build up policy strategies for the achievement of such forms of modernity.⁷ Gerard van der Ree points out that this tendency is due to two characteristics of Chile's intellectuals: firstly, they perceive modernity as achievable, and thus they conduct the debate on practical rather than philosophical or theoretical terms.

⁶ PNUD (2002) *Desarrollo Humano en Chile. Nosotros los Chilenos: Un Desafío Cultural*. Santiago: LOM, pp. 67-75.

⁷ J.J. Brunner (1996) 'Tradicionalismo y Modernidad en la Cultura Latinoamericana', *Escritos, Revista del Centro de Ciencias del Lenguaje* (13-14). Santiago: FLACSO, p. 304.

Secondly, they often participate actively in national politics and thus encourage a policy-oriented intellectual creation.⁸ In fact it is not surprising that several Ministers who served under the Concertación governments should also have been members of *Expansiva*, a Concertación-prone think-tank: such was the case of Jorge Marshall, Vivianne Blanlot and Andrés Velasco. By the same token, several Ministers of Piñera's administration —namely Cristián Larroulet, Ena von Baer, Juan Andrés Fontaine and Felipe Larraín— belonged to rightwing research centres such as *Libertad y Desarrollo* and *Centro de Estudios Públicos*.

According to van der Ree, there are four main schools of thought that represent the diverse forms of modernity put forward by diverse intellectual currents in Chile. Jorge Larraín in his book *Identidad Chilena* refers to the first perspective as 'baroque modernity'. This perspective tries to recover the Hispanic and Catholic elements present in Chile as key elements of its identity, factors that should thus be present in a project of modernization. A second perspective of modernity in Chile postulates a liberal model in a social-democratic sense. A third approach is the Socialist modernization alternative which suggests an egalitarian society with a minimized role of the market and larger state intervention. The state's main duty would be the eradication of socio-economic inequality even at the expense of democracy. Finally, a fourth model put forward by Chilean intellectuals refers to a liberal modernity resembling an American style of society with a reduced state and a bigger role for the market: this would be the model present in Chile in the historical period under consideration.⁹ Lastly, I would like to insist on what I said in Chapter 1 regarding modernity: for the purposes of this dissertation modernity equates socio-economic development, as has occurred in the wealthy Western European nations. Modernity —as manifested in Chile— is mainly an economic event that brings about social, cultural and political transformations.

Liberal modernity brings about the construction of a consumer cultures —formed when a certain level of material wealth has been achieved, which permits to have many products to offer and a mass of consumers who want to get them. The birth of consumer cultures coincided with the industrial revolution, whose techniques of mass distribution helped to increase the consumption of ready-made goods.¹⁰ In fact,

⁸ G. van der Ree (2007), *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

⁹ G. van der Ree (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁰ See D. Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

the industrial era triggered the availability of an enormous number of products at low prices. In Don Slater's opinion, consumer cultures are periodically rediscovered as fields of study after certain events, the latest of which would be the advent of neo-liberalism in the 1980s.¹¹ Consumption —defined here as knowing one's needs and getting them satisfied—¹² is, on the one hand, an individualistic issue. It is also a social statement in the sense that by saying 'I need' something, it is understood that many of those requirements are expressed in order to live a certain life in relation to others. As Celia Lury puts it, 'it is through the acquisition, use and exchange of things that individuals come to have social lives'.¹³

It is generally acknowledged that consumer culture reduces social life to trivial materialism only. Although it is true that an alienating materialism can be a consequence of such cultures, I believe that they also have to do with how a group of people organizes their society, aspirations and self-individuality. Thus, material possessions also serve as expressions of group membership and help to locate or categorize others in the social-material environment: in fact, material possessions provide people with information about other people's identities.¹⁴ In fact, as stated by Paul S. Boyer, consumer cultures refer to societies in which mass consumption and production stimulate the economy and shape perceptions, desires, values and the construction of a personal identity.¹⁵ Hence, although I do not deny that consumer culture can produce mindless acquisitiveness, selfish individualism and greed, I agree with the idea that it is also associated with positive actions and constructs such as freedom and choice.¹⁶ It also implies the achievement of certain standards of material wealth for the population at large, which are necessary to live in improved conditions, as the experience of Euro-American societies attests to. In the case of Chile, the advance of a consumer society showed that the nation's proverbial poverty was not a 'necessary' national character trait but a reality that could be overcome. Chile demonstrated to itself and others that its economic inferiority was not due to unavoidable racial factors and other ominous predictions but to a set of circumstances that proved to be surmountable.¹⁷

¹¹ D. Slater (2006) *Consumer Culture and Modernity*. Malden: Polity Press, p. 1.

¹² D. Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹³ C. Lury (1996) *Consumer Culture*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, p. 19.

¹⁴ H. Dittmar (1992) *The Social Psychology of Material Possessions: to Have Is to Be*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 205.

¹⁵ P.S. Boyer, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ D. Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁷ In his famous and influential book *Nuestra Inferioridad Económica*, published in 1910, Francisco A. Encina stated that Chileans were inept as regards economic activity due to their mentality, their

Consumer culture is inextricably linked to modernity, not just a late consequence of industrialization. It is part of what is generally considered a modern person: individually free, rational and walking the path towards political liberty.¹⁸ The notion of consumer culture implies a modern society whose core tendencies are oriented towards consumption. In fact, consumer societies are mainly directed to expenditure rather than to other social dimensions such as solidarity, political participation, religion or military development. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in Chile neo-liberalism instated consumerism and a consumer society as identifying features of modernity. Based on real material and structural changes that have taken place in society, this consumerist means of experiencing modernity is more than just a cultural phenomenon. The consumerist ethos developed in Chile is related to the neo-liberal economic policies introduced by the military.¹⁹

Often criticized for its ingrained materialism and concern for ‘having’ instead of ‘being’,²⁰ the concept of consumer cultures is also contentious because it places together two ideas that seem to clash, i.e. ‘consumption’—a fairly rudimentary activity—with ‘culture’, which implies more sophisticated actions. Nevertheless, the contradiction in terms is valid only if culture is taken as ‘high culture’ reserved for the elites—and belonging to the superior realm of ideas—²¹ or as an accumulation of immutable values which cannot be subject to market exchange. In fact, what can be considered as traditional culture was reserved for a few. With modernity, culture abandons the opera house²² and hits the streets—literally and metaphorically.²³ It ceases to constitute a class marker to become a binder of social groups defined in terms of similar consumer

racial background and the education that they had received. Chile’s economic development of late proves his theories wrong. See Francisco Antonio Encina (1972) *Nuestra Inferioridad Económica*. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria.

¹⁸ D. Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 9

¹⁹ P. Silva in D. Hojman (1995), *op. cit.*, p. 119.

²⁰ Interestingly enough, different sectors of the world’s Left and Right intellectuality, as well as religious groups, reject the advent of consumer societies. Such would be the cases of Herbert Marcuse who condemned the alienation brought about by capitalism, Jaime Guzmán, who thought that consumerism triggered a dehumanizing materialism, and some progressive Roman Catholics who oppose consumption to solidarity.

²¹ J.J. Brunner (1996) *op. cit.*, p. 306.

²² Luis Orrego Luco in his *Memorias del Tiempo Viejo* comments on this issue, which is picked up in J.J. Brunner *et al.* (1989) *op. cit.*, p. 29.

²³ In the last years several world known opera singers, both Chilean and foreigners, have sang opera pieces for thousands of people in the streets. Such events have been organized by city councils for free.

patterns which single out specific and differentiated life styles.²⁴ This definition matches my definition of culture in Chapter 1: a given way of existence, shared in a society and recognizable in the lifestyles of ordinary people,²⁵ containing behavioural standards²⁶ and forming a system of attitudes, values and knowledge transmitted through generations.²⁷ Despite being different notions, culture and identity are connected given that both imply symbolic constructions through which individuals communicate—in the case of culture—and build a narrative about their selves—in the case of identity.²⁸

There is a distinct culture of youth, of women, of professionals, of yuppies, of people who tend to consume the same items—not only things of daily use such as clothes and food but also things that transcend time, such as education, opinions, group values, etc. Thus, culture merges with the city; it is present in government affairs, in politics and in society in general. It stops being just intellectual information, an enjoyment of fine arts, literature or science, to become life itself. As José Joaquín Brunner suggests, ‘the incorporation of modernity is, partly, a movement of culture in all its diversity towards the market’.²⁹ Thus, works of culture are commercialized and their production depends on what the market demands. Consequently, industrial production and culture operate together and publicity is used to finance cultural endeavours.³⁰

In my opinion, although consumption may be the leading activity in a consumer society, there is a tendency to overstate the importance of consumption in society: activities that can well be catalogued otherwise are classified as consumption. This is the case of pundits such as Helga Dittmar who, unlike Don Slater, considers almost every human act as consumption. In my view, consumption does not only refer to the acquisition of retail goods but also to activities which imply interaction with what in Chapter 1 is called high culture, i.e. fine arts, literature and so on. Such activities have been performed by humans for centuries, only that fewer people had access to them. Thus, consumer cultures—which imply a wider availability of economic means to

²⁴ J.J. Brunner *et al.* (1989) *Chile: Transformaciones Culturales y Modernidad*. Santiago: FLACSO, p. 188.

²⁵ J. Larraín (2005) *¿América Latina Moderna? Globalización e Identidad*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones, pp. 88–90.

²⁶ F.R. Vivelo in R. Wodak, R. de Cillia, M. Reisigl and K. Liebhart, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²⁷ R. Inglehart (1997) *Modernization and Postmodernization. Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 15.

²⁸ J. Larraín (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 100.

²⁹ J.J. Brunner *et al.* (1989) *op. cit.*, p. 67.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

access, for example, high culture ‘goods’— has not created the need to consume such things as music or literature but has expanded the public that wants them. I make this clarification to insist on what I said above: there is a tendency to consider that almost every activity that takes place in a consumer society is hard core consumption even though it may have existed long before consumer cultures. In addition, several of these activities can be considered as different from consuming. For example, attending church services or any religious activity may be considered as religious consumption yet—to me— this constitutes an abuse of the notion of consuming. By the same token, Chile’s traditional celebration of the *Virgen de la Tirana*³¹ could be considered as consumption of the devotion to the Virgin Mary, which, in my opinion, appears to be the wrong conclusion.

It is necessary to differentiate between forms of consumption which call for some sort of spiritual activity—as in non-material actions such as appreciating beauty—and the consumption of material goods. We can refer to the former as ‘soft consumption’ and to the latter as ‘hard consumption’. This consideration of the non-material side of consumption does not prevent the recognition of commercial activities associated with them. Thus, visiting an art gallery or reading a book are forms of ‘soft consumption’ (art and literature consumers) which also involve some sort of economic transaction (paying for the ticket to the art gallery or the book at the bookshop).

As I said before, although consumer societies have existed for some time now, they experience periodic revivals and become the centre of academic research after spearheading social changes. In the case of Chile, since the Chicago Boys introduced novel liberal economic practices, consumer culture has grown and developed, leading the country through liberal modernization patterns. The society that has risen is based on the autonomy of individuals and the freedom of the markets from a state that has renounced its traditional role of universal assistance to focus—mostly— on the fight against extreme poverty. In actual fact, the retreat of the state can be traced in fields such as the increase of private education at school and university level, private social security, privately-led health care systems, and so forth. To a certain extent, the current social mobility in Chile has less to do with governmental backing and much with personal effort, family support and real growth and expansion of the economy.³²

³¹ The devotion to *La Virgen de la Tirana* is a religious tradition of Chile’s northern region.

³² PNUD (2004) *Desarrollo Humano en Chile. El Poder: ¿Para Quién y Para Qué?* Santiago: PNUD, pp. 285-286.

Chile has become a nation in which the general interest in politics declined rapidly following democratic restoration³³ given that the country reached a general consensus on a basic political and economic organization: thus politics, participation in political parties and mass mobilization is no longer so important as it was in the past. Besides, many consider that political parties have lost their mystique and are now nothing but elite organizations with little regard for what people really think and need and eager to get jobs in the government and power for their leading members.³⁴

It is true that Pinochet's consistent rhetoric against politicians harmed the good name of politics,³⁵ but it is undeniable that there is genuine disenchantment with power politics reserved for just a few. Thus, parties have definitely lost the grip they once had on society. Nevertheless, specific candidates that have been able to show people that they work beyond political parties and seem to understand and empathize with the public, have been very successful and gained wide support, beyond the coalitions that backed them. Such have been the cases of Ricardo Lagos, Joaquín Lavín and Michelle Bachelet, politicians who were able to convey strong emotions —honesty, leadership, sympathy for the weak and poor, strength of character— on what up to now has been the main communication medium, television. Thus, what seemed a political anachronism, a personalized political style based on charismatic leadership, has proved to be a strong political feature that cuts across all the liberal modern societies producers of consumer cultures.³⁶

It is undeniable that Chileans today tend to have little participation in stable social groupings.³⁷ What is more, 66.1 per cent would not like to lead any of those groups if offered the possibility³⁸ and would definitely not participate in a public protest against any public authority or private company.³⁹ In spite of what some consider as

³³ In the 1988 plebiscite young voters between 18 and 24 accounted for 20.3 percent of the general voting population. Already in 1993 they accounted for only 13.1 percent and 3.4 percent in the 2001 elections. The information is available in the Electoral Registry <http://www.servel.cl/servel/index.aspx?channel=289>

³⁴ P. Halpern (2002) *Los Nuevos Chilenos y la Batalla por sus Preferencias*. Santiago: Planeta, p. 57.

³⁵ C. Huneeus (2003) *Chile un País Dividido*. La Actualidad del Pasado. Santiago: Catalonia, p. 215.

³⁶ E. Tironi (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 276.

³⁷ PNUD (2004) *op. cit.*, p. 30. In the same line, the findings of the UNDP 2008 report are quite astounding: 98.7 percent of respondents do not participate in political parties, 96.7 percent are not members of trade unions and 98.9 percent are not members of any professional association.

³⁸ PNUD (2006) *Desarrollo Humano en Chile. Las Nuevas Tecnologías: ¿un Salto al Futuro?* Santiago: PNUD, p. 293.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

general apathy as regards the common good of society, there are still issues that stir public opinion showing that the civil society has not disappeared. This fact is attested to by the surge of national solidarity movements in times of catastrophe, defence of the environment groups, associations to protect people from crime and groups that struggle to improve living conditions for all Chileans. It is worth mentioning two such entities, '*Educación 2020*'⁴⁰ and '*Un Techo para Chile*',⁴¹ both of them born from the grassroots of society, neither mediated nor fostered by the state. There is another issue that moves people and arouses public sympathy: the defence of consumer rights. In fact, the amount of claims registered by the National Consumer Service (SERNAC in its Spanish acronym) is constantly rising and the same happens in other entities entrusted with the protection of individuals versus governmental and private agencies and companies.⁴² What is at stake is not only a given amount of money stolen or unfairly charged to someone, but the lack of transparency and honesty.⁴³

As already claimed in the 1980s by Joaquín Lavín in his book *La Revolución Silenciosa*⁴⁴ and later on in Eugenio Tironi's *La Rebelión de las Masas*,⁴⁵ the Chilean society cannot be described without mentioning consumption.⁴⁶ This obviously relates to the vigorous expansion of the credit facilities that have allowed people of lesser means to access the goods that modernity tantalizingly offers through the media. The shopping

⁴⁰ '*Educación 2020*' sprang from the initiative of an engineering professor —Mario Waissbluth— who in 2008 denounced through the media what he considered the disastrous state of public education in Chile. He suggested that by 2020 the poorest 20 percent of Chile's children should have access to the same education excellence as the richest 20 percent. Two months after the initiative was launched, more than 25,000 people had adhered to the idea and a year later the movement was about to become a foundation with juridical status, had numerous volunteers working in the project and a Board of Directors formed by prominent Chileans. For more information visit <http://www.educacion2020.cl/>

⁴¹ '*Un Techo para Chile*' is another grassroots movement that started in 1997 when university students lead by a Jesuit priest —Felipe Berrios— undertook the commitment to build 350 basic homes in a poor area of southern Chile. By the year 2000 '*Un Techo para Chile*' had built 2000 basic homes. The project was a success and thousands of people have participated in the initiative, aiming at the eradication of camps in which many families live in appalling conditions. The initiative was exported to different South American countries. See more information www.untechoparachile.cl/

⁴² E. Engel and P. Navia (2006) *Que Gane el 'Más Mejor'*. *Mérito y Competencia en el Chile de Hoy*. Santiago: Random House Mondadori, p. 18.

⁴³ E. Tironi (1999) *La Irrupción de las Masas y el Malestar de las Elites*. Santiago: Ed. Grijalbo, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁴ J. Lavín (1987) *Chile, Revolución Silenciosa*. Santiago: Editorial Zig-Zag.

⁴⁵ E. Tironi (1988) *Los Silencios de la Revolución. Chile: la Otra Cara de la Modernización*. Santiago: Editorial La Puerta Abierta.

⁴⁶ P. Halpern, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

mall has become the new city square where people meet, take the children to play and, of course, celebrate Mother's Day and Father's Day, and is a clear example of the deep penetration of a consuming mentality. Not only do shops sell goods: politicians also do so in their campaigns when they offer medical and legal assistance, scholarships to pursue studies, fumigation of homes,⁴⁷ disinfection of pets,⁴⁸ and *domaduras*—horse round-ups—a typical entertainment in rural areas of central Chile.⁴⁹ It is also interesting to consider that on consuming, each individual projects his or her own identity and a group identity too, and that each group has several elements of consumption that symbolize the community it is nurturing.⁵⁰

The massive acquisition of electronic devices such as television sets, radios and computers has greatly widened the 'message market', and has expanded it by incorporating segments that used to be quite marginalized, such as poor families, some segments of the female population and people from the countryside.⁵¹ The modern consumer culture has somehow empowered people, allowing them to emancipate from the former leading sectors of society—often for better, but also for worse, as not every indication from an authority or leader is necessarily negative for those being commanded or led. In fact, individuals show considerable independence of opinion from old and well regarded institutions such as political parties and the Roman Catholic Church. Also investigative journalism has helped to unmask all sorts of white-collar offenders—from politicians to policemen, to ordinary citizens that abuse children, etc.—and this has made the 'sacred cows' of old lose their grip over the population.

Although 'two Chiles' still coexist—the country of the poor and the rich denounced by the opposition towards the end of the 1980s—nowadays it is more exact to speak of 'many Chiles' formed by several groupings. Following the logic of free market, the supply of produce has diversified thus replacing uniformity, fostering social diversity and individuality and diminishing the importance of collective utopias.⁵² This explains what I mentioned before, that is, the emergence of fragmented sub-cultures—youngsters, families, women, industrialists, etc.—linked by common consumer patterns ranging from clothing to education.

⁴⁷ P. Halpern, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁴⁸ Ernesto Silva, UDI winner of a deputy seat in congress in the 2009 elections.

⁴⁹ José Antonio Kast, UDI winner of a deputy seat in congress in the 2009 elections.

⁵⁰ J. Larraín (2001) *Identidad Chilena*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones, pp. 247–248.

⁵¹ J.J. Brunner *et al.* (1989) *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁵² P. Halpern, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Another interesting aspect of the culture of consumption is that it has helped to democratize society. The traditional ‘monopoly’ exerted by the higher social classes on the possession of goods and the access to services has become less severe. Even though the gaps in income, opportunities and life styles that differentiate the social strata present in Chile are still considerable, the democratization of consumption has contributed to blur in some way the edges between social groups.⁵³ With more and more people having access to cars, computers, holidays and trips overseas—which some 15 years ago were clear indicators of luxury—are today also the domain of the middle classes, partly thanks to credit cards. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Chile, but has become a world trend Chilean trend, as once exclusive brands—such as Mercedes Benz and Armani—have developed more accessible products to expand their markets.⁵⁴ As we shall see in section 5.2, the *Nuevos Chilenos*, the new Chileans that have emerged from the consumer culture developed in the country from the mid-1970s onwards, adhere to a whole array of novel values, consumption being one of them. Thus, as I said in Chapter 1, it has been a long time since we could say that Chileans were austere.⁵⁵

5.2 Los “Nuevos Chilenos”: New Values and New Cultural Reality

Section 5.1 suggested that most studies addressing the issue of Chile’s modernization have had a clearly practical inclination. This thesis is not an exception and also deals with this issue from a pragmatic perspective. Hence, section 5.2 shall examine the appearance and development of certain tangible indicators of modernity which attest to the development of that sort of present cultural ethos and way of living in Chile. This country has experienced an accelerated—albeit uneven—economic growth and modernization process. In fact, while many people have been able to get out of poverty, thousands of others have not. Also, although 99 per cent of young Chileans are able to read and write,⁵⁶ the differences in quality of education in the public and private system are enormous. Thus, Chile’s development since the mid-1970s has a bitter-sweet aftertaste as social mobility has increased, but deep poverty and social differences remain.

⁵³ ‘Luces y Sombras de la Nueva Sociedad Chilena’, *La Tercera*, 22 October 2006.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ F. Villegas, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁵⁶ http://www.unicef.org/spanish/infobycountry/chile_statistics.html#56

The definition of modernity as the transformation of traditional societies has multiple reading and interpretations —almost as many as the authors that have written about it. Nevertheless, there is some degree of consensus among scholars as regards the existence of certain empirical features which confirm the advent and development of modernity, such as urbanization, improvement in the material well-being of the population, wider access to education, an increase in qualified labour force, women working outside their homes and changes in the structure of families, among several others. That modernity had ‘arrived’ in Chile became evident in the 1990s when diverse and long-standing tangible and intangible processes emerged, thus confirming that Chile was experiencing high levels of socio-economic development, which in this thesis equates modernity. Nevertheless, even though the emergence of so many characteristics common to modern and modernizing nations does not imply they develop in an identical way, as they have a wide variety of cultures and institutions.⁵⁷

The urbanization process is one of these indicators. In Chile, the strongest country-to-city migratory movement took place between the 1940s and 1980s with its peak during the 1960s and 1970s. Towards the 1980s it started stabilizing and ten years later Santiago, the main migratory centre, stopped receiving important population influxes.⁵⁸ What happened then in terms of urban development was an increase in the population’s stability: people not only ceased to move towards the cities but also within the cities themselves. ‘*No me cambio ni de casa ni de barrio*’⁵⁹ was the saying by Zalo Reyes, a Chilean singer that was famous in the 1980s. His motto was at the same time populist —meaning that he would not change his lifestyle even when fame and money were knocking at his door— and realistic as Conchalí, the inner city area where he lived, was becoming a respectable working class area. In the last ten years Conchalí has become a middle class residential sector. In its adjacent zones, some of which lodge sophisticated entrepreneurial complexes, real estate developments have been rising steadily. By the same token, areas of Peñalolén, La Florida, Puente Alto, Macul (which have been traditionally working class sectors) have experienced important urban transformations that attest to the noticeable improvement of the living condition of the population in general.

⁵⁷ R. Inglehart, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁵⁸ O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁵⁹ I won’t leave either my house or my neighbourhood.

For those experiencing the rapid upwards social mobility of the 1980s and 1990s, moving to more prosperous urban districts ceased to be necessary as prosperity literally hit home and schooling and employment begun to be available in almost every place. The increasingly smaller groups of people who refuse to settle down form part of elites who have accessed higher levels of education and employment than their milieu. Thus the patterns of urban mobilization have shifted drastically. It is no longer the city poor that look for places that offer less unfit living standards, but better qualified workers that look for improved living conditions.⁶⁰ Some cities have not stopped growing in size, but this is not necessarily due to external migration but the fact that more families own or rent homes. The 2002 national census showed 30.6 per cent⁶¹ increase in the number of homes in a ten year period, which greatly contributed to reduce overcrowding. These data are confirmed by complementary information: in the same period, homes housing less than two people per room rose from 58.5 per cent to 73.9 per cent.⁶² The 2002 census also showed that 95 per cent of Chilean homes sheltered one single family.⁶³ These data show a considerable reduction in overcrowding. Also the quality of the buildings has improved: 90.7 per cent of the population resides in solid dwellings compared to 81.1 per cent in 1990.⁶⁴

There has been an improvement in home furnishing: 82.1 per cent of Chilean households have refrigerators; 78.8 per cent have washing machines and 87 per cent colour television sets; and over 51.5 per cent have phones.⁶⁵ Finally, whereas in 1992 21.6 per cent of the population had a car by 2002 35.2 per cent owned one.⁶⁶ What also shows spectacular advances is the acquisition and use of information technology (IT):⁶⁷ between 1989 and 2004 the number of mobile phone owners rose from five thousand to 9 million⁶⁸ and internet users went from 250 thousand in 1997 to almost 4.8 million in 2004.⁶⁹ Also, there are areas that have improved so greatly that there is little space to keep doing so. Such is the case of infant mortality, malnutrition and

⁶⁰ E. Tironi (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁶¹ CENSO 2002. Síntesis de Resultados, <http://www.ine.cl/cd2002/sintesisencensal.pdf>, p. 37.

⁶² O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁶³ CENSO 2002. Síntesis de Resultados, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁶⁴ O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁶⁵ CENSO 2002. Síntesis de Resultados, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁶⁶ O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁶⁷ As access to IT is not normally mentioned in sociology texts I studied as a separate modernity indicator, in this thesis I include it in the improvement of the general living standard of the population.

⁶⁸ PNUD (2006) *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

other poverty related health matters. Improvement is quite marginal as the indexes have been very good for many decades now, as happens in developed nations. These figures are good examples of the second empirical indicator of modernization, i.e. the general improvement of the material wellbeing of individuals and their living standards and the people are aware of such upturn. As pointed out in the 2004 UNDP report, 67.1 per cent of respondents consider that they themselves and their families live in better conditions than in 1994.⁷⁰

Education has also expanded, reaching almost the entire population at primary and secondary schooling level.⁷¹ The new national educational goal appears to be higher education: although the number of people accessing university or technical professional training has risen —2.7 per cent of the population in 1952,⁷² 16.1 per cent in 1990⁷³ and 37 per cent in 2003⁷⁴— there is still a long way to go before reaching mass or near universal professional training: in fact government forecasts predict that by 2012 almost one million youngsters between the ages of 18 and 24 —i.e. only 50 per cent of that age group— will get some form of higher education.⁷⁵ Furthermore, many years will elapse before the parent-children gap in terms of instruction is bridged: current studies show that the parents of two out of three higher education students have a lower educational floor.⁷⁶ Education is directly related to the transformation of the working force. In fact, skilled workers are on the rise, as it is easier for those with higher education level to find a job.

According to Brian Loveman, the female labour force's share by 1970 amounted to approximately 25 per cent.⁷⁷ Thirty years later the percentage had risen. In fact, according to the 2002 census, the women's workforce share amounted to 35.6 per

⁷⁰ PNUD (2004) *op. cit.*, p. 289.

⁷¹ L. Mires and H. Rivas, (2003) Los Principales Cambios Socio-Económicos de Chile en la Década 1992-2002, *Revista Estadística y Economía* (23). Santiago: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, pp. 9-12. Also see O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁷² O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ PNUD (2004) *op. cit.*, p. 273.

⁷⁵ 'Educación superior en Chile'. Ministerio de Educación.
http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningal/images/stories/presentaciones/chile_doc.pdf, p.4.

⁷⁶ O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁷⁷ B. Loveman (2001) Chile: *The Legacy of Hispanic Capitalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 337.

cent.⁷⁸ Rises in educational standards, a drop in fertility rates,⁷⁹ the availability of home appliances that facilitate the household chores, are some of the reasons that explain the upswing in females working outside home. Nevertheless, the Chilean rates for this indicator are quite low by world and Latin American standards. Part of the problem is due to the lack of a comprehensive child care system: although it has extended considerably, it still benefits only a small portion of society. Furthermore, although there has been a change in the traditional gender roles within the family, women still take on their shoulders most domestic tasks, a fact that is acknowledged by women and men alike.⁸⁰

In the end women who have a full time job outside their homes, tend to have a full time occupation at home too.⁸¹ This greatly raises their levels of stress and unhappiness.⁸² As this fact shows, the shift in gender roles in Chile is not quite smooth, but it is definitely taking place. For example, some patterns have changed sharply over the past decades precisely because of this fact: as many more women prioritise their professions, fewer are getting married and if they do so, it is later in life. The same can be said of maternity, which is postponed, and of fertility rates which have been consistently dropping since the 1960s. These facts have led to a transformation of families, which have been evolving from extensive family groupings, with at least three generations under the same roof, to the nuclear groupings centred on a couple and their children or a couple with no offspring.⁸³ The changes experienced within the family will be analyzed in greater detail later on.

Within consumer culture the social order that attributes an inherited fixed status to individuals disappears. Upward or downward social mobility is a matter of personal income and there is no law that guarantees that people will have a certain social level

⁷⁸ The year 1992 female labour force participation was 28.1 percent. O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁷⁹ According to some estimates, if fertility rates keep dropping, by the year 2050 Chile will have a population of 19 million. The number is quite small considering that the population in 2010 was approximately 17 million. See 'Sergio Melnick: Santiago y el Bicentenario: Mucho Cuerpo, Poca Alma y Nada de Futuro', *Qué Pasa*, 28 February 2009.

⁸⁰ Encuesta Nacional Bicentenario Universidad Católica-Adimark (2008). http://www.adimark.cl/medios/Encuesta_Nacional_Bicentenario_08.pdf, p. 82.

⁸¹ PNUD (2002) *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁸² 'El 60% de las Santiaguinas Se Sienten Estresadas por su Carga de Responsabilidades', *El Mercurio*, 11 July 2007. Study conducted by Clínica Las Condes.

⁸³ L. Mires and H. Rivas, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

throughout their life and that of their children. This has happened in Chile in the past 15 years. The seed was planted in the 1970s and 1980s and the economic growth of the 1990s brought the democratization of consumption, the expansion of the middle class and an increase in the purchasing power of the poor. People started to believe in and live by the idea that a life of hard work and personal effort leads to social betterment and that the social class in which a person was born is not predetermined.

Three of the interviews conducted for this dissertation illustrate these points. The women to whom I talked to were born into poor families who originally lived in rural areas. Mercedes Hermosilla⁸⁴ was the eldest of thirteen children, María Guzmán's⁸⁵ parents had twelve children and Jaqueline Aburto⁸⁶ was adopted and grew up as an only child. The three of them ended up living in Santiago where they got married. Mercedes had no children whilst María and Jaqueline had two each. The three women were able to finish school and access technical education where they were trained as carers of babies and elderly people, a well-paid job: they charge approximately CLP\$25.000 per day, some US\$ 50. Mercedes and María own their homes. The three carers' children and/or several of their nephews have been able to access higher education, some having attended university. Thus, María's eldest son is a lawyer and Jackie's daughter is an English teacher. The three women understand perfectly well that things have changed in Chile in such a way that they, who were brought up in poor families, are now part of a forceful middle class. Mercedes specifically relates those changes to Pinochet's government, which she approves of in economic terms and condemns for human rights violations.

Mercedes Hermosilla, María Guzmán and Jaqueline Aburto have been able to move upwards socially speaking but they know their situation is not guaranteed. And this is also valid for those born to humble families and those blessed by fortune from birth. In fact, in recent years Chile has seen an expansion in its 'millionaires club', who also struggle relentlessly to preserve and increase their wealth. Nowadays, approximately 4,000 families have assets for more than US \$1,000,000 and some 600 of them for over US\$ 5,000,000.⁸⁷ It is for them that helicopters and planes, as well as other luxury products, have arrived in the country. Although these figures are quite indicative of the

⁸⁴ Mercedes Hermosilla, (baby carer) interviewed on 30 May 2009.

⁸⁵ María Guzmán, (baby carer) interviewed on 7 October 2009.

⁸⁶ Jackelin Aburto, (baby carer) interviewed on 28 November 2009.

⁸⁷ Since 2000 the multinational Boston Consulting Group publishes an annual report of world wealth. The figures of Chilean millionaires are available there.

economic transformation of Chile, the families of millionaires account for only 0.09 per cent of the total population.⁸⁸ Much more impressive and important is what has happened to the great majority of the Chilean population. As already indicated in the first section of this chapter, the living standards of the vast majority of Chileans have improved greatly in the last 30 years, particularly after the 1985 economic expansion. Although the subprime crisis of 2008 and the February 27th, 2010 earthquake shattered many of these dreams, until 2006 about 70 per cent of the population believed that it would climb up the social ladder throughout their lives and 92 per cent believed that their children would lead a better life than themselves.⁸⁹ Two years later, that is once the crisis had broken out, people were less optimistic. But still 53 per cent thought that they would improve their living standards, only that this might take longer.⁹⁰

It is generally agreed that social mobility has been possible due to the 30 per cent increase in real wages in the past 10 to 15 years⁹¹ as well as to a wider access to education. In fact, approximately 70 per cent of the students attending university are the first generation to do so in their families.⁹² These facts explain the important growth experienced by the middle classes, which is increasingly related to the private sector of the economy. Following the privatization of public enterprises during the 1980s and 1990s, the state had fewer jobs to offer, i.e. there were fewer positions traditionally to be filled by the middle classes. This contributed to a change in the characteristics of these groups, which were somehow pushed into the new consumer, free market society and became mainly an urban class, hooked to the means of communication that have developed consumer habits like those of the middle classes of industrialized nations.⁹³

Although the enrichment of so many people in Chile is certainly positive, it is also true that not everything is so bright. It is undeniable that the whole country has

http://www.bcg.com/SearchResults/ViewSearchResults.aspx?page=1&sort=date%3aD%3aL%3ad1&filter=0&output=xml_no_dtd&access=p&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&start=10&num=10&q=annual+report+world+wealth.&search_type=basic&numrecs=95&site=bcgsite

⁸⁸ 'Luces y Sombras de la Nueva Sociedad Chilena', *op. cit.*, 8 October 2006.

⁸⁹ 'Luces y Sombras de la Nueva Sociedad Chilena', *op. cit.*, 15 October 2006.

⁹⁰ Encuesta Nacional Bicentenario Universidad Católica-Adimark (2008) *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁹¹ 'Luces y Sombras de la Nueva Sociedad Chilena', *op. cit.*, 15 October 2009.
PNUD (2004) *op. cit.*, p. 273.

Income per families from 1990 to 2003 have increased 73 percent in the Great Santiago area and 65 percent in the regions of Magallanes, Aisén and Coquimbo.

⁹² 'Luces y Sombras de la Nueva Sociedad Chilena', *op. cit.*, 15 October 2009.

⁹³ P. Halpern, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

grown in economic terms, but it is also irrefutable that this growth has not been even. Although income distribution has improved in the past ten years,⁹⁴ the difference between the rich and the poor is considerable; 41 per cent⁹⁵ of the national wealth concentrates in the hands of the wealthiest 8 per cent⁹⁶ to 10 per cent of the country.⁹⁷ The concentration of wealth is not the only —or the major— problem in the uneven development of so many nations around the world. In fact, there are nations with a more equal wealth distribution —such as Peru— but with far fewer possibilities of social mobility and much larger portions of their population living under the poverty line. In fact —although this situation may change in the coming years due to Peru's successful economic performance— the inflow of poor Peruvians into Chile looking for a brighter future is such that some speak of the formation of a new social segment in Chile, that of Peruvian immigrants. Thus, if a society with a less unbalanced accumulation of wealth does not ensure improved social mobility, then what is the problem if some have a lot, even if they are few?

The dilemma lies in the fact that such levels of inequality imply the existence of severe flaws in the social and economic organization of the country. In fact, poor quality education, a persisting lack of pre- or in-service qualifications and less access to credit all greatly diminish the possibilities of having better incomes.⁹⁸ These factors affect the economic growth of a country, its political and social stability and good labour relations.⁹⁹ In the opinion of the Executive Director of *Fundación para la Superación de la Pobreza*,¹⁰⁰ Leonardo Moreno, in Chile the acute socio-economic differences attest to a deep inequality of opportunities. For example, in Santiago the wealthiest urban sectors have access to more green areas and parks even though several of the people living there have access to private gardens. Also, more policemen guard their streets instead of watching over zones with far higher crime levels. In Moreno's opinion, this is not the fault of the wealthy and the problem is not necessarily solved by increasing

⁹⁴ 'Distribución del Ingreso Logra su Mayor Mejoría desde 1990', *La Tercera*, 29 June 2007.

⁹⁵ B. Loveman, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

⁹⁶ Leonardo Montes, (Executive Director *Fundación para la Superación de la Pobreza*) interviewed on 30 November 2009.

⁹⁷ A. Solimano and M. Pollack (2006) *La Mesa Coja. Prosperidad y Desigualdad en el Chile Democrático*. Santiago: CIGLOB, p. 64.

⁹⁸ A. Solimano and M. Pollack (2006) *op. cit.*, pp. 77-79.

⁹⁹ A. Solimano and M. Pollack (2006) *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ For more information see <http://www.fundacionpobreza.cl/>

taxes. Rather, the problem lies in a deficient system of distribution and access to opportunities of development, which are facts that demand better public policies.¹⁰¹

The other dark zone of economic growth and social mobility is the existence of an important number of people that have not been able to progress and still live under the poverty line. This issue is a matter of much debate because it is a political topic. Despite the good will of several left and right wing politicians, as well as confessional and lay organizations, entrepreneurs and academics, all of whom sincerely long for the elimination of poverty in the country, it has been very difficult to reach a consensus on how many people live in poverty and the means to get them out of it. On the one hand, there are political sectors that still blame Pinochet and the Chicago Boys for neglecting the poor, forgetting that it was the introduction of a market economy that allowed the subsequent socio-economic development experienced by the country since the 1980s. Also, as social justice has been one of the main battle flags of the Concertación, the representatives of their governments do not easily accept a frequent criticism in the sense that the measurement standards that they used to assess the levels of poverty were dated, and thus tended to make the real problem seem less serious as, by these standards, not all the poor were considered as such. Finally, in recent years the right wing Alianza sectors have somehow stolen the banner of defenders of the poor. So, instead of the Concertación and the Alianza joining forces and ideas to fight poverty, there has been an increase in clashes. Hence, although the politicization of the 'topic' of poverty is positive in the sense that it keeps it in the public agenda instead of shutting it away,¹⁰² it is negative in that the lack of consensus is an obstacle to the clarification of policies to put an end to such a scourge.

The important question to be addressed now is how many poor live in Chile and the answers differ substantially from one source to another. The official figures—to be found in the 'National Characterization Socio-economic Survey'—CASEN in the Spanish acronym, conducted every three years by the Ministry of Planning— suggest that by 2006 13.7 per cent¹⁰³ of Chileans lived under the poverty line, this is 2,208,937 people. Of that figure, 1,692,199 correspond to poor people who earn approximately

¹⁰¹ Leonardo Moreno, (Executive Director *Fundación para la Superación de la Pobreza*) interviewed on 30 November 2009.

¹⁰² Mauricio Rosenblüth, (Research and Public Policy Director *Fundación para la Superación de la Pobreza*) interviewed on 30 November 2009.

¹⁰³ Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica (CASEN) 2006
<http://www.mideplan.cl/casen/publicaciones/2006/Pobreza.pdf>

\$50,000 pesos a month (some US\$ 100) and 516,738 who are indigent, that is, they live with less than \$24,000 pesos per month (some US\$ 50). These results were considered quite positive as the results of the previous CASEN, which appeared in 2003, showed that Chileans living under the poverty line added up to 18.7 per cent of the total population. If compared with Mideplan's studies of 1990, the improvement has been considerable, as poverty fell by 24.9 percentage points from 38.6 per cent¹⁰⁴ of the whole population to the aforementioned 13.7 per cent. In addition to the CASEN survey there are other studies whose results can differ quite substantially basically because the methodology used in them is different.¹⁰⁵

Probably one of the most interesting debates on the issue of how many poor there are in Chile took place in 2008 between the Ministry of Planning and the study conducted by the economist Felipe Larraín,¹⁰⁶ who blamed the ministry for using obsolete methods to measure the levels of poverty. In fact, the CASEN methodology considers a basic food basket contrasted with the income of those being surveyed, the result of which is the purchasing power of respondents. The study conducted by Larraín used exactly the same methodology except for one aspect: the food basket both studies considered is that of the National Statistics Institute,¹⁰⁷ only that MIDEPLAN still uses the 1987-1988 version of the Survey on Household Budgets whilst Larraín used the version released between 1996 and 1997. The difference in the results is substantial: if CASEN 2006 talked about 2.2 million poor, that is 13.7 per cent of the total population, the study conducted with the updated information states that 29 per cent of Chileans live in poverty, i.e. some 4 million. Interestingly, the study conducted by Larraín was based on data gathered by a reputed national institution that fights poverty, *Fundación para la Superación de la Pobreza*, which is partly funded by the government. Both its Executive Director, Leonardo Moreno, and its Research and Budget Director, Mauricio Rosenblüth, think that there are far more poor in Chile than indicated by CASEN 2006, although the foundation prefers not to conduct a parallel study to

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ To illustrate this point I took three studies on poverty published on the internet and compared their results. I made the calculations with an estimated population of 16,000,000 for Chile in 2003. The results were as follows: CASEN 2003: 3,008,000 poor, i.e. 18.8 percent of the population; Cepal 2003: 3,760,000 poor, i.e. 23.5 percent; Adimark 2003: 3,248,000 poor, i.e. 20.3 percent of the population.

¹⁰⁶ F. Larraín (2008) 'Four Million Poor in Chile: Updating the Poverty Line', *Estudios Públicos* (109). Santiago: CEP, pp. 101-148.

¹⁰⁷ INE in its Spanish acronym.

replace the official figures.¹⁰⁸ Definitely lack of agreement on the issue of poverty and the fact that some Chileans lead a first-world nation life whilst many others live in appalling conditions introduces a tensioning factor in Chile's peaceful coexistence, which will be explored in the coming section.

5.3 Thesis-Antithesis: the Quest for a Bicentennial Chile within Antagonising Forces

In the previous sections I outlined the recognizable features of neo-liberal modernity and the consumer society in Chile. Nevertheless, one should not draw the wrong conclusion that Chile's transformation in the last decades has been straightforward, like an arrow shot by an expert archer that cannot but hit its target, i.e. development. On the contrary, the modernization phase has encountered not only ups and downs because of the external and internal economic context but also bitter antagonisms among the elites that have thought out the changes and conducted them. There are also natural or spontaneous conflicting feelings, responses and attitudes that arise within the wider population when many of Chile's traditional institutions and values are being shaken from their very roots. For example, there is the controversy that took place by the end of the 1990s on what several intellectuals regarded as the ill feelings to be found in Chile due to the characteristics of its fast liberal modernization, and also a second controversy on the dismantling of the value system prevailing in the country until few years ago. In fact, the debate around issues such as divorce, abortion or homosexuality, has tended to divide the nation thus contributing to the controversial celebration of its Bicentennial.

The achievement of development has been one of the dearest wishes of the nation through its last hundred years of existence, a frustrating quest at the heart of several political proposals. As Antonio Cándido said, until the first decades of the twentieth century the predominant notion as regards Latin America's development considered its nations as 'new countries', i.e. states with still unfolding histories full of possibilities. Nevertheless, as those promises did not always materialize, what began to sink in

¹⁰⁸ Leonardo Moreno, (Executive Director *Fundación para la Superación de la Pobreza*) interviewed on 30 November 2009.

Latin America's self-consciousness was the notion of frustrating underdevelopment.¹⁰⁹ Chile was no exception to this view.¹¹⁰ In fact, one of the reasons for the bitter feelings surrounding the celebration of the Centennial was that, in spite of the immense wealth brought in by the 30-odd years of nitrate trade boom, towards 1910 the nation was still poor, with a per capita income that had started tumbling down quickly. Far from being catapulted towards development Chile saw its hopes for improvement totally thwarted.¹¹¹ Together with the economic downturn came the time of *autocrítica de Chile*, as Mario Góngora called the wave of ill feelings that sprang around the change of century described in Chapter 2.¹¹² Interestingly, a hundred years later the ill feelings have once again entered the scene, spreading a depressive outlook on the celebration of the Bicentennial. And the reasons are quite similar: Chile has touched development, as described here, but the Asian and subprime crises as well as the devastating February 2010 earthquake, have made the Chileans realize that progress is neither indefinite nor to be taken for granted.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ A. Cándido (2000) 'Literatura y Subdesarrollo' in César Fernández Moreno (ed.) *América Latina en su Literatura*, Mexico City: Siglo XXI (UNESCO), p. 335.

¹¹⁰ See A. Pinto (1959) *Chile, un Caso de Desarrollo Frustrado*. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria.

¹¹¹ According to one account of the nitrate wealth, the Chilean state earned an immense wealth through taxes, which set the foundations of a statist national mentality, quite different from what had been predominant during the previous decades. In fact, the wealth paid into the state permitted the establishment of a protectionist industry, a large bureaucracy and fostered state clientelism. For further information on this line of analysis see M. Rojas (2007) *Diario de un Reencuentro. Chile Treinta años Después*. Santiago: El Mercurio-Aguilar, pp. 103-104.

¹¹² M. Góngora (1986), *op. cit.*

¹¹³ Interestingly, Sebastián Piñera's website for the 2009 presidential campaign made a comparison with the spirit of the Centennial celebration. The web page reads as follows: ¿Qué Ataja el Poderoso Vuelo? Hace más de 100 años, cuando Chile se aprontaba a celebrar su primer Centenario de vida independiente, Enrique Mac Iver, desde las tribunas del Ateneo de Santiago, pronunció un discurso que quedó grabado a fuego en nuestra historia. El destacado político denunciaba entonces: "Me parece que no somos felices"; y agregaba: "La holgura se ha trocado en estrechez; la energía en laxitud; la confianza en temor; las expectativas en decepciones". ¿Por qué Chile parecía haberse detenido? ¿Y qué había atajado el poderoso vuelo que había tomado la República?, se preguntaba. Poco más de un siglo después, y a punto de celebrar el Bicentenario, nos asaltan interrogantes similares: ¿Qué ha sucedido con la promesa de llegar al año 2010 como un país desarrollado y sin pobreza? ¿Dónde está el crecimiento sólido y las promesas de promover la innovación y el emprendimiento? ¿Qué ha ocurrido en Chile que los delincuentes nos atemorizan día a día arrebatándonos calles, plazas y parques? ¿Dónde ha quedado nuestra admirada tradición de eficiencia y probidad en el servicio público? ¿Cuándo las envenenó la incompetencia y la corrupción? ¿Cuándo y por qué Chile perdió el liderazgo? ¿Por qué volvemos a tener un desempleo que afecta a casi 750.000 compatriotas?"

Voices of discontent have risen from diverse sectors of the nation. Those groups who have left poverty behind panic when they face the possibility of losing what they have achieved with so much effort.¹¹⁴ And even if things do not evolve so negatively, they find it frustrating to be moving forward at a slower pace now that they have tasted the goods of modernity. What also irritates the middle class is the Chilean education system.¹¹⁵ Chileans have come to believe that education is the springboard to social mobility—as do the three baby carers mentioned in section 5.3—and thousands of parents have made heavy sacrifices to allow their children to access an education that will take them and their families not only out of poverty but into undreamt-of lifestyles. Regrettably, what the inefficient public system—and not for lack of economic means—has done is to reproduce and increase the social inequality mentioned in 5.2 as has been repeatedly shown by diverse national examinations. For example, 2009 was characterised by the strikes of school teachers, which meant that the students from the public system who sat the university admission test¹¹⁶ in November had had fewer classes to prepare for the test than the students from the private sector.¹¹⁷ Thus, their performance was poorer and once again it was the teenagers coming from wealthier families that got accepted at the best universities and the top degree courses.¹¹⁸

Delinquency is another topic that greatly worries the whole population, cutting across all class divisions. Criminality rates have increased steeply in the past years. Less threatening to the population, but still a menace, are the anti-systemic groups that have emerged in the last five to ten years. The Chilean Neo-Anarchists, who

¹¹⁴ María Guzmán, (baby carer) interviewed on 7 October 2009.

¹¹⁵ President Michelle Bachelet practically inaugurated her administration with the biggest student protest ever seen in Chile. During May and June 2006 thousands of secondary school students went on strike in protest for what they considered to be bad quality public education. This was known as the ‘penguins protest’. The movement was quite eclectic in terms of ideology and many youngsters did not have a clear idea of what they were fighting against or asking from the government. Nevertheless, the movement showed what everyone knew in the country: that in spite of the abundant resources spent in the public education system, it had proved unable to provide quality education, thus increasing the rift between the high quality private schooling system existing in the country and the public system.

¹¹⁶ PSU: Prueba de Selección Universitaria.

¹¹⁷ In fact, the students from the public system who sat the university admission test in 2009 are often called the lost generation since they spent a considerable part of their high school education in demonstrations. For more information see ‘La Generación Perdida de la PSU’, *La Estrella de Valparaíso*, 24 November 2009.

¹¹⁸ In fact, from the 100 schools with best performance in 2010 PSU, only three were public and three partly state-funded; the other 94 were from the private sector. For more details see <http://static.latercera.com/200912/644201.pdf>

have seldom heard of Mikhail Bakunin, are vague left-wingers with minimal political ideology: they oppose authority, hate the police forces and any type of organized government. Frustrated by the current social order, often jobless, they appear on key days —such as ‘the day of the young fighter’ or on September 11— wreaking havoc and destruction.¹¹⁹ All this adds to the feeling of insecurity, personal defencelessness and depression.¹²⁰ The withdrawal of the state from so many aspects of public and private life has highlighted the role played by other institutions that might replace it, basically, the mass media and the Roman Catholic Church.¹²¹

Between the late 1990s and early 2000s several works interpreting the transformation of the decade were published. Most of them can be grouped along four lines of interpretation¹²² which reflect the antagonism produced by the advent of liberal modernization as well as the malaise triggered by the Asian crisis. Felipe Larraín¹²³ emphasises the continuity of the economic system and the similarities with that implanted by the Chicago Boys. The same is argued by Tomás Moulian¹²⁴ and Alfredo Joignant¹²⁵ but under an absolute opposite perspective: they basically deny any positive aspect of the changes of the 1990s which they consider as a spurious continuation of Pinochet’s regime. A more positive outlook is presented by an alternative interpretation of those times, its main exponents being Manuel Antonio Garretón,¹²⁶ Paul Drake, Ivan Jaksic¹²⁷ and Felipe Agüero.¹²⁸ They acknowledge the advantages of democracy

¹¹⁹ ‘Manual del Encapuchado’, *El Mercurio*, 6 September 2006. The day of the young combatant —celebrated every 29 March— was inaugurated in remembrance of Rafael and Eduardo Vergara Toledo, two brothers and members of the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR). The Rettig Report states that they were killed in 1985 by state agents. With the passing of time the memorial date has degenerated into days of vandalism.

¹²⁰ Interestingly enough, in 1995 The World Health Organization declared Santiago to be ‘the world capital of depression’. See ‘Psiquiatras Explican el Alza de la Depresión’, *El Mercurio*, 15 June 2006.

¹²¹ PNUD (2004), *op. cit.*, p. 287.

¹²² E. Tironi (2005), *op. cit.*, pp. 141–149.

¹²³ F. Larraín and R. Vergara (eds.) (2000) *La Transformación Económica de Chile*. Santiago: CEP.

¹²⁴ T. Moulian (2002) *Chile Actual. Anatomía de un Mito*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones.

¹²⁵ A. Joignant (2002) *Los Enigmas de la Comunidad Perdida. Historia, Memoria e Identidad Políticas en Chile (2000–2010)*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones.

¹²⁶ M. A. Garretón (2000) *La Sociedad en que Vivi(re)mos, Introducción Sociológica al Cambio de Siglo*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones.

¹²⁷ P. Drake and I. Jaksic (eds.) (1999) *El Modelo Chileno. Democracia y Desarrollo en los Noventa*. Santiago: LOM Ediciones.

¹²⁸ F. Agüero (2002) ‘Chile: Unfinished Transition and Increased Political Competition’ in J. Domínguez and M. Shifter (eds.), *Constructing Democratic Governance*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

but think it is characterized by authoritarian enclaves and a longing for past times of wider social participation. A third line of interpretation, which follows a more sociological analysis is presented in the 1998 UNDP report.¹²⁹ Acknowledging the benefits of material progress, this report shows concern for the fissures of culture and community bonds in Chile. Finally, Edgardo Boeninger,¹³⁰ Cristián Tolosa and Eugenio Lahera,¹³¹ Ernesto Ottone, Crisóstomo Pizarro¹³² and José Joaquín Brunner¹³³ acknowledge the achievements of the new democratic-market system and are quite hopeful of its future development.

The intellectual debate described above sums up the attitudes and opinions of the main lines of thought in Chile by the 2010 Bicentennial celebrations. That Chile is no longer the rising star of South America¹³⁴ is a reality generally agreed on, as the economy has never been able to perform at a pre-1997 level. Nevertheless, and although higher levels of pessimism have sunk in, as a consequence of the slower pace of economic growth from 1998 onwards, there are still optimistic voices as regards the society that Chile has become and its capacity to transform lives for the better. Thus, the 2004 UNDP report findings makes it clear that most people think that in Chile today there are more chances of studying, accessing material goods, setting up a private business and expressing one's view than ever before.¹³⁵ The study published by PUC-Adimark in 2008 shows that 57 per cent of respondents believe that Chile will have better education and achieve the status of developed nation (58 per cent) by 2018¹³⁶ and 53 per cent trust that their economic situation will improve, although not at a fast pace.¹³⁷ Obviously, once the crunch of the Asian crisis was over, people tended to recover faith in the system. Hence, whereas in the 2002 UNDP report 55 per cent of the people considered themselves as losers within the market system and

¹²⁹ PNUD (1998) *Desarrollo Humano en Chile. Las Paradojas de la Modernización*. Santiago: PNUD.

¹³⁰ E. Boeninger (1997) *Democracia en Chile Lecciones para la Gobernabilidad*. Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello.

¹³¹ C. Tolosa and E. Lahera (1998) *Chile en los Noventa*. Santiago: Dolmen Ediciones.

¹³² E. Ottone and C. Pizarro (2003) *Osadía de la Prudencia. Un Nuevo Sentido del Progreso*. Santiago: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

¹³³ J.J. Brunner (1998) 'Malestar en la Cultura, ¿de qué Exactamente Estamos Hablando?', in *Revista de Estudios Públicos* (72). Santiago: CEP, pp. 173-198.

¹³⁴ 'Michael Reid: Chile Era la Estrella de América Latina', *Qué Pasa*, 21 February 2009.

¹³⁵ PNUD (2004) *op. cit.*, p. 289. Answers to question 45 state that in today's Chile there are more opportunities to study (73,3 percent), to access material goods (63,1 percent), set up a private business (53,7 percent), express one's view and live as one wants (57.0 percent).

¹³⁶ Encuesta Nacional Bicentenario Universidad Católica-Adimark (2008) *op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹³⁷ Encuesta Nacional Bicentenario Universidad Católica-Adimark (2008) *op. cit.*, p. 33.

thus disapproved of it,¹³⁸ the 2006 PNUD report showed that 62.6 per cent considered themselves as winners.¹³⁹ However, this was followed by the subprime crisis: once again pessimism sank in and a more deteriorated scenario was envisioned, some publications announcing the end of the Chilean model.¹⁴⁰ It seems that those predictions were wrong as Chile's economy was able to recover from that troubled period.

There are also voices complaining about the shift in values experienced in Chile. Although brewing for several years, this became apparent in the 2000s. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, some point out that it was specifically during Ricardo Lagos' administration. The concept of values is ample. What it refers to here pertains mainly to the traditional-conservative Christian view, with most of the dissenting voices concentrating on issues such as family, life and religion. On a second level, it also alludes to what the traditional-progressive Left has cherished as valuable: solidarity, austerity, control of nature —and thus of the market— by human reason.¹⁴¹ Both visions have undoubtedly been questioned by society. This is not surprising if modern capitalism is seen as a doer and destroyer, a big machine that at the same time wipes out and creates material things, values and life styles.¹⁴² Definitely, modernity is an 'ambiguous enterprise that, on the one hand, frees human energies as it multiplies the possibilities of being, doing and knowing. On the other hand, it creates a social environment that menaces with destroying everything'.¹⁴³

Christian Welzel and Ronald Inglehart argue that modern societies bring about favourable existential conditions, which help them to shift from survival values to self-expression values. This means that when basic needs —such as food, accessing education and health care— are covered, people tend to pay attention to less material principles centred on subjective well-being and self-expression values derived mainly from an increasing autonomy from authority.¹⁴⁴ It is in this context that Chile's traditional standards have shifted and resemble what David Harvey calls the postmodern

¹³⁸ PNUD (2002) *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹³⁹ PNUD (2006) *op. cit.*, p. 233.

¹⁴⁰ 'El Fin del Modelo Chileno', *Punto Final*, 19 March 2009.

¹⁴¹ E. Tironi (1999), *op. cit.*, p. 215.

¹⁴² J.J. Brunner (1988) *op. cit.*, p. 175.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ C. Welzel and R. Inglehart (2005) *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: the Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 29 and 37.

value fragmentation.¹⁴⁵ It is necessary to say that although several of these changes are positive, often leading to more humane societies, history teaches us that thoughts and ideas are neither innocent nor innocuous.¹⁴⁶ In fact, socio-economic development as achieved in Chile has a bittersweet taste, which is not surprising if we consider that development has both positive and negative effects on the different segments of the population,¹⁴⁷ as the following passages suggest. Moreover, the findings of positive psychology research appear to indicate that several of the trends that developed in Chile may not necessarily lead Chileans to a happier life.¹⁴⁸

That Chileans attribute the greatest importance to family is out of the question. When asked about their main source of happiness, protection and emotional support, most respondents answered that it was their families.¹⁴⁹ What is more, 94 per cent of young respondents declare that they have full trust in their parents and 72 per cent also trust their relatives.¹⁵⁰ In a society that has become more aggressive and competitive, with less state protection for the individual and less community bonds, the family is resorted to as comforting refuge and panacea, which can be quite dangerous. On the one hand, studies about the levels of happiness of different nations show that those societies with strong family bonds tend to be happier and cope better with the demands of modern life: Chile would be such case.¹⁵¹ On the other hand, the fact that the family is so well evaluated does not mean that it is well prepared to cope with such expectations and demands. In fact, there is a general belief that Chilean families are in crisis, given the increase of divorce, the decline in number of people who get married¹⁵² or do so later in life,¹⁵³ the fairly large amount of grandparents who are forced to take care of their young grandchildren whilst their teenage daughters try to finish school

¹⁴⁵ D. Harvey, *op. cit.* He organizes in tables (pp. 174-79 and p. 221) the shift of values in the post modern era.

¹⁴⁶ B. Subercaseaux S (1999) *op. cit.*, p. 35.

¹⁴⁷ A. Y. So, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

¹⁴⁸ S. Lyubomirsky (2008) *The How of Happiness*. New York: Penguin Press.

¹⁴⁹ 'La Felicidad, Aquí y Ahora', *Revista Capital*, 19 May 2006 -31 May 2006.

¹⁵⁰ 'Concertación Boys. Encuesta de Participación Social de Jóvenes 2009 Periodismo UDP-Feedback', *Qué Pasa*, 16 October 2009.

¹⁵¹ 'La Felicidad, Aquí y Ahora', *Revista Capital*, 19 May 2006 - 31 May 2006.

¹⁵² 'Hijos Nacidos Fuera del Matrimonio Duplican a los Nacidos de Parejas Casadas', *La Tercera*, 18 July 2009. Between 1960 and 1992 50 percent to 52 percent of the whole population was married. By 2002 only 46 percent. For further analysis on these issues, see E. Valenzuela, S. Schwartzman, A. Biehl and S. Valenzuela (2006) *El Eslabón Perdido. Familia, Modernización y Bienestar en Chile*. Santiago: Taurus, pp. 226 and 255.

¹⁵³ E. Valenzuela, S. Schwartzman, A. Biehl and S. Valenzuela, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

or look for a job,¹⁵⁴ the wider acceptance of couples living together with no formal bond,¹⁵⁵ the decrease of births in general and the increase of births out of wedlock.¹⁵⁶

Although some claim that the family is undergoing a deep crisis, other voices say that Chile has never massively adhered to the traditional family style, i.e. two parents and their children. On the contrary, single-parent families, often headed by a woman, have been the most common feature throughout Chilean history, especially in the lower classes.¹⁵⁷ Regardless of what type of family has been predominant in Chile, what is in crisis is the traditional conception of family. What is suggested by some national intellectuals is that families are not univocal realities but flexible, optional¹⁵⁸ and heterogeneous kinds of associations that consider themselves as families.¹⁵⁹ Whatever the case, the changes observed in these associations —home to people related by blood or adoption bonds— are currently in the eye of the storm. These associations serve as economic supporters and take care of the elderly and children, and of over-worked women that have full time jobs at home and away. They somehow make up for weaker or less durable links between parents, with the series of consequences this has in the emotional formation of children, etc.

The causes of the changes in the family—which also contravene Christian-conservative and Left-progressive values— can be tracked down to the agents of change of all liberal societies: flexible labour markets, consumerism, and post-modern hedonistic morals that weaken personal links as they imply sacrifice. They are societies that oppose ideas such as duty in a rigorous sense, and praise self-autonomy and the pursuit of

¹⁵⁴ '500 Mil Niños Son Criados por sus Abuelos', *The Clinic*, 23 July 2009.

The newspaper article states that some 500,000 grandparents have to take care of the offspring of their own children. The rise is considerable if this figure is compared with the data to be found in the year 2002 census that registered only 150,000 grandparents doing so.

¹⁵⁵ E. Valenzuela, S. Schwartzman, A. Biehl and S. Valenzuela, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

¹⁵⁶ 'Hijos Nacidos Fuera del Matrimonio Duplican a los Nacidos de Parejas Casadas', *La Tercera*, *op. cit.* During 2009, children born out of wedlock (some 60,000) were more than those born to married couples (30,000). Interestingly enough, Mauricio Rosenblüth explained that in *Fundación para la Superación de la Pobreza* they have come to the conclusion that in the last years several of the teenagers who fall pregnant do it on purpose. The reason for doing so is that in the harsh and hopeless environments that they live in, maternity gives them some dignity. Thus, the figure of the young girl who got pregnant by accident and was abandoned by the male is no longer totally valid.

¹⁵⁷ For more information see E. Valenzuela, S. Schwartzman, A. Biehl and S. Valenzuela, *op. cit.*, chapter 1.

¹⁵⁸ PNUD (2002) *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁹ O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

individualistic happiness. It is not extreme *carpe diem* —as in eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die— but it also rejects costly responsibility: ‘we seek respect for ethics without a mutilation of ourselves and excluding difficult obligation: a spirit of responsibility, not unconditional duty’.¹⁶⁰ It is in this context that a society that in 1990 rejected abortion, the morning-after-pill, homosexuality, suicide, prostitution, divorce and euthanasia in almost absolute terms, now fully justifies second marriages and is more tolerant of same sex couples.¹⁶¹ The acceptance of the other realities remains low or very relative, especially as regards abortion,¹⁶² but none of them is universally rejected, as was the case in the early 1990s.

It can be concluded that changes in terms of moral values have occurred slowly if compared to the accelerated transformation of the country in other fields. This situation may or may not change, as Chile —like the United States— has an important containment barrier, i.e. religion. This idea coincides with Christian Welzel’s and Ronald Inglehart’s studies in the sense that the secularization of modern societies does not always occur. In their view, although the authority of established religions has declined, spiritual concerns do not disappear, they even become more widespread.¹⁶³ The behaviour of Chileans is in line with this assertion. Thus, there are very low levels of church attendance¹⁶⁴ —closer to European patterns at least among Roman Catholics—¹⁶⁵ Chileans show high levels of belief in God,¹⁶⁶ the devil,¹⁶⁷ miracles,¹⁶⁸ the Virgin Mary and saints. In the 2002 census 85 per cent considered themselves Roman Catholic,¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁰ G. Lipovetsky (1994) *El Crepúsculo del Deber: La Ética Indolora de los Nuevos Tiempos*. Barcelona: Anagrama, p. 48.

¹⁶¹ See World Values Survey 2006 at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/statistics/WVSQuestRoot.pdf>

¹⁶² Encuesta Nacional Bicentenario Universidad Católica-Adimark (2008) *op. cit.*, p. 91. Although abortion is rejected in absolute terms by 53 percent of respondents, 40 percent accept it under certain circumstances.

¹⁶³ C. Welzel and R. Inglehart, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁶⁴ 75 percent does not go to church regularly, PNUD (2002) *op. cit.*, p. 33.

80 percent does not go to church regularly, PNUD (2004) *op. cit.*, p. 298.

¹⁶⁵ ‘¿Es Chile un País Cristiano?’, *El Mercurio*, 2 April 2006.

¹⁶⁶ Approximately 94 percent believe in God (94 percent according to ‘Retrato Hablado de Dios’, *La Tercera*, 23 December 2007 and 93.9 percent according to Encuesta Nacional Bicentenario Universidad Católica-Adimark, 2006 www.tironi.cl/inicio/codigo.php?documento=Encuesta_Nacional_Bicentenario_07.pdf)

¹⁶⁷ 78 percent believe in the Devil, ‘Retrato Hablado de Dios’, *La Tercera*, 23 December 2007, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁸ 72 percent believe in miracles, 65 percent believe in the Virgin Mary, and 55 percent believe in saints. Encuesta Nacional Bicentenario Universidad Católica-Adimark (2008) *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁹ O. Larrañaga, E. Tironi, E. Valenzuela, D. Bravo, B. Teitelboim and V. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

which attests to a modernizing society but not a secularized one. Still, Catholics have shown a strong tendency to disapprove of what have been the traditional moral values and teachings from the hierarchy, thus constituting ‘rebel children’ of the Church. As the Church will almost certainly not yield on those issues, it remains to be seen how many Chileans will still say that they are Catholic in the 2012 census.¹⁷⁰ The issue is important not only in terms of values but also because it is directly connected with Chile’s identity. The questions asked in the coming section relate to such issues: how much can Chile change before it stops being Chile.

5.4 A Nation in Search of a Collective Identity

In my view, whilst the year 2010 approached—thus getting closer to Chile’s Bicentennial celebration—three important questions about the future of the country were pending, namely, what does it mean to be Chilean today, when is Chile going to be considered a developed nation and what will happen to the modern, liberal, free market oriented system implanted in the mid-1970s (will it continue or will it be altered). The answers are very elusive and definitely not univocal. Firstly, current Chile is so much in the making that it is almost impossible to say what will become of it in terms of identity. Some ideas will be advanced here. Then, the so longed-for full development status is being constantly pushed further away: global crises that affect our economy and alleged jamming economic policies implemented during the last Concertación governments are said to be slowing the pace. Finally, the idea that ‘the model has to be changed’ became dominant during the electoral campaign in 2005: both Concertación and Alianza candidates pointed out that the system should be altered particularly as regards bad income distribution.

It seems pertinent to recall some aspects of what I defined as national identity in Chapter 1. On the one hand I consider that there are several historical features—traditions, languages, shared historical memories, a territory considered to be national—which are traces of a nation’s identity. This view is compatible with the creation of myths mainly by stressing and selecting historical facts and imagining some

¹⁷⁰ Besides the issues mentioned above (divorce, contraception, etc) it is quite astonishing to see that 50.7 percent of Roman Catholics think that women should become priests and 48.2 percent think that priests should marry—issues that are very much against core teachings of the Church in its Latin tradition. ‘A Dios Rogando y con el Mazo Dando’, *El Mercurio*, 2 April 2006.

aspects of the national community. Thus, a nation's identity deals with realities that exist independent from subjectivity and it also entails an intellectual and symbolic construction.¹⁷¹ The 2002 UNDP report concludes that Chile has both a diffuse and non-convincing image and identity and that very few nationals seem to be proud of their country. This assertion contrasts sharply with PUC-Adimark 2006 findings which show that 77.5 per cent of respondents feel strongly identified with Chile.¹⁷² Perhaps the difference of opinion is due to the recent blow of the Asian crisis when the report was published. This relates to Jorge Larraín's assertion in the sense that it is in times of crisis that countries evaluate their identity.¹⁷³ Another explanation for the difference between the UNDP's conclusions and those of ordinary citizens may be that we are facing a dissociation between what the national *intelligentsia* and the 'commoners' think. In my opinion this may be due to the fact that the UNDP research is directed by left-wing thinkers, who, as we shall see here, find it difficult to accept the positive aspects of the neo-liberal system and society that the Concertación has contributed so decisively to anchor. Whatever the case, the fact is that the approach of the Bicentennial is a good time to reflect on what the country is and what it is not after 30 odd years of fast-track social changes, introduced during two markedly different historical periods, the Unidad Popular era and the advent of the military dictatorship.

As Eugenio Tironi argues, countries with a strong identity consciousness have invested considerable intellectual energy in developing national myths.¹⁷⁴ Such myths are not pure inventions; they are based on historical realities, but require a level of selection of facts that are remembered and facts that are forgotten. Chile has enough historical events —some of them referred to in this dissertation— of which to feel very proud and many episodes on which to elaborate a myth. In Juan Gabriel Valdés' opinion, one of the reasons why Chile does not build up a forceful narrative about its history and achievements is the natural modesty of the people and a fear of the governments to be perceived as arrogant by the surrounding countries.¹⁷⁵ Also Chilean intellectuals seem to find it uncouth or uncivilized to feel positively about their own nation. Thus, just like American patriotism is considered naive or French pride always

¹⁷¹ See B. Subercaseaux S. (1999) *op. cit.*, p. 46 and J. Larraín (2001), *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁷² Encuesta Nacional Bicentenario Universidad Católica-Adimark (2006) *op. cit.*

¹⁷³ J. Larraín (2001) *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁷⁴ E. Tironi (2005), *op. cit.*, pp. 288-290.

¹⁷⁵ J. G. Valdés Soubllette (2009) 'La Asignatura Pendiente de Chile', *op. cit.*

chauvinistic, to accept that Chile has valuable identity traits is just too simple.¹⁷⁶ Once again, there might be a rift in between what the elites and what average citizens think, as shown by the same PUC-Adimark study quoted above, which claims that 82.2 per cent of Chileans are proud of their nation's history and 74 per cent consider it to be the best country to live in Latin America.¹⁷⁷

Does Chile have a 'dream' as the United States has? It seems as if many immigrants —especially Peruvians— thought so as they keep moving to Chile in search of a better life. Certainly a dream can be built up on the idea of a land of possibilities, particularly given the revolutionary changes studied here. The idea is not to deny the black episodes of the nation's past but to correct them and learn from them. Thus, for instance, Carlos Huneeus and Jorge Larraín point out that a trait that has arrived to stay in Chile's culture is respect for human rights.¹⁷⁸ Taking this as given, the task ahead would be to look for episodes that identify Chile as a nation, highlighting aspects that are part of a historical continuum —such as respect for law, inclination towards order and the existence of strong institutions. Although it may hurt the sensibilities of some members of the Chilean intellectual elite, what neo-liberalism and liberal modernity have brought to the country, is probably one of the main issues to be tackled when re-thinking the Bicentennial Chilean myth.¹⁷⁹

As mentioned above, the idea that the neo-liberal model has to be altered became part of the 2005 presidential campaign of the Concertación and the Alianza. In fact, the same as the Left 'stole' free-market ideas from the Right, the Right seemed to have appropriated equity issues from the Left. Thus, in 2005 both right wing candidates to the Presidency, Joaquín Lavín and Sebastián Piñera, reproached the Concertación governments for not having obtained what they had so often promised, i.e. growth and equality and promised to do it themselves even if it called for more state intervention. Nevertheless, although during the 2009 presidential campaign the idea of changing the system was present in some of the Concertación and Alianza candidates speeches, their specific proposals conformed to the system. Thus, Sebastián Piñera's proposals were conservative, and he did not recommend anything that did not fall within market

¹⁷⁶ In the past years several young historians have published books and papers in which they revise what has been the traditional view of Chile's founding fathers, from the colonial period onwards, stripping them of most of their merits.

¹⁷⁷ Encuesta Nacional Bicentenario Universidad Católica-Adimark (2006) *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁸ C. Huneeus (2003), *op. cit.*, pp. 167-204 and J. Larraín (2001) *op. cit.*, p. 225.

¹⁷⁹ E. Tironi (2005), *op. cit.*, pp. 287-312.

economy orthodoxy.¹⁸⁰ As for Eduardo Frei's proposals, under the heading of 'against the abuses of the market'¹⁸¹ in his website—which could have suggested radical and progressive initiatives—the candidate advocated for increased market competition and controlling monopolies, measures that are very much in the spirit of neo-liberalism. Then, under the heading of 'transparency in the health system'¹⁸² Frei proposed that the health plans of the ISAPREs¹⁸³ should be standardized so that the consumers could compare between the different institutions. Thus, as can be seen, both Frei's proposals were quite within the liberal orthodoxy.

As equity issues are now being taken into account by left wing and right wing sectors alike, the question is whether suddenly all Chilean political sectors—with parliamentary representation—have become social democrats, seeking the eradication of poverty through wider governmental intervention. Yet, and up to now, what has prevailed in the governmental actions and speeches is that the state should keep helping the poor to improve their situation and promote 'equality of opportunities' for the rest of the population investing in education and health care.¹⁸⁴ Eduardo Engel and Patricio Navia think that more than this is needed: the only way to really achieve a society based on merit rather than contacts or birth, is to foster impartial competition—an even football pitch to ensure a fair match—¹⁸⁵ eliminating 'market distortions' in areas such as political parties, labour markets, education, etc. Given that all political sectors agree on the need to improve social equality in Chile, it appears to be almost certain that the quest for social justice—understood as the promotion of non-discriminatory practices—will be part of the name-tag of the nation to come.

The findings of the World Bank Human Opportunity Index¹⁸⁶ published in 2008 are quite revealing in terms of the importance of the levelling of opportunities for the children of the countries being studied. In fact, the report reveals that between one fourth and one half of income inequalities observed among Latin American and

¹⁸⁰ <http://pinera2010.cl/programa-de-gobierno/>

¹⁸¹ <http://efrei.cl/laspropuestas/contra-los-abusos-del-mercado>

¹⁸² <http://efrei.cl/laspropuestas/transparencia-en-salud>

¹⁸³ *Instituciones de Salud Previsional* –ISAPRE– are a private health insurance that has been operating in Chile since 1981.

¹⁸⁴ G. van der Ree (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 287.

¹⁸⁵ E. Engel and P. Navia (2006) *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹⁸⁶ To see the World Bank's Human Opportunity Index, access.

<http://web.worldbank.org/wbsite/external/countries/lacext/0,,contentmdk:21915630~pagepk:146736~pipk:146830~thesitepk:258554,00.html>

Caribbean adults are due to the unequal access to basic services during childhood and other circumstances —such as gender, race, birthplace, parent’s educational level— that were beyond their control. In the case of Chile, the study reveals several inequalities. For example, only 1 per cent of the population that has a better income comes from families whose parents have little education.¹⁸⁷ The study also shows that 80 per cent of those who are economically successful were educated in Santiago and only 20 per cent in the regions.¹⁸⁸ Thus it is not surprising that Chile’s main political forces should highlight the importance of levelling opportunities among the nation’s people. Although the fight against hard-core poverty will undoubtedly be a main concern, as the possibility of dying poor is ever-present in Chile, the country’s development offers enough room to pay attention to other issues such as, for example, that every young person who shows talents for sports, arts or science should not be prevented from developing her or his talent for lack of money.¹⁸⁹

Up to now there has been a national consensus on the need to support and preserve the neo-liberal system as the path to development and the ultimate elimination of poverty. Nevertheless, the strong discomfort brewing at the heart of the Concertación may bring a sharp shift in years to come. In fact, some left-wingers look embarrassed at what their governments have achieved, and look down on their own work.¹⁹⁰ ‘Many hope for the dismantling of the system, not its administration. This urge has increased as a result of the slowdown of economic growth and the increase of unemployment’.¹⁹¹ Given that the subprime crisis has been worse than the Asian crisis —which is what the author I have cited refers to— it is to be expected that such urge may keep on developing.

As Oscar Guillermo Garretón has pointed out,

For some time now several Concertacionistas seem to be blind, as they keep denying what has been achieved. It means they deny themselves, reject twenty years which constitute an important portion of their lives and the existence of the parties they support...

¹⁸⁷ Human Opportunity Index, World Bank in.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/lacinspanishext/Resources/Cap5_Desigualdad_Oportunidades.pdf

¹⁸⁸ Human Opportunity Index, World Bank in.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/lacinspanishext/Resources/Cap5_Desigualdad_Oportunidades.pdf

¹⁸⁹ E. Engel and P. Navia (2006) *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁹⁰ P. Halpern, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁹¹ E. Tironi (2002) *El Cambio Está Aquí*. Santiago: La Tercera-Mondadori, p. 109.

Will they say they never agreed to what their governments did? That during twenty years they were forced to act as they did?...Such an attitude would be understandable if the Concertación administrations had been a failure, but no. (On the contrary), the improvements are impressive'.¹⁹²

Some time ago, these ideas were to be expected from the self-flogging sectors of the Concertación that cannot come to terms with the original sin of Chilean liberalism. They regard with nostalgia the politics of the 1960s and early 1970s with its rhetoric of popular participation and state intervention. Thus, it is not that surprising that someone like Camilo Escalona should describe businessmen as “bloodsuckers”.¹⁹³ It is more disconcerting when harsh opinions come from moderate leftist sectors that blame businessmen for the crisis and for the rising levels of unemployment. ‘It is not that entrepreneurs are angels, but it is evident that without them, and with high levels of freedom, the current system does not work. In spite of this, a favourite target of the Concertación grassroots —especially its left wing sectors— are businessmen and business activities’.¹⁹⁴

As for the Right, as we shall see here, it is not as if their coalition has no conflict. Firstly, as mentioned in Chapter 3 the Alianza parties have been increasingly detaching themselves from Pinochet’s figure, his death in 2006 coming as a blessing in disguise. The trend has gone so far that the UDI refused to support his daughter Lucía Pinochet’s candidacy at the 2008 municipal elections; she finally had to run as an independent candidate. The same happened with his grandson Rodrigo García Pinochet, who also ran —and lost— as an independent candidate for Congress. Although Pinochet’s relatives’ candidacies did not bring about a rift in the Right, they produced some concern. The appearance of people like Pinochet’s daughter and grandson —who are voted for by right-wingers— gives the Concertación the perfect excuse to keep accusing this sector of still being attached to a dictatorial past.

If the Pinochet factor still divides the Right, it is more in the sphere of values that some of the major disagreements take place. Interestingly, although not a homogeneous movement, the ideological differences between its two main parties —RN and

¹⁹² O. G. Garretón: ‘Un País Está Terminando’, *La Segunda*, 18 August 2008.

¹⁹³ ‘Felipe Bianchi: Chupasangres y Explotadores. Carta Abierta al Compañero Escalona’, *The Clinic*, 8 September 2006.

¹⁹⁴ E. Tironi (2002), *op. cit.*, p. 109.

UDI—are not as deep as those between the parties of the Concertación. Being mainly inheritors of the two related rightist parties of the nineteenth century, respectively the Liberal and Conservative parties, typically ‘*come curas*’¹⁹⁵ the former and confessional the latter, similar traits can be found in the current organizations.¹⁹⁶ Although neither RN nor UDI are openly Catholic nowadays, the latter tends to align with Christian values (not with the clergy though) whilst the former is much more liberal in this respect. Yet, in the last years the fissures introduced by modernity in Chile in terms of moral ideas has also hit the Right, and more transversally than in the past. Thus, with the debate concerning the acceptance of therapeutic abortion, UDI senator Evelyn Matthei¹⁹⁷ and RN deputy Karla Rubilar¹⁹⁸ declared themselves in favour of discussing the issue. As for the presidential candidates for the 2009 elections, they were all ready to legalize homosexual unions in one way or another. This was no surprise when the proposal came from Jorge Arrate, Marco Enríquez-Ominami or even Eduardo Frei. It was a bombshell when it came from the Alianza candidate. Thus, when RN senator Andrés Allamand and UDI senator Andrés Chadwick launched out of their own initiative—and not consulting with their parties—the idea of legalising gay civil unions along the lines of Piñera’s ideas,¹⁹⁹ the commotion was considerable, some UDI sectors declaring themselves in open rebellion.

As I said before, the Alianza parties have few ideological divisions. In spite of this, their confrontations and quarrels can be so bitter that at times they appear to be the worst of enemies.²⁰⁰ It looks as if such struggles are mainly due to conflicting personalities among people used to commanding. Hence, what might appear to the public

¹⁹⁵ Literally: priest-eaters. Typical Spanish expression to denominate people who are not close to the Roman Catholic Church, very specially to its clergy.

¹⁹⁶ To get a good summary of the right wing parties and tendencies, see G. van der Ree (2007) *op. cit.*, pp. 271–275.

¹⁹⁷ ‘Rossi y Matthei se Reúnen con Especialistas para Discutir Sobre Aborto Terapéutico’, *La Tercera*, 10 January 2011.

¹⁹⁸ ‘Política Stereo: Aborto Terapéutico, ¿Es Necesario Legilar?’, *La Tercera*, 14 January 2011.

¹⁹⁹ ‘Piñera Defiende Propuesta de Allamand y Chadwick para Regular Uniones Civiles’, 13 October 2004.

<http://www.radiobiobio.cl/2009/10/13/pinera-defiende-propuesta-de-allamand-y-chadwick-para-regular-uniones-civiles/>

²⁰⁰ Perhaps the nastiest clash between RN and UDI took place when a pedophilia network led by a businessman called Spiniak was uncovered. RN deputy, Pía Guzmán, accused UDI senator Jovino Novoa of being involved in it. The accusations proved to be false, but for two years—until the case was fully clarified—members of both parties fought fiercely over it with destructive consequences in terms of undermining mutual trust.

as inability to form teams and thus govern Chile as a coalition, possibly boils down to simple problems of pride and power ambition.²⁰¹ It might also be due to a further 'liberalization' of the sector opposed to the traditional party discipline of the Left. In fact, for years the Concertación was able to solve its problems behind closed doors in spite of having much deeper ideological differences than the Alianza.

Nevertheless, it was during Bachelet's tenure that deep rifts were disclosed in public. One of the groups within the coalition to show the depth of the divisions was the DC when its '*colorín*'²⁰² faction, led by the redheaded Senator Adolfo Zaldívar, left the party and joined the PRI, *Partido Regionalista de los Independientes*. Another rift came from the PPD when Senator Fernando Flores first and Jorge Schaulsohn later, left the party. They formed a new movement, called *Chile Primero* which, together with Zaldívar's party, ended voting for several laws and projects with the Alianza and supporting Piñera's candidacy in the case of the former PPD. It must be noted that two of these three prominent political figures were expelled from their parties —Flores resigned voluntarily— for acting in open rebellion against their coalition's leaders. The PS also suffer important dismemberments, namely when senator Alejandro Navarro left the party to form his own movement, *Movimiento Amplio Social* (MAS) and Jorge Arrate renounced his party membership to run as the presidential candidate of the non-Concertacionista extra parliamentary Left. Another commotion came from several Concertacionista deputies who called themselves *díscolos*, — i.e. rebellious— did not always follow party orders and sometimes acted and voted in open contradiction to indications from their political leaders. Finally, and probably the gravest of all schisms, Marco Enríquez-Ominami left the PS to launch its candidacy for 2009 presidential elections, and was followed by several prominent figures such as his step-father, senator Carlos Ominami. Enríquez-Ominami's candidacy greatly complicated the scenario of the elections given that it divided the Concertación's voters. In fact, many blamed him for Frei's defeat in the 2010 presidential elections.

As seen in sections 5.1 and 5.2 the modern society that has emerged in Chile has somehow 'freed' its citizens in the sense that people tend to pay less obedience to what different authorities or elites declare. Thus, the political parties have lost their

²⁰¹ In a speech delivered on 25 April 2006, UDI senator Pablo Longueira assured the Concertación had the great ability of showing the coalition's internal disagreements as a sample of diversity and democratic spirit, whilst every discord within the Alianza ended up in the press featuring the latter's incapacity to govern.

²⁰² Redhead.

grip over a society that is less and less interested in what they have to say; politicians themselves seem to not to conform much to what the heads of their organizations command; Christians in general and Catholics in particular, follow less closely what their spiritual leaders suggest as patterns of moral conduct. The causes of such behaviour are multiple, but it is almost certain that the sense and reality of freedom and the praise of individuality and subjectivity introduced by neo-liberalism are behind these developments.

Concluding Remarks

Chile shows observable signs of modernity: material well-being has increased, infant mortality is very low, more women have been incorporated into the workforce and urbanization has increased. In the same empirical line of study, I revised other indicators such as an increase in levels of education and of a qualified workforce. Although Chile shows the signs of modernization, the nation's development has been only partly successful as the levels of poverty are still high. In fact, the existence of considerable social gaps, attest to the failure of the channels for the distribution of wealth and highlights the need for better planning in the public sphere. It also seems clear that the country has fostered a consumer society, as consumption has become a newly acquired feature of Chileanness. The emerging Chilean society is complex and at the same time it must face the problems of abundance and lack of material resources.²⁰³ In chapter 5 I tried to convey that idea: Chile's path to modernization under the neo-liberal star has not been straightforward. On the contrary, on the one hand this nation is still a country with high levels of poverty and feeble when it faces an international economic crisis. On the other, it has to deal with the typical problems of developed nations such as overcrowded cities. It is also complex in terms of the existence of the elites —be they economic or intellectual, from the political Right or Left— who seem to have lost their directing role over society. This fact may explain the discrepancy between some social analyses that reach certain conclusions and the facts shown by surveys. Conflicting feelings, antagonism between different sectors of society, disassociation between those who govern the country and those supposedly being led, are some of the underlying sentiments in Bicentennial Chile.

²⁰³ E. Tironi (1999), *op. cit.*, p. 225.

In chapter 5 I focused mainly on describing the socio-economic changes that took place in Chile in the 1990s and 2000s. Most studies about Chile's modernization have an empirical inclination and this chapter also deals with that issue from a similar perspective. I started by studying the development of a national consumer culture which, although it encourages impulsive buying, also implies that more people have the means to buy what is needed to lead a decent life. The chapter goes on to study some typical features of consumer societies analysing how they operate in Chile, thus helping to recognise new features of Chileanness. Two of them are the hike in social mobility and the decline of mass mobilizations attached to collective utopias. It also has forwarded emancipation from the authorities, be they religious, political or cultural.

After outlining the recognizable features of modernity and the consumer society in Chile, I suggested that the achievement of full development should not be taken for granted. On the contrary, the current modernization project has encountered important external and internal obstacles and also triggered antagonism among the elites that planned and led the changes. The wider population also breeds disagreement at times of economic crises and when Chile's traditional values are being challenged. Possibly, the ill feeling about Chile's neo-liberal modernization will not disappear unless the country recovers the momentum of fast economic growth.

Controversy goes beyond the topics I have just mentioned. In fact, the evolution of both Chile's identity and the neo-liberal system implanted in the 1970s are also a source of dispute. It is certainly not clear what it means to be Chilean today, but it does seem that many Chileans feel proud of their nation. As regards neo-liberalism—probably the greatest agent of change in the period addressed in this thesis—the 2005 presidential campaign implied that the model would be changed. However, the tendency shifted in the 2009 campaign, as the presidential candidates did not stress the need to transform the model all that much. Although it looks as if the model will remain fairly unchanged, I believe that there is some risk in the lack of healthy pride—and even in the embarrassment shown by some right and left wing sectors—in the system that they helped to create and preserve respectively. In the first case, the efforts to separate the sector from Pinochet's figure have led rightist leaders to distance themselves from the liberal system. As for left-wingers, it looks as if some are still nostalgic for the era of collective utopias and mass mobilization, regardless of the fact that they did not prove efficient in fostering Chile's development.

If Chapter 5 studied such issues as what it means to be Chilean towards 2010, how Chile's society has changed, the change in values of past decades as well as the shift

in the image that Chileans have of themselves, in Chapter 6 I shall go into the year 2010, the year of the nation's Bicentennial. Although the newly elected right wing government—with its promises of all-out efficiency—had raised hopes of regaining economic growth, the February 2010 earthquake and tidal wave shattered not only families and villages but also all hope of a fast recovery. Once again Chile's aggressive nature was taking its toll. Nevertheless, as always throughout the country's history, people began to recover, in many cases in the midst of disaster. Although it is true that the country has changed in many aspects since 1970s, apparently some of the traces of Chileanness have not. As I shall analyse in the next chapter, it looks as if the Chileans' staunch endurance of adversity—engraved in fire in their memories throughout centuries of experiencing war, poverty, isolation and earthquakes—is a psychological feature that modernity has not washed away. By the same token, solidarity, which I read as a version of Chile's traditional hospitality, has shown quite alive despite the fact that ideas such as individualism have found a niche in society.