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Paul W. Posner

ABSTRACT

Structural reforms, institutional arrangements, and the dominant mode of political party–base linkage all militate against effective popular participation in Chilean local democracy. Structural reforms have constrained local leaders' resources as well as their policy-making prerogatives; institutional arrangements limit public officials' accountability to their constituents and citizens' opportunities for input in decisionmaking. The parties of the center-left Concertación have reinforced this vicious cycle by pursuing a mode of linkage with civil society designed to promote their electoral success with only minimal organization and participation by their grassroots constituents. Such conditions fit well with the desire of elites of the Concertación and the right to depoliticize civil society in order to preserve macroeconomic and political stability. Yet they leave in doubt the efficacy of popular participation and the strength of local democracy in Chile.

Three decades ago, Chile convulsed with grassroots political activity. Rallies, demonstrations, and land seizures were increasingly common in shantytowns surrounding Santiago and other major urban centers. Perhaps unwittingly, the Christian Democratic Party, under President Eduardo Frei Montalvo (1964–70), facilitated this intense grassroots mobilization. The centrist party established a corporatist program through municipal government, *Promoción Popular* (Popular Promotion), which it hoped would provide a monopoly of influence over previously marginalized and unincorporated segments of the population. In this manner, the Christian Democratic Party (*Partido Demócrata Cristiano*, PDC) intended to broaden its base of support and establish itself as the ultimate arbiter of Chile's political destiny. Instead, it alienated the right and provoked intense competition from the left.

Like the Christian Democrats, the Socialists and Communists aggressively organized, mobilized, and encouraged previously marginalized segments of the population to demand greater responsiveness and resources from the state. This dynamic intensified under President Salvador Allende, threatening the Chilean state's fiscal and political stability and ultimately contributing to the democratic breakdown of 1973. It was not surprising, therefore, that soon after taking power the military regime initiated forceful steps to suppress local collective action and to

break the nexus between political parties and their grassroots constituents. Despite this repression, popular resistance and mass demonstrations emanating from the shantytowns challenged the Pinochet regime's legitimacy and prompted the liberalization process that concluded with the return to democracy in 1990.

Since that time, Chile's economic and political stability have been the envy of Latin America. The country is widely viewed as the region's most successful case of transition from state-led to market-driven economy and from authoritarianism to democracy. Yet now that the difficult hurdle of democratization has been largely overcome throughout the region, Chile and its neighbors are being judged increasingly by a new standard. The preoccupation of policymakers and researchers has shifted from the establishment or stabilization of new democratic regimes to their improvement (Hagopian 1998, 99). One of the essential questions in this regard is how to facilitate organization and political participation for segments of the population who have benefited little, if at all, from the region's recent wave of economic and political reform.

For a variety of reasons, examination of local politics in Chile promises substantial insight into this question. For one, the significant role local politics has played in Chile's recent political history provides a useful basis of comparison by which to assess popular participation and local government under different regime types and development models. In addition, as in many other Latin American countries, radical transformations in Chile's social structure brought about through authoritarian repression, structural reform, and economic liberalization have tended to shift the relative importance within the popular sectors "from the classes to the masses"; that is, from the organized labor movement to the more heterogeneous, less well organized agglomeration of the popular sectors in the shantytowns surrounding major urban centers.¹ For many in the popular sectors, moreover, the institutions of local government provide the primary, if not the only, point of contact with the political system and the state. These conditions make examination of popular sector participation in local government all the more relevant to any qualitative assessment of new democracies such as Chile's.

To what extent, then, does municipal government in Chile facilitate the participation in local politics of groups which historically have been marginalized? The argument presented here provides a disappointing answer to this question. Structural reforms, institutional arrangements, and the dominant mode of political party-base linkage all militate against effective popular sector participation in local democracy. Structural reforms have severely constrained local leaders' resources as well as their policymaking prerogatives, thereby undermining incentives for popular participation. Meanwhile, institutional arrangements limit public officials' accountability to their constituents and severely circumscribe

opportunities for citizens' input in decisionmaking, creating a vicious cycle of low levels of popular participation and limited accountability. The parties of the governing center-left coalition, the Concertación, have reinforced this vicious cycle by pursuing a mode of linkage with civil society designed to promote their electoral success with only minimal organization and participation of their grassroots constituents.² Such conditions fit well with the desire of elites of both the right and the Concertación to depoliticize civil society in order to preserve macroeconomic and political stability. Yet they leave in doubt the efficacy of popular participation and the strength of local democracy in Chile. To develop this argument, the following section delineates essential conditions for facilitating popular participation in local democracy. Subsequently, the analysis examines popular participation in local government in the precoup, military regime, and posttransition periods.

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION

Strong local democracy requires accountability of public officials and institutional access that facilitates the active political participation of local constituencies. If citizens are to hold their local officials accountable and if the officials are to be responsive, then the citizens must participate through established local institutional channels. Institutional arrangements that facilitate accountability and access include direct election of mayors and other public officials and institutional channels that allow citizens to participate in decisionmaking in their jurisdictions.

Direct election of mayors is desirable because indirect elections have "tended to perpetuate the strength of political insiders, who are often more accountable to their party hierarchy than to the public at large" (Peterson 1997, 14). Institutional channels must facilitate participation beyond the mere act of voting, because elections occur infrequently and allow for only limited citizen input or feedback regarding specific local concerns or policy options. Therefore, "direct citizen participation requires that citizens have clear information regarding the municipal budget and service costs and that they participate in actual budget choices" (20). Moreover, there should be formal structures that clearly spell out the roles that citizens and community organizations should play in collaborating with municipal government. In this regard, "advisory committees" are not highly valued by the population. Instead, "effective participation with local government has been organized mostly around public works projects that bring immediate benefits, and around a process that allows participation in budget allocation" (16–17).

The foregoing assessment suggests that popular sector participation in local government is highly sensitive to the prevailing opportunity

structure. A wide range of research supports this conclusion. Such research indicates that state structures and institutions, along with the kinds of linkages political parties develop with civil society, are the primary determinants of the level and form of popular sector political participation. Recent comparative work by Portes and Itzigsohn (1997) and Houtzager and Kurtz (2000), as well as earlier studies by Goldrich (1970), Cornelius (1974), Eckstein (1977), and Castells (1983), among others, concludes that popular sector constituencies structure their participation in accordance with the political opportunities and resources that are available to them. Accordingly, structural arrangements that severely limit local officials' revenue base and their ability to shape policies in accordance with constituent demands will, all things being equal, act as disincentives to popular participation. Without the ability to address constituents' demands, local officials will have little incentive to encourage, and constituents little incentive to engage in, political participation and collective action.

Whether parties facilitate popular sector access and participation depends on the kinds of relationships they assume with civil society. Parties that adopt a participatory form of linkage, for example, attempt to serve as an agency through which citizens can themselves participate in government, and tend to be closely linked with organizations in civil society; they have strong grassroots organizations and are internally democratic. In contrast, electoralist parties are primarily concerned with mobilizing an electoral constituency rather than organizing and mobilizing groups in civil society. Their primary objective is to develop the broadest possible base of electoral support, which requires attracting unorganized and often independent voters and developing a multiclass electoral constituency. To the extent that grassroots party structures exist, party leaders typically control them and mobilize party activists only for electoral purposes (such as registering new voters, canvassing, getting out the vote, and so on). Without high levels of autonomous organization in civil society, this form of linkage will not be an effective means for grassroots constituents to promote their interests. Similarly, in parties that adopt clientelistic linkages to civil society, grassroots structures are boss-ruled or nonexistent and therefore do not facilitate effective collective action; such parties act as vehicles for the exchange of votes for favors. Finally, parties that adopt a directive form of linkage act as agents of political education or coercion. Such parties attempt to maintain control over their constituents (Lawson 1988, 16–17). They typically have strong roots in social organizations (labor unions, peasant associations, urban neighborhood organizations, and so on), but their work with these groups is an extension of party organizing and reflects an effort to build social bases for the party's political project rather than for the purpose of strengthening civil society in its own right (Roberts 1998, 75).

As the following analysis demonstrates, center and left parties in Chile have adapted their mode of party-base linkage in accordance with changing political and structural conditions and related changes in their agendas and their perceptions of democracy. Under state-led development before the 1973 coup, center and left parties were driven by the desire to control the state and its resources in order to realize their distinct ideological objectives. To achieve those objectives, they pursued primarily directive and clientelistic linkages with constituents in the local political arena. By the mid- to late 1980s, however, conditions had changed dramatically. State resources on which to build and maintain grassroots constituencies had been severely curtailed, and the left's primary base of support, the labor movement, had been decimated. Most parties of the center and left, moreover, had concluded that their ideological zeal and inflexibility had contributed to the collapse of democracy. Their new focus became the achievement of elite consensus and the establishment of an electoral democracy in which the market, not the state, predominated and parties mobilized constituents to win elections rather than to transform society or to promote participation.

This strategy, and the structural and institutional reforms that have supported it, has served to perpetuate the military regime's project of depoliticizing civil society in order to maintain political and macroeconomic stability. Yet it has done little to facilitate the participation and collective action of those segments of society that, after years of authoritarian repression and radical economic reform, are most in need of political representation. Comparison of contemporary local politics in Chile with local politics during the precoup and military regime eras substantiates this conclusion.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION DURING THE PRECOUP PERIOD

From the 1940s until the 1973 military coup, a number of forces interacted to expand popular participation in Chilean local government. Unfortunately, the same forces that propelled increased popular participation also provoked political and fiscal instability and contributed to the collapse of democracy. These forces were related to Chile's state-led development model and to the prevailing form of party competition and party-base linkage.

Consistent with the logic of state-led development, fiscal resources in the Chilean state were increasingly centralized. As a result, the fiscal dependence of local governments and the fiscal pressure on the central government intensified. The manner in which increasing party competition and ideological polarization expressed themselves exacerbated

these fiscal pressures. Driven by the desire to realize their distinct ideological objectives, center and left parties (primarily the Christian Democratic, Socialist, and Communist parties) competed for political dominance through both clientelistic and directive linkages, particularly with previously politically excluded segments of the population, such as urban shantytown dwellers.

Through clientelistic ties, local leaders exchanged votes they could deliver on behalf of congressional members for patronage these national politicians could distribute through party networks. Under directive linkage, "political action consisted of organizing a social base in order to bind it to party structures and thus exert pressure on the state, at times demanding fulfillment of claims and at other times seeking to take control of the state itself" (Garretón 1989a, 12). On one hand, party efforts at cooptation either treated the popular sectors as political pawns in the ideological competition. On the other, it made the parties victims of their own strategies by unleashing popular demands they could not satisfy and popular protests they could not contain. Ultimately, increasing popular sector political activity and demands threatened the economic privileges of conservative elements in Chilean society, who consequently allied themselves with the armed forces to carry out a military coup. A brief historical overview will clarify these interrelationships and their repercussions.

Since the 1940s, the center and left political parties that dominated the Chilean state had resisted attempts by oligarchic elements in the provinces to decentralize resources or political power (Cleaves 1969, 10). As a result, power, and the responsibility for addressing social and political demands, were increasingly concentrated in the hands of the central government. In order to meet the increased obligations that centralization brought, the central government routinely channeled funds collected from municipalities to the *Tesorería General* (General Treasury) and delayed repayment of its debt to local governments for long periods. Thus the percentage of state funds allocated to the municipalities steadily declined after World War II, while the lion's share of local budgets, instead of being devoted to social investment, was consumed by basic operating expenses (Cleaves 1969, 25–26; Valenzuela 1977, 52). The growing disparity between local needs and local governments' ability to meet them forced local leaders to rely on their political and bureaucratic contacts at the national level to gain access to scarce resources. Linkages between local officials and their national political party brokers therefore provided key channels for mediating local political interests. Local political leaders extracted resources from the central government through their contacts with these national political brokers (Valenzuela 1977, 154–56). In return, local leaders turned out the vote for congressional representatives, who delivered patronage through

party networks. Particularly in the emerging urban shantytowns, center and left parties complemented these essentially clientelistic practices by operating in a more ideological and collective fashion (Valenzuela 1977, 161). They organized and controlled squatter settlements, helping residents place resource demands directly on the state (Castells 1983, 207).

Although these modes of interest mediation gave the central government and the political parties that controlled it considerable control over local politics, they also placed enormous political and fiscal pressures on the Chilean state. This pressure, and the popular sector mobilization that helped to fuel it, increased exponentially with the rise of the PDC in the 1950s. Unlike the previously dominant centrist party, the Radicals, the PDC was programmatic and highly ideological; it was much more interested in pursuing its own agenda than in finding compromise positions between extremes on the left and the right (Scully 1992, 11). Thus, ideological division and party competition, already a significant feature of the Chilean political system, increased substantially with the PDC's ascendance.

At the local level, such ideological polarization and competition were the impetus behind reforms that the Frei government instituted in 1968. Frei's program of *Promoción Popular* involved, among other things, the establishment of *juntas de vecinos*, or neighborhood associations, which were to form a network of community organizations coordinated at the national level by a *Consejería de la Promoción Popular* (Council of Popular Promotion). In establishing this corporatist institutional framework, the PDC hoped to increase dramatically its political support, which would, in turn, facilitate the realization of its ideological project. The PDC's corporatist reform measures failed, however, primarily because the legal sanctioning of the *juntas* greatly intensified local political participation and demandmaking beyond a level the central government had the capacity to satisfy (Portes and Walton 1981, 125–26). The various parties and factions of the center and left fueled this demandmaking from below through their competitive efforts to organize and mobilize rural peasants and urban shantytown dwellers, previously dormant segments of the popular sectors (Castells 1983, 207).³

Thus the inauguration of *Promoción Popular* helped unleash material demands from sectors of Chilean society that had never before played an active role in politics. The increase in land seizures—8 in 1968, 73 in 1969, and 220 in 1970—exemplified this upsurge in material demands at the local level (figures are taken from Castells 1983, 200; and Stallings 1978, 115). It also underscored the government's inability to satisfy popular demands—or to assuage the business community's concerns about the increasing spread of leftist radicalism. Under these circumstances, the Chilean right had little reason to lend its electoral support to the Christian Democrats, as it had done in 1964. This condi-

tion made it possible for Allende's leftist *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity) coalition to win the 1970 presidential election.

With Allende's ascension to power, the polarizing dynamics put in play under the Frei administration continued unabated. In an effort to respond to popular demands, the Popular Unity government increased fiscal spending by more than 70 percent (Ascher 1984, 243). Under such circumstances, inflationary pressures accelerated, and Allende's already meager support from the business community evaporated. As the newly mobilized segments of the popular sectors joined organized labor to press for greater concessions, business and other right-wing elements sought to derail the socialist government. Such political polarization precipitated the 1973 military coup.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION UNDER THE MILITARY REGIME

Once the Chilean military had toppled the Allende government, it embarked on a radical overhaul of the Chilean state, including a fundamental restructuring of local government. The objective of the military regime's state reform project was to guarantee the order and political stability needed to carry out neoliberal economic restructuring. To achieve this goal required the political, economic, and social exclusion of the previously mobilized popular masses (Garretón 1989a, 81–83). Thus the military regime's decentralization reforms were designed to limit the democratic freedoms and demandmaking capacity of the popular sectors in order to protect the fiscal stability of the Chilean state and the macroeconomic performance of the Chilean economy. As such, decentralization under the military regime transferred significant administrative responsibilities to lower levels of government while further centralizing political power and control over resources. From a system of governance that facilitated the representation of local interests at the national level (Valenzuela 1977), the military regime sought to transform the Chilean political system into an institutional vehicle for promoting the interests of the national government at the local level (Marcel 1994, 104).

Almost as soon as it assumed power, the military regime took steps to achieve its objective. On September 25, 1973, just 14 days after its violent overthrow of President Allende, the military regime enacted Ley 25, which mandated that the municipal councils and their democratically elected representatives cease their functions and established a mayor designated by the military junta as the sole political authority in each municipality. In place of the municipal councils, the military regime established the *Consejos de Desarrollo Comunal y Social* (CODECOS, Communal Social Development Councils) to advise mayors on issues of concern to their commu-

nities. The regime attempted to portray the CODECOS as legitimate institutions for popular participation. Yet with members appointed by the central government and with no decisionmaking authority, there appeared to be no legitimate basis for this claim (Pozo 1981, 29, 1986, 21).

In conjunction with these reforms, the military government forced the resignation of all community leaders and designated their replacements, outlawed Marxist political parties, and prohibited unions, trade associations (*gremios*), and public administration organizations from participating in the CODECOS. To prevent the autonomous action of community organizations, the Interior Ministry mandated that such organizations must receive prior governmental permission before holding meetings (Pozo 1981, 27–30, 1986, 15–21; Gallardo 1989, 22–25). Consequently, the authoritarian regime's program of administrative decentralization and limited "democratic participation," coupled with armed repression, enabled it to subvert the brokerage and directive roles played historically by Chilean political parties. The regime destroyed the institutional nexus through which parties could represent the interests of their constituents before the state.

The military regime did not stop there. It reorganized the provision of social welfare services in a manner that shifted fiscal responsibility onto municipal governments at the same time that it severely limited their decisionmaking and revenue-generating autonomy. The dictatorship's neoliberal social welfare scheme neutralized the significance of political participation characteristic of the previous welfare system, in which social policy originated in response to citizens' demands mediated through the party system. Now the design and implementation of social policy would be handled by government technocrats insulated from the pressures of popular demands, the intended result being the depoliticization of social policy.⁴

The military regime attempted to justify its policy of municipalization on the grounds that it would increase administrative efficiency and augment opportunities for constituent populations to participate in the shaping of policies directly affecting them. Yet the institutional arrangements the military regime established for popular participation were patently undemocratic. The regime consulted none of the relevant populations on whose behalf it allegedly designed and implemented social policies. Moreover, its claims concerning the gains in administrative and economic efficiency to be achieved through municipalization were contradicted by the objective outcomes of such reforms. Indeed, instead of improving economic efficiency, the transfer of responsibility to municipal governments for the provision of education and health care generated municipal deficits (Raczynski 1994, 58).

The causes and consequences of such deficits were similar for both educational and health care reforms. In each case, municipal deficits

were precipitated by two factors: the privatization of services, which allowed the diversion of substantial resources away from the public sector; and the central government's setting of fee-for-service payments (that is, conditional transfer payments) significantly below the rate of inflation (Castañeda 1992, 20). The regime's policy of allowing private schools to compete for students, and therefore for funds typically allocated to public schools, only exacerbated the fiscal problems confronted by the municipal school systems. The increase in numbers of students attending private schools, coupled with a sizable decrease in overall government expenditures, resulted in a significant decrease in funds for public education.⁵ Similarly, the creation of private alternatives to services previously provided almost exclusively by the public sector produced a demonstrable decline in the public health care sector's revenues and expenditures (Raczynski 1994, 69).

In general, instead of granting local governments greater freedom to borrow funds or collect revenues to meet their increased fiscal obligations, the dictatorship insisted on increasing their dependence on funds transferred from the central government through the *Fondo Comunal Municipal* (Municipal Common Fund). This was evident in its municipal tax policy. This policy prevented municipal governments from borrowing funds to meet their fiscal needs.⁶ Instead, they were expected to derive their operating revenues from vehicle and property taxes, taxes on productive and business activities, and user fees for municipal services (Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Municipalidades, Artículos 11, 12; Dockendorf 1990, 188). Because under this system tax rates were (and continue to be) set by the central government, municipal governments had limited ability to structure revenue collections in accordance with local needs (Marcel 1994, 107, 108).

Thus the Pinochet regime very effectively restructured government in Chile in a manner that shifted the fiscal burden from the national to the local level, and thereby protected the national budget and economy from inflationary pressures generated from below. It achieved this objective first by severing the institutional linkage between political parties and grassroots constituents, and second by making local officials accountable to regime leaders rather than to the constituents residing in their municipalities. Accordingly, groups organized at the local level lost the demandmaking capacity that they had used so effectively before the democratic breakdown. Moreover, even if local leaders wanted to be more responsive to the needs and concerns of the citizens over whom they ruled, they had virtually no autonomy to generate revenue or to design or implement policy, given the restrictive fiscal and administrative reforms imposed by the dictatorship.

Many *pobladores* reacted to the economic, political, and social exclusion the military regime's policies imposed on them by organizing

in the shantytowns to promote and protect their interests. Ironically, the military regime's political repression and constriction of resources and local institutional channels for demandmaking provided the impetus for the emergence of a plethora of popular sector groups. When the regime dismantled the populist state and banned political parties, these groups—community soup kitchens, self-defense organizations, youth and religious groups, among many others—developed in isolation from traditional forms of state and party control. They played a key role in the mass mobilizations and public protests that, from May 1983 through July 1986, put increasing pressure on Pinochet to loosen his authoritarian grip. They also provided fertile opportunities for the many intermediate and lower-level party leaders who went into hiding in the shantytowns to develop direct ties to the *pobladores*. Yet once the popular protests had created sufficient space in civil society for party elites to resurface, these elites reasserted their dominance over the popular sectors and took control of the opposition movement.

Ultimately, the reemergent party elites transformed the popular struggle from one of mass mobilization and violent opposition to electoral contestation. Several reasons lay behind this fundamental shift in strategy. First, though many (if not most) shantytown dwellers believed that Pinochet could be forcibly ousted from power, party leaders viewed such a victory as implausible, as evidenced by the military regime's ability to withstand and contain popular resistance. Accordingly, they began to contemplate a negotiated return to democracy. Some party leaders, however, were quicker than others to accept, and therefore adapt to, the new strategic calculus a negotiated transition implied. The Christian Democratic leadership, afraid that continued violent protests would alienate its primary base of support among the middle class, was quickest to make the switch from mass opposition to elite negotiation. Similarly, the Socialist Party faction with the strongest ties to the middle class (led by Ricardo Nuñez, hence referred to as the PS-Nuñez) had similar concerns. It recognized that with the military regime's decimation of the labor movement, the party needed to increase its middle-class support in order to continue as a viable political force. With these considerations in mind, it was quick to realize that the leftist party that first established an alliance with the PDC would have the best opportunity to shape the terms of the transition. The opposing Socialist Party faction, the PS-Almeyda (led by former Allende foreign minister Clodomiro Almeyda), had much deeper roots in the shantytowns than did the PS-Nuñez and therefore was slower to abandon its emphasis on popular resistance. (See Roberts 1998; Walker 1990 for a more detailed account of this history.)

Eventually, however, the PS-Almeyda accepted the need to join the alliance led by the PDC, called the *Alianza Democrata* (Democratic Alliance, AD, precursor to the present Concertación), if only to prevent

its own political irrelevance. The PS-Almeyda's abandonment of the popular struggle left the Communist Party, the party most deeply entrenched in the shantytowns and most strongly committed to popular insurrection, isolated and without allies. Though the PC eventually abandoned the *via armada* and supported an electoral exit from authoritarianism, it never overcame its political isolation. Thus, with the PS-Almeyda joining and the PC excluded from the dominant AD, those political elements most strongly committed to promoting popular sector organization and participation were destined to have virtually no influence in shaping the terms of the transition.

This lack of influence would persist through the transition and would be reinforced by the "renovation" of the dominant parties that composed the AD. Between the Chilean military's overthrow of the Popular Unity government and the time when the democratic opposition entered transition negotiations with the military, the elites and parties leading the opposition movement underwent a process of political renovation (Roberts 1998; Walker 1990). This renovation facilitated a convergence between the constraints that the military regime wished to impose on Chile's new democracy and the steps the democratic opposition was willing to take to ensure the stability of the new regime.

The leaders of the democratic opposition parties reasoned that if ideological polarization and overpoliticization of the state and civil society had precipitated the breakdown of Chilean democracy, then only depoliticization could assure future democratic stability. Practically speaking, this meant significantly increasing the role of the market and proportionally decreasing the state's role in running the economy and organizing civil society. It also meant reducing the role of political parties in organizing and mobilizing groups in civil society. Consequently, the renovated democratic opposition demobilized its mass opposition movement and accepted the military regime's neoliberal economic model and 1980 Constitution, along with the demobilization of its mass opposition movement, as preconditions to democratization.⁷ Party leaders dissolved the umbrella organizations they had constructed to shape the disparate opposition groups in the shantytowns into a broad-based, unified opposition. Without the parties' overarching political leadership, these groups atomized and lost their ability to influence the democratic transition (Oxhorn 1995, 258). Under these conditions, the Concertación shifted the opposition's focus to electoral contestation, orchestrated the defeat of Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite, and restored civilian rule under the leadership of Christian Democratic president Patricio Aylwin in 1990.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION AFTER REDEMOCRATIZATION

The opposition's acceptance both of the military regime's preconditions and its commitment to depoliticizing civil society determined that many of the essential elements which defined local government under the dictatorship would remain intact after the democratic transition. It also signaled that once in power, the now ruling Concertación would take steps to ensure elite control over local politics. Thus, while redemocratization has brought important reforms of municipal government, significant impediments to effective accountability and local political participation persist.

To be sure, residents of municipalities no longer live under the constant threat of authoritarian repression and can once again elect their local officials. Yet they do not enjoy the connection or influence with political parties that they possessed before the coup or even during the dictatorship.⁸ Instead, the parties of the center and left have distanced themselves from their followers at the base.⁹ Moreover, local institutional arrangements do not hold leaders fully accountable to their constituents or give citizens a meaningful voice in municipal decisionmaking and budgeting. The administrative and financing structures of local government remain essentially the same as they were under the dictatorship, giving local leaders little discretionary control over resources or policy design and implementation. Therefore, municipal residents have little incentive to participate in local government, levels of participation are quite low, and local democracy remains weak. At the same time, municipal governments in Chile continue to bear a fiscal burden that generally exceeds their capacity to generate revenue, while the national government puts significant restrictions on transfer payments and thereby can maintain limits on local-level fiscal demands and expenditures.¹⁰

Examination of the institutional, fiscal, and administrative structures of local government in Chile substantiates this argument. With respect to institutional structures, Chilean municipal government does not meet the most essential criteria for holding local officials accountable to their constituents—citizens do not directly elect mayors or municipal council members. Instead, municipal election outcomes are largely determined by electoral pacts and subpacts among allied political parties, an arrangement that means, in many instances, that the candidates receiving the highest number of votes are not the same candidates who actually assume office.¹¹ Indeed, on average, 43 percent of council members elected in metropolitan Santiago in 1996 received a lower percentage of the vote than the highest vote getters among losing candidates (Posner 1999, 76–77).

The pact arrangements that characterize the municipal electoral system, moreover, diminish its proportionality. This is because only parties or candidates who have pacted with either the major right-wing pact

(which includes the RN and the UDI) or the center-left Concertación (which includes the PDC, PPD, PS, and PRSD) have a reasonable chance of winning seats on municipal councils. Results from the 2000 municipal elections illustrate this point well. Out of a total of 2,124 seats, these two pacts won 2,054. Three other pacts shared the remaining 70 seats. The poor showing by the pact headed by the PC illustrates another significant consequence of this electoral system. Without the benefit of an alliance with the PS, which it enjoyed before the coup, the PC won only 1 mayoralty and 21 council seats in the entire country. The comparable numbers for the PS were 32 and 207 (see table 1, p. 73, and Servicio Electoral República de Chile 2001 for these data).

Thus Chile's municipal electoral system, in theory proportionally representative, in practice functions like a majoritarian or plurality system in that it favors larger parties or pacts. As a result, the right and center-left pacts have managed to thwart challenges to their dominance and to maintain their elitist manner of governing.

The method of selecting mayors to lead the municipal councils further aggravates the lack of accountability apparent in the formation of the councils themselves. Instead of mandating the direct election of mayors, the Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Municipalidades stipulates that the municipal council candidate who receives the greatest number of votes and also receives at least 35 percent of the vote becomes mayor. Because so many parties typically field candidates, however (those in the pacts plus the PC, along with various independent candidates), and because even the party with the largest following, the PDC, can claim on average the allegiance of less than 25 percent of the electorate, it is not uncommon that no candidate reaches the 35 percent threshold to become mayor. When this occurs, the municipal council must select the mayor from among its members (see Article 115 of the Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Municipalidades for a detailed explanation; see also González Moya 1992). Naturally, the council members who have united in electoral pacts will negotiate to elect one of their own. Under these circumstances, mayors—like the municipal council members who elect them—are beholden to party elites as much as or more than they are to the constituents of their communities.

The institutional channels established to allow grassroots constituents input on local policy issues, the CESCO (Community Economic and Social Councils) and the *juntas de vecinos*, are equally unrepresentative. These institutions are strictly advisory in nature and therefore largely ineffective at encouraging popular participation or transmitting community demands to local leaders. For example, as an advisory board to the mayor, the CESCO (like its precursor under the military regime, the CODECO) has no power to ensure mayoral accountability; it cannot make binding resolutions, create or implement policy, or impose sanc-

tions. Its sole function is to offer advice on community concerns, which the mayor is free to heed or ignore. As one leader and CESCO member in the municipality of La Granja in metropolitan Santiago observed,

CESCO is merely a consultative body with no real power. Those of us who belong to CESCO are like an umbrella that protects the mayor. He asks our opinion and we can say either yes or no to his projects, but that's it. . . . A law needs to be passed to make this organization more pluralistic. (Robles 2001)

Grassroots leaders are not alone in holding this critical view of the CESCO. Indeed, *concejales* (council members) from the three metropolitan Santiago municipalities investigated in this study all share the view that these community councils function poorly as representative institutions.¹² For example, Carmen Gloria Allende, Socialist *concejal* in the Santiago municipality of Huecheraba, notes that because of extremely low community participation in the neighborhood associations, from which a large percentage of CESCO representatives are elected, the CESCO themselves are unrepresentative of popular interests.

This organization [CESCO] functions as an advisory board. You can either take or ignore what CESCO says. People are really skeptical about politicians. This can be illustrated by the fact that only one hundred neighbors from the *juntas de vecinos* are registered. [Being formally registered with the *juntas* entitles them to vote for members of the CESCO.] And they register because they feel that they have to do it. So, I have the impression that the communal organizations are not well represented by CESCO. With municipal councils, people are legally compelled to vote. But this is not the case with CESCO. Thus, the leaders are not chosen by the *pobladores*. (Allende 2001)

For many grassroots leaders, the low levels of membership and citizen participation in the neighborhood associations have common origins in the institutional legacy of the dictatorship. As grassroots leaders involved with the neighborhood associations are quick to point out, the existing law governing neighborhood associations is the same law implemented by the military regime. To ensure that the neighborhood associations would not recapture their former political power when democracy was restored, the military government instituted its new Ley de Junta de Vecinos on December 30, 1989, just months before President Aylwin took office.

With the military's law still in force, it is widely perceived among grassroots leaders that the neighborhood associations have not regained the legitimacy and influence they held before the military takeover. The original law governing *juntas de vecinos*, Ley 16.880, passed on August

7, 1968, granted the neighborhood associations substantial powers and responsibilities. These included

the preparation of both an annual plan for urban betterment and a budget for the execution of the plan . . . the organization, promotion, and participation in the formation of cooperatives, especially consumer goods, handicrafts, and housing . . . with the object of bettering the socioeconomic conditions of the inhabitants of the respective neighborhood units...to collaborate in the control of prices, as well as the distribution and sale of necessities . . . ; to contribute to the removal of trash, the management of collective transit, to render an opinion before granting licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages . . . ; to collaborate in the protection of persons and property in the neighborhood . . . ; to assist in finding work for the unemployed. . . . (González Moya 1993, 7–8; author's translation)

In contrast, the military government's 1989 law, Ley 18.899, says virtually nothing in regard to the objectives and functions of the neighborhood associations or community organizations and, in essence, grants them no substantive powers or responsibilities.

In addition, the military regime's neighborhood association law encourages the formation of several neighborhood associations within the boundaries of one territorial unit, a provision which reinforces partisan divisions and limits popular unity. Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that grassroots leaders characterize the neighborhood associations as lacking resources and decisionmaking authority and incapable of overcoming factional divisions or motivating *pobladores* to participate. Indeed, the grassroots leaders interviewed for this study estimated that one percent or less of their respective communities' populations participate in the neighborhood associations.¹³ When compared with the estimated 15 to 20 percent of *pobladores* who actively participated in local organization and mobilization during the dictatorship, and an even higher percentage who participated in the neighborhood associations and other popular organizations before the coup, these figures appear abysmally low.¹⁴

The vast majority of the grassroots leaders interviewed attributed such low levels of popular participation to the Concertación leaders' failure to give the *juntas* more resources and greater capacity to encourage grassroots unity. As one social leader summarized it,

After the transition, the *juntas de vecinos* did not organize. The people of the *población* did not see them as presenting solutions to their problems. The communities have no money and the political leaders are not preoccupied with the people's concerns. The connection with people at the base does not exist—the *juntas de vecinos* do not represent anyone! This is part of the overall process of depoliticization and disarticulation. The leaders of the Concertación

realized that the powerful popular organizations that helped to oust Pinochet could be used against them. So they tried to weaken and disarticulate the popular organizations. They come to the *poblaciones* only when they need votes. (Molina 2001)

The frustration and cynicism expressed in such comments reflect grassroots leaders' disenchantment with both the institutions of municipal government and the political parties that control them. The basis of this disenchantment lies in the renovation of parties historically most closely associated with the popular sectors in Chile, particularly the PS and the PDC, as well as the more recently established (1987) center-left PPD. In theory, this renovated, *laissez-faire* posture of political parties toward civil society was to prevent the kind of ideologically charged, politically divisive manipulation of the popular sectors that party leaders understood as a primary cause of the 1973 democratic breakdown. It would, in the words of former Socialist Party secretary-general and labor minister Jorge Arrate, make "politics less elitist and gradually more popular" (Arrate and Hidalgo 1989, 107). In practice, however, this new posture only widened the breach between grassroots activists and party elites that evolved over the course of Chile's transition to democracy.

This breach has persisted since the transition, perpetuated partly as a result of the military regime's binomial electoral system. According to this system, a party or political pact is guaranteed a seat in any electoral district in which it receives a minimum of 33.4 percent of the vote. This percentage unduly rewards second-place finishers and, not coincidentally, is roughly equivalent to the percentage received by the Chilean right. With the undue advantage this arrangement gives to the right, the center and left have been encouraged to subordinate their programmatic differences and maintain their electoral alliance, the Concertación, to prevent an even greater overrepresentation of the right. Thus, by imposing a bipolar pattern of competition on parties that historically have divided themselves according to three ideological blocs—right, center, and left—the binomial electoral regime seriously distorts the extent to which societal interests are fairly represented in the political arena (Munck and Bosworth 1998, 486–87). In short, the electoral regime has increased the incentives for party cooperation and alliances, reduced the incentives for competition, and reinforced the tendency already prominent among the center-left parties of the Concertación to deemphasize ideological differences and focus on elite consensus to the exclusion of popular sector input.

Consequently, the posttransition period has witnessed a significant decline in party identification among the Chilean electorate.¹⁵ Apathy has increased among grassroots leaders and their followers. (For an account of the nature and extent of this apathy, see Posner 1999). Municipal elections have seen significant voting abstention and nullifi-

cation.¹⁶ One of the primary causes behind these negative trends appears to be the public's perception that local leaders are not in touch with their communities. When asked in a 1996 Centros de Estudios Públicos survey to identify the primary problem affecting their communities, low- and middle-income respondents most frequently named local politicians' "lack of contact with the community" (CEP 1996, 32).¹⁷

The center-left parties of the Concertación have suffered electorally from the popular sectors' disenchantment. The number of mayoralties they held nationwide declined from 197 in the 1996 municipal elections to 169 in 2000; the right, on the other hand, increased its number of mayoralties substantially, from 132 to 165 (see table 1). Similar though less dramatic results occurred in the election of municipal council members. The total number of Concertación council members declined from 1,054 in 1996 to 1,036 in 2000, while the rightist pact, the *Alianza Por Chile* (Alliance for Chile), increased its numbers of council members from 638 to 684.

What stands out most about these election results are the noticeable losses of the centrist PDC, the Concertación's dominant party, and the even more substantial gains of the far-right UDI, the party most closely linked with the Pinochet legacy. While the PDC lost 17 mayoralties and 32 council seats, the UDI picked up an impressive 40 mayoralties and 149 council seats. When asked to explain this relative shift in local government influence, representatives from the dominant parties of the Concertación acknowledged their parties' failure to get sufficiently involved in building and maintaining grassroots constituencies. Most striking in this regard was the admission by Luciano Valle, National Secretary of Social Organization of the Chilean Socialist Party, that the party currently has no formal organization devoted to popular sector political education or organizing and has essentially abandoned its tradition of grassroots organizing (Valle 2001). However, both party leaders and grassroots activists from the Concertación are quick to identify other significant factors in the local rightward shift: the UDI's superior resources and clientelistic practices. In this regard, the comments of Anastasio Castillo, a community leader affiliated with the PDC in Huecheraba, were typical: "People here are poor. The UDI takes advantage of them to gain political support by distributing food . . . and money . . . to win votes" (Castillo 2001).

Alfredo Galdames, national director of UDI's project to build support among *pobladores* and chief of staff for UDI mayor Pilar Urrutia in the municipality of Conchali, casts the situation in a different light. He ascribes the Concertación's declining support and the lack of local participation to the center-left alliance's focus on politics rather than on good management and solutions to local problems, a criticism not unlike those lodged by the Concertación's own grassroots constituents.

Table 1. Municipal Votes in Chile, 1996 and 2000

	Mayors 1996	Mayors 2000	Council Members 1996	Council Members 2000
Concertación Pact				
PDC	102	85	456	424
PRSD	16	15	173	102
PPD	34	28	201	215
PS	38	32	171	207
Independent	7	9	53	87
Total	197	169	1,054	1,036
Alliance for Chile Pact				
RN	67	72	288	292
UDI	5	45	35	184
Independent	60	48	315	208
Total	132	165	638	684
Left Pact				
PC	2	1	28	21
Independent	0	0	5	2
Total	2	1	33	23

Note: The remaining seats were divided among several other pacts and independent candidates.

Source: República de Chile, Servicio Electoral 1996, 2000.

Conversely, he attributes the UDI's success to its leaders' effective management, as well as their high ethical standards. When asked to identify the differences between the manner in which leftists have governed and the UDI's governing style, he noted the party's willingness to draw on private sector assistance. This willingness was evidenced in his discussion of local education. "The schools in this community, the preparation of the teachers and the students, is very poor. We cannot compete with the private schools—the state does not have sufficient resources. So we seek assistance from the private sector. We have very good relations with the business community here" (Galdames 2001).¹⁸

To illustrate how this strategy has been effective, Galdames noted that under Mayor Urrutia the local government had succeeded in acquiring funds to establish and maintain a school for young pregnant girls. He was particularly proud that the mayor had recently signed an agreement in New York for an annual twenty-thousand-dollar grant from the conservative Manhattan Institute to help operate the school and to evaluate its success. He also noted the local government's success in secur-

ing private sector support for the construction of low-cost housing in the community (Galdames 2001). UDI grassroots supporters reinforce this image of the party drawing on private resources with much more modest examples, such as the provision of food or resources for local organizations, such as sports clubs and youth groups.

These examples suggest not that the UDI is alone in its use of traditional patronage strategies but that the party has superior access to private sector resources, which enable it to employ such strategies with greater effect. The party's success in utilizing private sector resources to cultivate popular sector support provides vindication for the architects of Chile's neoliberal revolution, particularly Jaime Guzmán, the UDI's founder and principal author of the military regime's 1980 Constitution. One of the fundamental principles Guzmán and his fellow neoliberal architects espoused, and which is deeply embedded in the 1980 Constitution, is the notion of the subsidiary role of the state. Instead of trying to supplant or control the market, as was the case under import substitution industrialization (ISI), proponents of neoliberalism asserted that the state should play a subordinate and supportive role in relation to the market. The scaling back of the state that followed from this ideological precept cut off the lifeblood of center and left parties, which had depended on access to state resources to build and mobilize their constituencies. The Concertación's abandonment of traditional mobilization strategies and commitment to preserve the primacy of the market has reinforced the impact of these neoliberal reforms. As a result, local politicians who lack outside support for their community projects are hamstrung in a number of ways.

First, taxes are both set and collected by the central government (Yáñez and Letelier 1995, 143). Consequently, local governments have a severely limited capacity to structure taxes, including the creation of new taxes or the setting of tax rates, in line with local needs (154). Because the Treasury Department sends the property taxes it collects to the municipalities, moreover, it has no incentive to deal rapidly with delinquent taxpayers, and consequently local governments lose significant amounts of money (169).¹⁹ Second, the central government's strategy for helping municipalities deal with their fiscal shortfalls—namely, financial transfers—puts substantial constraints on how municipalities can spend their resources while simultaneously underfunding them (Nickson 1995, 139–40).

The central government's method of funding and regulating education and health care services provided at the municipal level epitomizes each of these problems. Because the fixed rate at which the central government subsidizes local governments for each enrolled student or each clinic visit is insufficient to cover the real cost of providing these services, the municipalities' financial situation has deteriorated. To cover the

shortfall caused by inadequate funding from the central government, the municipalities have had to use their own income, thereby reducing the funds they have available for social investment and producing a transfer to the central government (Nickson 1995; Yáñez and Letelier 1995, 149, 154).

Third, while some municipalities might be tempted to borrow to compensate for the central government's insufficient funding or to circumvent its tight regulatory control, statute prohibits them from doing so (Nickson 1995, 140; Yáñez and Letelier 1995, 170).²⁰

These policies exacerbate the dire fiscal straits of Chile's poor municipalities, constrain the ability of local leaders to respond to constituent needs and concerns, and undermine incentives for popular participation.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of recent electoral declines at both the local and national levels, the Socialist and Christian Democratic parties have begun to rethink their relationship with their constituents at the grassroots. Julio Pérez, national secretary of the Christian Democrats' Community and Neighborhood Action Front (formerly the Departamento de Pobladores), said that the party has begun a new, grassroots effort to rebuild support in the shantytowns and to encourage political participation (Pérez 2001). Similarly, Luciano Valle of the PS confided that although his party has no formal organization devoted to political education or popular organization, there is recognition in the party that strategies need to be developed to encourage popular participation (Valle 2001).

This shift in thinking is no doubt a positive sign for the strengthening of local democracy in Chile. In contrast to the PS and the PDC, however, the PPD has no plans to step up its organizational activities in regard to the popular sectors, according to Juan Reyes, the PPD's national secretary for unions (Reyes 2001). Moreover, structural reforms and local institutional arrangements still stand in the way of more meaningful and effective political participation in local government. Institutionally, indirect election of mayors weakens the nexus between constituents and elected leaders; the Community Economic and Social Councils (CESCO) remain unrepresentative and ineffective; and neighborhood associations have little formal power or influence, and therefore very few citizens are motivated to get actively involved in them.

These institutional impediments to strong local democracy in Chile exist in a structural context equally stultifying to local accountability, control, and participation. The military government implemented decentralizing reforms that increased local governments' responsibilities while seriously constraining their fiscal and policymaking autonomy. The Concertación has essentially maintained those reforms. Thus, while local

governments are responsible for administering primary education and health care services, they have virtually no policymaking autonomy in these areas. They are also greatly restricted in their ability to raise revenue and to utilize central government transfer payments. Such reforms enable the central government to maintain its control over local governments while providing local officials little capacity to construct policies or provide resources in response to their constituents' demands or concerns.

Under these circumstances, it is little wonder that disenchantment with local government in Chile is on the rise while local political participation is on the decline. The UDI has been able to take advantage of this disenchantment through its capacity to distribute private sector resources to popular sector clients. If the parties of the Concertación wish to confront this challenge from the right and enhance participation in local government, adopting a more participatory form of linkage with their grassroots constituents may be the answer. Facilitating the organization of grassroots constituents will make them less susceptible to the divisive appeals of clientelism and better able to demand public solutions to common problems. Compelling the state to address community concerns through broad-based popular pressure has the potential to produce more encompassing remedies than appear feasible under the status quo. Reinvigorating the linkage between the popular sectors and their traditional party allies may provide at least a partial antidote to the sweeping social disarticulation that neoliberal reforms and authoritarian repression have produced. In the end, such a radical shift of party-base linkage may both improve electoral outcomes for the Concertación and strengthen Chilean democracy from the ground up.

NOTES

1. I borrow this apt phrase from Garretón 1989a, 274.
2. The members of the center-left Concertación include the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, the Party for Democracy, and the Social Democratic Radical Party.
3. According to Castells, each *campamento* (squatter settlement) was dominated by one political party, which determined the *campamento's* political direction (1983, 207). Such partisan divisions at the grassroots both reflected and reinforced the ideological polarization among Chile's center and left political parties. (Right-wing parties were equally polarized, if not more so, but were not engaged in grassroots organization at this time.)
4. See Posner 2002 for a detailed discussion of the military regime's social welfare policy reforms and their impact on the popular sectors in terms of the propensity and capacity for collective action.
5. By 1988, fiscal spending devoted to education calculated as a percentage of GDP was 2.73 percent, little more than half the average percentage of

GDP devoted to education between 1970 and 1973 (Cox 1989, 6–8). In Santiago, the burden of sacrifice caused by the drop in fiscal expenditure on education appears to have been experienced almost exclusively by the poorer municipalities (Dockendorf 1990, 101).

6. Instead of strictly forbidding municipal borrowing, the statute required a special law to authorize each loan. In the face of such a stringent requirement, only two such borrowing operations were recorded between 1979 and 1994 (Marcel 1994, 111).

7. The democratic opposition accepted the 1980 Constitution not because it shared the military's vision of a restricted or tutelary democracy, but for several strategic reasons. First, recognizing that they could not remove the Pinochet regime from power through force, opposition leaders were obliged to negotiate a transition to democracy on the military regime's terms, which included acceptance of its 1980 Constitution. Second, the democratic opposition wanted to create a new democratic regime that was based on the rule of law. Attempting to transform the political system through existing constitutional principles was an important means of accomplishing this objective, even if the legitimacy of that constitution was questionable. Third, the democratic opposition attempted through negotiations to remove the most egregiously antidemocratic elements of the 1980 Constitution and viewed constitutional reform as part of the process of democratic transition. It therefore saw its acceptance of the military regime's constitution as the beginning, not the end, of the establishment of a new democratic order in Chile. See Ensalaco 1994 for a detailed discussion of constitutional reform in Chile.

8. See Campero 1987; Oxhorn 1995; Roberts 1998; and Schneider 1995 for a description and analysis of party-base relations during the dictatorship.

9. The Chilean Communist Party remains an exception to this rule, but its exclusion from the ruling Concertación and its low level of electoral support substantially weakens the significance of its more aggressive grassroots organizational efforts.

10. Because Chilean municipalities differ significantly in their class composition, this lack of fiscal sufficiency and autonomy weighs most heavily on the Chilean underclass. The Pinochet regime's policies of spatial segregation and its forced relocations of poorer citizens from wealthier neighborhoods greatly exacerbated this tendency (Morales and Rojas 1987; Portes 1989, 21–22).

11. The municipal electoral system implemented after the transition, a modified D'Hondt, is a proportional representation system. Citizens vote for individual candidates belonging to pacts rather than closed party or pact lists. To determine the number of candidates elected by each list, the Tribunal Electoral Regional totals the number of votes cast in favor of each candidate of the same list and uses the sums to determine the electoral quotient according to the formula standard to D'Hondt electoral systems. The electoral quotient is then used to determine the number of seats to which each pact or party is entitled. In the event that a pact has more candidates than council seats, the candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the pact are entitled to the council seat(s) awarded to the pact. See Articles 109 through 114 of the Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Municipalidades for a detailed explanation of these procedures and stipulations (González Moya 1992).

12. Grassroots leaders were interviewed in La Pincoya, Lo Hermida, and Yungay, three shantytowns in Greater Santiago, which, according to Schneider (1989, 218, 222), demonstrated during the dictatorship respectively high, medium, and low levels of organization and mobilization. These three types of communities provided a comparative basis on which to gauge the change in grassroots organization and mobilization since the democratic transition. The interviews revealed no significant distinction among the *poblaciones* in the levels of popular participation since that time. Despite their past differences, all these communities can now be characterized as having equally low levels of grassroots involvement in politics.

13. An anecdotal account will illustrate these circumstances. During a meeting of Neighborhood Association number 11 in Santiago on June 14, 2001, I inquired how many potential, as well as actual, members this association had. The group's president informed me that there were 40,000 potential members but only 150 actual members. Eight members were present at the meeting, which, they said, was the norm.

14. For these figures and an excellent historical analysis of popular organization and mobilization in Santiago, see Campero 1987.

15. Between November 1993 and July 1997, those identifying with the right or center-right of the political spectrum declined from 28 to 22 percent, those identifying with the center declined from 18 to 10 percent, and those identifying with the left or center declined from 37 to 21 percent. See CEP 1997 for these data.

16. The combined percentage of null and blank votes along with abstentions was 23.14 percent in 1996 and 20.46 in 2000 (Servicio Electoral República de Chile 1996, 2000). While these numbers may not seem significant in comparison with rates of voter turnout for local elections in the United States, it is important to recognize that voting in municipal elections in Chile is legally mandatory, and failure to do so is punishable by a substantial fine, nearly half the monthly minimum wage.

17. Forty-eight percent of low- and middle-income respondents gave this response. The figure for low-income respondents alone was 54.3 percent. The second most frequent response among low- and middle-income respondents to the question, "What do you think is the primary problem affecting your community?" was "too much bureaucracy." Less than 17 percent of low- and middle-income respondents indicated that too much bureaucracy was the primary problem in their municipalities. Thus local political leaders' failure to maintain contact with their communities was far and away the most significant problem these respondents identified.

18. Of course, the irony that did not occur to Galdames when making these statements is that it was key figures from his own party who, under the military regime, pressed for structural reforms that severely reduced state funding in education, health care, and other social programs on which poor communities like Conchali are so dependent.

19. This is essentially the same fiscal arrangement that existed before the coup, with similar negative repercussions for local government. In the precoup period, however, intense party competition and substantial state involvement in the economy gave local communities significant leverage in translating their

demands into resources from the central government. Today, competition among center-left parties and state involvement in the economy have both declined, leaving local communities with significantly diminished capacity for extracting state resources to meet their needs.

20. Chilean local government possesses the lowest borrowing autonomy among the 18 countries evaluated by the Inter-American Development Bank (1997, 176).

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