

# The ‘Gender Gap’ in Chile

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*Abstract.* Men and women in Chile register and vote at separate polling booths. Election results are also tabulated separately for each sex by the Ministry of Interior, down to commune level. A survey of national elections from 1952 to 1970 shows that women and men have different voting preferences. Moreover, results from the four congressional elections held since democracy was restored in 1989 demonstrate that those preferences persist to the present. By focusing on elections in the capital city of Santiago, which is divided into 52 communes (*barrios*) whose residents differ in their economic and educational levels, it is possible to see to what extent class and gender affect voting preferences. On the basis of an analysis of this data, this article concludes that women are consistently more likely than men to vote for conservative parties, and that this is true in every social class. Support for the left does rise among both sexes in the lower middle class, proletarian and peasant communes – but less among women than among men. The ‘gender gap’ is not usually very large (although it increases at both ends of the political spectrum), but it is persistent.

## *Introduction*

Do women turn out to vote as frequently as men, and when they vote are they more likely to favour candidates of the left or right? Does social class have an effect on gender voting, and if so what kind and how much? Are women more poorly informed and confused at the polls, and therefore more apt to mis-mark or spoil their ballots? Are they as likely as men to run for office, and if they do will other women be more likely than men to vote for them? If men and women in democratic countries registered and voted in separate polling places political scientists would have a lot of hard empirical data with which to answer these questions. Unfortunately, there are few occasions where this has happened.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, political scientists have had to depend on opinion research, which has tended either to give

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<sup>1</sup> Early studies that discuss sex-segregated voting include Maurice Duverger’s pioneering work, *The Political Role of Women* (Paris, 1955); Mattei Dogan and Jacques Narbonne, *Les Françaises face à la politique* (Paris, 1955). Federico Gil and Charles J. Parrish, *The Chilean Presidential Election of September 4, 1964: Part II* (Washington, 1965); Paul H. Lewis, ‘The Female Vote in Argentina, 1958–1965,’ *Comparative Political Studies* (January, 1971), pp. 425–41. More recently, Andrew Wilder, ‘Changing Patterns of Punjab Politics in Pakistan: National Assembly Election Results, 1988 and 1993,’ *Asian Survey*, vol. 35, no. 4

contradictory evidence about these matters or has failed to address all the above concerns. Chile, however, has had sex-segregated polling stations since women achieved the suffrage in 1949, and therefore provides the information necessary to show exactly how women voted (although without survey data we cannot know *why* they voted as they did).

This article therefore limits itself to describing whether, and how, Chilean women participated in elections in a different way to men. The data indicate that there are sex-related differences which, though not great, are consistent over time. They also show that class has a significant influence on voting in Chile, but not enough to cancel out gender differences. Chilean women in every social class tend to have higher participation rates than men at every stage in the electoral process. And in every social class they are more favourable to candidates of the right than are men, whether or not those candidates are women. For all of these reasons, Chile's experience with sex-segregated electoral registration and polling since 1949 is significant. This article examines statistical data on registration, turnout, null and blank votes, party or coalition preferences and relative support by sex for women candidates, providing, for at least one country, the most complete examination to date of gender differences at the polls.

Chilean women won the right to vote in national elections in 1949. Law Number 12,281 of that year provided for separate registration and polling stations for the two sexes in order to allow women more freedom to vote according to their preferences. This tradition was maintained by General Pinochet in a referendum held in 1980 to ratify a new constitution, and again in 1988 for a plebiscite on whether he should continue as president. As democracy was being restored, following Pinochet's defeat in 1988, two new electoral laws preserved the tradition of sex-segregated voting. Law Number 18,556 provides for the separate registration of men and women. Law Number 18,700 mandates separate polling places.

Administratively, Chile is divided into thirteen regions that are strung out on a narrow strip along South America's western coast, from the Peruvian border to Tierra del Fuego: a distance of about 2,600 miles. Before Pinochet these regions were subdivided into 25 provinces and over 300 communes. Under Pinochet the provinces were replaced by 51 electoral districts, which were then increased to 60, for electing deputies to the lower house of Congress (Chamber of Deputies), as he restored Chile to democratic rule. In addition, Pinochet created 19 'circumscriptions' for senatorial elections and 333 communes for municipal elections. Voters register and cast their ballots at sex-segregated *mesas* in their local commune.

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(April, 1995), pp. 377–93, examined some 48 polling booths where men and women voted separately to see whether they differed as to their party preferences.

Here I will focus on Chile's presidential elections and elections for the Chamber of Deputies from 1989 to 2001, using the statistics reported by the Ministry of Interior for the 60 electoral districts. Presidential elections are important because the 1980 Constitution puts so much power into the hands of the executive; deputy elections are arguably a better barometer of ideological preferences because they put less emphasis on personality factors. In each case I compare the percentage of the vote recorded for men and women to see whether female voters were more, or less, conservative than the males.

The left and right in Chile today revolve around two major coalitions of parties, which formed in response to two crucial factors. The first factor was the 1988 referendum on whether or not to extend General Pinochet's presidential term. All parties and factions that wanted to preserve the military government banded together to get out a 'yes' vote; all those who wanted to restore civilian democracy joined forces to campaign for a 'no' vote. These coalitions have more or less remained intact. The second factor was changes made by Pinochet in the electoral laws following his defeat in the referendum. Before Pinochet, if no presidential candidate received a majority, then a joint session of Congress, voting in secret, would choose the winner from the two front-runners. Allende, for example, was elected in 1970 with only 36.2 per cent of the vote. To prevent a repetition of such an occurrence, if no one gets a majority on the first ballot there is now a runoff between the two top candidates. Also, prior to Pinochet Chile used multimember districts with proportional representation for electing deputies. Predictably, the result was a multiparty system of narrowly based parties. Under Pinochet's new rules, each electoral district was allocated two seats, with the second seat going to the runner-up party if they polled at least 33.4 per cent of the vote.

Taken together, these factors have encouraged parties to form two broad electoral coalitions: a governing coalition and an opposition. Since 1989, the governing coalition has been the anti-Pinochet, centre-left Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (hereafter referred to as the centre-left) composed chiefly of the Christian Democrats (PDC), a moderate socialist Partido por la Democracia (PPD), a more orthodox Socialist Party of Chile, and remnants of the old middle-of-the road Radical Party. Opposing the centre-left is a coalition of entirely new parties representing conservative opinion: National Renovation (RN) and the Independent Democratic Union (UDI). Of the two the UDI stands much further to the right. Both of them accept the free market economic model introduced by Pinochet, but during the 1988 campaign for the plebiscite RN decided it was time to end military rule and supported the 'no' vote. In the post-Pinochet period RN has moved even more toward the centre, appealing to the small entrepreneurs and white collar workers who traditionally make up the right wing of the Christian

Democrats. The UDI, with links to Opus Dei, is unapologetic about the Pinochet years. Its core is formed by young activists from the Catholic University who carry its message of religion, family, and nation to the working classes – with some success, as we shall see. The RN/UDI alliance has campaigned under various labels: Democracia y Progreso, Unión por el Progreso de Chile, Unión por Chile and Alianza para Chile. I will refer to it hereafter as the centre-right.

The ways in which men and women reacted to the radical left, as represented by the Communist Party and its allies, was also an issue of analytical concern. Although the communists are much weaker today than they were before Pinochet, when they controlled the Central Union of Chilean Workers and influenced every coalition on the left, they still command between 4 and 8 per cent of the vote – more than any other minor party or coalition. In addition, an estimation of whether women register and turn out to vote to the extent men do, and whether they are more likely to mis-mark their ballots, is developed using national level statistics. The same exercise is carried out to chart the relative performance of the individual parties within the two big coalitions. In deputy elections coalition partners often abstain from competing in the same electoral districts, so their real relative strength is best seen in national-level terms.

Finally, it is important to know whether, and how much, social class affects gender voting. However, the electoral districts were much too large and heterogeneous to be useful units of analysis for the purpose of testing this, and this was true most of the time even at the commune level. Entire cities, such as Valparaíso, Concepción, Antofagasta and Talcahuano constitute communes. However, the Metropolitan Region of Santiago, where over 40 per cent of Chile's voters live, is divided into 52 communes (51 before 1993) whose populations, according to the 1992 Census, are sufficiently homogeneous to be able to characterise them along class lines. The last part of this study then incorporates class, as well as gender, in its analysis by focusing on Santiago Metro.

Before proceeding to the post-Pinochet elections, however, it will be useful to take a quick look at male/female differences in voting in the pre-Pinochet era, as well as during the two plebiscites under Pinochet. This will allow us to see whether there is any long-term continuity in the voting behaviour of Chilean males and females.

### *The gender gap before Pinochet*

Women voted in four presidential elections before the military took over in 1973: in 1952, 1958, 1964 and 1970. Under the law, registration and voting were obligatory, yet women were slow to take advantage of the ballot.

In 1952 only 29.7 per cent of those eligible to vote bothered to register, and of those who registered 12.4 per cent failed to vote. In 1958 the numbers were little better: 33.9 per cent registered but of those 13.9 abstained from voting. In 1964, however, the number of women who registered, as well as the number who voted, more than doubled – from around half a million in 1958 to over a million. This was still only 45.3 per cent of the eligible women voters, but among those registered abstentionism dropped to just under 10 per cent. The 1970 presidential race saw female registration rise to a peak of 1,665,988, or 47 per cent of the eligible women voters, with 86.2 per cent of those (1,436,808 voters) turning up at the polls. Their importance in the electorate had also increased apace, partly because men failed to register or vote in even greater numbers. In 1952 some 32.3 per cent of all voters were females. That rose slightly in 1958, to 35.1 per cent, and then shot up to 44.1 per cent in 1964. By 1970, women made up just under half of the electorate, at 48.8 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

Table 1, which summarises the results of presidential elections in this period, shows that, as voters, women demonstrated a definite preference for candidates and parties on the right. They also favoured the more reformist Christian Democrats. However, they consistently voted against Salvador Allende, the Marxist-Socialist candidate in all four elections – and by wide margins.

In 1952 women, like men, gave a plurality of their votes to General Carlos Ibañez, a populist/nationalist, but their 43 per cent was 5.4 percentage points below the male vote. Conversely, their 32 per cent cast for the rightwing Liberal party candidate, Arturo Matte, was 6 percentage points above his vote among males. Salvador Allende, who made his first appearance as the Socialists' presidential candidate, got 5.8 per cent of the male vote but only 4.6 per cent of the female vote. In 1958 the women's vote was crucial to the narrow victory that the conservative Jorge Alessandri eked out over Salvador Allende, who ran at the head of a Socialist/Communist alliance called the Frente de Acción Popular (FRAP). Alessandri gained 31.6 per cent of the total vote, to 28.9 for Allende. Men preferred Allende, by 32.4 to 30.2 per cent; but women gave Alessandri 34.1 per cent of their vote and only 22.3 per cent to Allende. Clearly, Allende's 'gender gap' of 10 percentage points among women kept him from winning. Federico Gil, a contemporary observer, concluded that 'women have come to play an almost decisive role in Chilean elections.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ricardo Cruz-Coke, *Historia electoral de Chile, 1925–1973* (Santiago, 1984), 35–43; Germán Urzua Valenzuela, *Historia política de Chile y su evolución electoral (desde 1810 a 1992)* (Santiago, 1992), p. 553.

<sup>3</sup> Federico Gil, *The Political System of Chile* (Boston, 1966), pp. 212–15.

Table 1. *Male and Female Presidential Preferences (1952-1970)*

Candidates	1952				1958				1964				1970			
	% of Total	% of Male	% of Female	F/M Diff	% of Total	% of Male	% of Female	F/M Diff	% of Total	% of Male	% of Female	F/M Diff	% of Total	% of Male	% of Female	F/M Diff
<i>Conservatives</i>																
Matte	27.8	26.0	32.0	+6.0												
Alessandri					31.6	30.2	34.1	+3.9					34.98	31.86	38.88	+7.02
<i>Socialists</i>																
Allende	5.5	5.8	4.6	-1.2	28.9	32.4	22.3	-10.1	38.93	45.16	32.08	-13.08	36.30	42.02	30.97	-11.05
<i>Christ.Dem</i>																
Frei					20.7	19.0	23.9	+4.9	56.09	49.66	63.15	+13.49				
Tomic													27.84	26.12	30.15	+4.03
<i>Radicals</i>																
Alfonso	19.9	19.8	20.2	+0.4												
Bossay					15.6	15.2	16.1	+0.9								
Durán									4.98	5.18	4.77	-0.41				
<i>Independents</i>																
Ibañez	46.8	48.4	43.0	-5.4												
Zamorano					3.3	3.2	3.6	+0.4								

Source: Federico G. Gil and Charles J. Parrish, *The Chilean Presidential Election of September 4, 1964: Part II* (Washington 1965), pp. 9-11, 27-30.

The importance of the female vote was even more obvious in the 1964 election. Eduardo Frei, the Christian Democrat, won with 56.09 per cent of the total vote to Salvador Allende's 38.93 per cent. (Julio Durán, of the Radical party, got the remaining 4.98 per cent.) Among male voters, however, the race was much closer: 49.66 per cent – less than a majority – voted for Frei, and 45.16 per cent preferred Allende. It was among women voters that Frei achieved his landslide, by a margin of 63.15 per cent to 32.08 per cent for Allende, who in this election suffered from a 13 percentage-point gender gap. This pattern was repeated throughout the country. Statistics for this election are available for all of the 25 provinces that Chile was then divided into. In every one of those 25 provinces the female vote for Allende was lower, and their vote for Frei was higher, than the male vote. In 21 provinces the gender gap was in double-digits.<sup>4</sup>

Were the high level of female support for Frei and the sudden increase in women's registration and voting due to his being a Christian Democrat and therefore appealing to their presumed religiosity? Since Frei also ran on a programme of social and economic reform, would this mean that Chilean women voters were not so much conservative as church-oriented? Circumstantial evidence suggests that this was not the case. Frei first ran for president as a Christian Democrat in 1958, finishing third behind Alessandri and Allende. Although he was the second choice among women, he still finished 10 percentage-points behind Alessandri among female voters. Frei's big margin of victory in 1964 came about, in large part, because Alessandri was ineligible to succeed himself as president. With nowhere else to go, the conservative vote swung to Frei in order to stop Allende.

When Alessandri became eligible to run again in 1970, the election was nearly a repeat of the 1958 race, except that this time Allende narrowly beat Alessandri. That was because Radimiro Tomic, the Christian Democrats' third-place candidate, drew enough female support to prevent Alessandri from winning. Allende came in first with 36.2 per cent of the total vote to 34.9 per cent for Alessandri and 27.8 per cent for Tomic. Alessandri was the women's first choice, and their vote for him was higher than the male vote in every one of the 25 provinces, ranging from a low of 2.02 percentage points to a high of 13.19 points. Nationally, the female vote for Alessandri was 7.02 points higher than the male vote. The female vote for Tomic also outstripped the male vote in 22 of 25 provinces, and was 4.03 percentage points higher nationally. Allende's victory rested upon the heavy support he received from males, which was over 11 percentage points above the female vote. That was

<sup>4</sup> Federico G. Gil and Charles J. Parrish, *The Chilean Presidential Election of September 4, 1964, Part II* (Washington, DC, 1965), pp. 14–16.

sufficient to put him in first place, even though he actually got a lower percentage of the vote among both men and women than he had in 1964.<sup>5</sup>

*The gender gap under Pinochet*

Electoral data suggest that military rule failed to shake Chilean women voters out of their conservatism. In September 1980 General Pinochet submitted his new constitution to a national plebiscite. Since there was little opportunity for any opposition to express itself the results, in which 67.7 per cent voted 'yes' and only 31.1 per cent voted 'no', should be regarded with some caution. With that caveat in mind, it is still worth noting that 70.2 per cent of women voters cast 'yes' ballots, to only 61 per cent of men.<sup>6</sup>

Much more representative of public opinion was the October 1988 referendum on whether or not to give General Pinochet another eight-year presidential term. Campaigning was more open and intense; the number of registered voters had grown from 3,539,757 in 1970 to 7,216,391 (or from 83.5 per cent of those eligible to 90.3 per cent); and the turnout rate also rose from 83.5 per cent of those registered in 1970 to 96.9 per cent. Women were now a majority of the voters (51.6 per cent) and their turnout rate was higher: 97.3 per cent to 96.5 for males. A majority of both men and women voted 'no' and so put an end to Pinochet's rule, but the male vote was more overwhelming: 58.4 per cent (no) to 39.5 (yes), whereas the female vote was much closer, at 51.1 per cent (no) to 46.3 (yes). Prior to the plebiscite Pinochet had replaced the 25 provinces as electoral units with 51 newly-drawn districts. A majority of males voted 'yes' in only 12 of those districts, none of which were in the four northernmost regions of Tarapacá, Antofagasta, Atacama and Coquimbo, where mining dominates the economy and communist labour unions have traditionally had their main stronghold. On the other hand, a majority of females voted 'yes' in 25 districts – nearly half – and in six of the twelve districts that comprise those northern desert mining regions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Germán Urzua, *Historia política electoral de Chile (1931–1973)* (Santiago, 1986), p. 152. Allende got 32.08 per cent of the female vote in 1964, but only 30.97 per cent in 1970. Men gave him 45.16 per cent of their votes in 1964, but only 42.02 per cent in 1970. In all 25 provinces Allende did worse among women, with the gap running from a low of 4.57 percentage-points to a high of 22.82.

<sup>6</sup> César N. Caviedes, *Elections in Chile: The Road Toward Redemocratization* (Boulder, 1991), p. 30; Urzua, *Historia política de Chile y su evolución electoral*, p. 728. Blank votes were counted as 'yes' votes. The remaining 2.77 per cent of the votes were presumably spoiled ballots.

<sup>7</sup> Caviedes, *Elections in Chile*, pp. 36–7, 40–1; Delia M. Del Gatto R. and Cecilia Gómez B., *Actitud de la mujer hacia la política: análisis de su comportamiento electoral* (Santiago, 1989), pp. 15–19; Cruz-Coke, *Historia electoral*, pp. 37, 105, 112; *El Mercurio*, 14 December 1989, p. C-9.



Reviewing these results, César Caviedes, a Chilean political scientist, concluded that they 'reiterate the established fact that Chilean female voting patterns are independent from male patterns and disprove the assumption that Chilean men impose their voting preferences on their spouses or companions'. On the contrary, 'on numerous occasions men and women have demonstrated their divergent voting behaviour, and this lack of unanimity has proved detrimental more to leftist electoral options than to centrist or rightist issues and candidates'.<sup>8</sup>

*Presidential elections after Pinochet*

Presidential elections were held in 1989, 1993 and 1999. Table 2 summarises the results, including the runoff for the December 1999 race, held in January 2000. All three were won by the centre-left Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia's candidates: the first two by a wide margin, the third one only narrowly. In each election, however, the centre-left candidate got less support from women than from men, while the opposite was true for the centre-right candidate. In 1989 Hernán Büchi, a former finance minister under Pinochet, received more support from women than men in 59 of the 60 electoral districts, the exception being in southernmost district of Magallanes, where his support was about equal between the sexes. The same was true for Arturo Alessandri, nephew of former President Alessandri, who headed the centre-right ticket in 1993. Both Büchi and Alessandri lost badly, even among women, but women nevertheless made up a majority of their supporters. The female vote for Alessandri ran ahead of the male vote in all 60 electoral districts. In the 1999–2000 election a majority of women voted for the centre-right's Joaquín Lavín. He too got more female than male votes in all 60 electoral districts. The male vote, however, went to the eventual winner, Ricardo Lagos.

Women were consistently less supportive of the centre-left than men were. Although a majority of them voted for Patricio Aylwin in 1989 and Eduardo Frei Ruiz Tagle, son of ex-President Frei, in 1993, they did so to a lesser degree than men. Lagos, on the other hand, lost the female vote – not just nationally but in all 60 districts. Of the three centre-left candidates Frei did the best by managing to get more votes from women than men in eleven districts. Aylwin and Frei were Christian Democrats, whereas Lagos was a moderate socialist from the PPD. That may account for his worse showing among women, for he had served in the Marxist

<sup>8</sup> Caviedes, *Elections in Chile*, pp. 36–7, 40–41.

Table 2. *Male and Female Presidential Preferences (1989–2000)*

Candidates	1989				1993				1999 (1st Rd)				2000 (2nd Rd)			
	% of Total	% of Male	% of Female	F/M Diff	% of Total	% of Male	% of Female	F/M Diff	% of Total	% of Male	% of Female	F/M Diff	% of Total	% of Male	% of Female	F/M Diff
<i>Conservatives (Center-Right)</i>																
Büchi	29.40	26.01	32.52	+6.51												
Alessandri					24.41	22.65	26.02	+3.37								
Lavin									47.51	44.09	50.58	+6.49	48.69	45.73	51.35	+5.62
<i>Concertación (Center-Left)</i>																
Aylwin	55.17	59.04	51.60	-7.44												
Frei					57.98	58.51	57.50	-1.01								
Lagos									47.96	50.86	45.36	-5.50	51.31	54.27	48.65	-5.62
<i>Communists</i>																
Pizarro					4.70	5.52	3.95	-1.57								
Marín									3.19	3.69	2.75	-0.94				
<i>Independents (Right)</i>																
Errázuriz	15.43	14.96	15.87	+0.91												
Piñera					6.18	6.29	6.09	-0.20								
Frei-Bolivia									0.38	0.39	0.37	-0.02				
<i>(Left)</i>																
Neef					5.55	5.85	5.29	-0.56								
Reitze					1.17	1.18	1.16	-0.02								
Larrain									0.44	0.42	0.47	+0.05				
Hirsch									0.51	0.56	0.47	-0.09				

Source: Chile, Ministry of Interior (<http://www.elecciones.gov.cl/paginas>).

administration of Salvador Allende, from 1970 to 1973. Support for this hypothesis comes from women's propensity to shun the Communist Party at the polls.

The Communist Party was still outlawed in 1989, and so presented no presidential candidate, but it did field a candidate in the subsequent two presidential elections. In both cases, the communists got far more support from men than from women in every one of the 60 electoral districts. In the 1999 race the communist candidate was a woman: Gladys Marín Millie. This presented an opportunity to see whether a female candidate would attract a larger female vote. As it turned out, Marín's share of the total vote was even less than that for her predecessor, Eugenio Pizarro, among both women and men. Still, she provided the necessary margin for Lagos to win the presidency in the runoff.

Independents displayed no particular pattern of support. Francisco Javier Errázuriz, an independent conservative from one of Chile's 'first families', refused to back the centre-right's Büchi because he was a member of the Unión Democrática Independiente, and therefore too Catholic and right-wing for Chilean 'big business'. Errázuriz pulled votes away from Büchi and was slightly more acceptable to women than to men. None of the subsequent independents from the right got as many votes as he did or managed to get more female than male votes. Independents from the left did even worse. Neef, Reitze, and Larrain were environmentalists, the latter two actually members of the tiny Green party. Hirsch was the nominee of the 'New Left' Humanist party. All of them ran far behind the major coalitions. In general, this period has seen the decline of third parties in Chile, and a trend toward bipolarity, concentrating electoral power in the centre-left and centre-right coalitions.

The closeness of the 1999 presidential election brings up the question of whether the resurgence of the centre-right is a long-term trend or merely the result of personal factors. Those who believe that long-term trends were reflected in the outcome point to the fact that the centre-left Concertación is increasingly divided between its Christian Democrat and Socialist components, and that the Christian Democrats, traditionally the senior partners, are in turn divided into left and right wings. These strains became public in 1993 when the Christian Democrats imposed their presidential candidate, Eduardo Frei Ruiz Tagle, son of ex-President Frei, on the coalition. This was done over the objection of Ricardo Lagos, head of the socialist PPD, who thought it was his turn. Lagos subsequently secured the Concertación's nomination for the 1999 race by defeating the Christian Democrats' choice in the primaries, but only at the cost of seeing the more conservative Christian Democrats desert to the centre-right, taking with them many female supporters. Those who support the long-term trend thesis also allege

that, after a decade in power, the centre-left faced an electorate that was growing tired of them.<sup>9</sup>

Observers who stress the personality factor in the closeness of the 1999 race point to the fact that as a candidate Lagos was 'self-righteous, solitary, and severe'. Physically unattractive, he had a nervous tic that 'was mercilessly picked up on television'. By contrast, Lavín, though a leader of the far-right UDI and a member of Opus Dei, was younger, more handsome, jovial and outgoing. He ran a populist campaign, going out to the poor barrios and rural districts to 'press the flesh', and his vague promises of 'change' attracted many poor voters who might otherwise have supported the centre-left.<sup>10</sup>

### *Congressional elections after Pinochet*

Since it is true that voters in presidential elections may be more candidate-oriented, one way to test whether the centre-right's resurgence was only a reflection of Lavín's personality is to look at the elections for congress that preceded and came after it. Elections for congressional deputies came in 1989, 1993, 1997 and 2001. After 1993 the constitution was changed to extend the presidential term from four to six years, meaning that presidential and congressional elections would no longer be held simultaneously. Table 3 provides the results of the congressional elections in 1989, 1993, 1997 and 2001 for each of the three most important coalitions: the centre-left, the centre-right, and the communists and their allies. In these races, independent candidates will sometimes run in a district, but will pledge their votes to one of the coalitions. If a coalition wins a seat, it goes to the candidate with the most votes, which occasionally is an independent. Although officially illegal in 1989, the Communist Party nevertheless backed a coalition called the Broad Party of the Socialist Left (PAIS).

After reaching a peak of support in 1993, the centre-left began to decline, losing even more ground among men than among women. Its sharpest drop occurred between 1993 and 1997, before the Lagos/Lavín race, apparently because the communists were pulling votes away from it. It declined even further among both sexes after the 1999 presidential race. This time it seems that Lavín had reinvigorated the centre-right while the communists lost ground. By 2001 the centre-right had greatly increased its support among both males and females and narrowed the gap between itself and the governing coalition.

<sup>9</sup> Paul W. Drake and Peter Winn, 'The Presidential Election of 1999/2000 and Chile's Transition to Democracy,' <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu>, pp. 1–4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3; Arturo Fontaine Talavera, 'Chile's Elections: The New Face of the Right,' *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2000), pp. 70–1.

Table 3. *Male and Female Congressional Preferences (1989–2001)*

Coalition	1989	1993	1997	2001
<i>Centre-Left (Concertación)</i>				
% of total vote	51.49	55.40	50.51	47.90
% of male vote	54.17	56.30	51.04	49.09
% of female vote	49.03	54.59	50.05	46.88
F/M difference	-5.14	-1.71	-0.99	-2.21
No. Deputies elected	69	70	69	60
<i>Centre-Right</i>				
% of total vote	38.20	36.38	36.36	44.27
% of male vote	35.13	34.85	34.10	41.85
% of female vote	41.03	38.33	38.14	46.36
F/M difference	+5.90	+3.48	+4.04	+4.51
No. Deputies elected	48	50	47	56
<i>Communists &amp; Allies</i>				
% of total vote	4.38	6.39	7.49	5.21
% of male vote	4.77	7.26	8.93	6.21
% of female vote	4.02	5.60	6.24	4.31
F/M difference	-0.75	-1.66	-2.69	-1.95
No. Deputies elected	0	0	0	0

Source: Chile, Ministry of Interior.

As for the relative influence (if any) of presidential candidates on the congressional races, it is interesting to note that both Aylwin and Frei polled slightly ahead of the rest of the Concertación ticket, even among women. At the same time, the centre-right presidential candidates, Büssi and Alessandri, ran substantially behind their congressional tickets – by about nine and twelve percentage points, respectively. These were races in which a president and Chamber of Deputies were elected simultaneously. The influence of Lagos and Lavín on the congressional races is harder to estimate, but if we take the 1997 and 2001 congressional elections and compare them to the 1999 presidential results in Table 2 we get the impression that Lavín may have permanently helped the centre-right and that Lagos has failed to reverse the centre-left's gradual decline. The 2001 congressional elections transferred nine seats in the Chamber from the centre-left to the centre-right. Among both sexes the races are closer now than ever before.

So far we have looked only at the relative strength of the two broad coalitions, but what about the relative strength of the political parties composing those coalitions? Table 4 summarises their performance throughout the four congressional elections. The centre-left Concertación appears to be in trouble, although at the time of writing it remained the governing coalition. The Christian Democrats, once the country's largest party, have been in decline since 1993, among both men and women. Their main coalition partner, the PPD, has made slight gains but not enough to offset the PDC's

Table 4. *Political Parties and Gender Support (Legislative Elections: 1989–2001)*

The Centre-Left	1989	1993	1997	2001
Christian Democrats				
% of total vote	25.99	27.12	22.98	18.92
% of male vote	26.67	26.93	22.88	19.16
% of female vote	25.36	27.29	23.06	18.71
F/M difference	-1.31	+0.36	+0.18	-0.45
No. Candidates	45	48	55	54
No. Elected	38	37	38	22
Partido por la Democracia				
% of total vote	11.45	11.84	12.55	12.72
% of male vote	12.23	12.02	12.56	12.92
% of female vote	10.74	11.69	12.54	12.55
F/M difference	-1.49	-0.33	-0.02	-0.37
No. Candidates	25	25	29	24
No. Elected	16	15	16	20
Socialist Party of Chile				
% of total vote	0.15*	11.93	11.05	10.00
% of male vote	0.14	12.50	11.50	10.52
% of female vote	0.16	11.41	10.66	9.56
F/M difference	+0.01	-1.09	-0.84	-0.96
No. Candidates	1	28	26	21
No. Elected	0	15	11	10
The Centre Right				
Renovación Nacional				
% of total vote	18.28	16.31	16.77	13.76
% of male vote	16.74	15.52	15.86	13.11
% of female vote	19.69	17.02	17.56	14.32
F/M difference	+2.95	+1.50	+1.70	+1.21
No. Candidates	66	41	52	45
No. Elected	29	29	23	17
Unión Nacional Democrática				
% of total vote	9.82	12.11	14.45	25.19
% of male vote	8.71	11.19	13.28	23.52
% of female vote	10.84	12.95	15.47	26.64
F/M difference	+2.13	+1.76	+2.19	+3.12
No. Candidates	30	29	47	54
No. Elected	11	15	17	31

*Source:* Chile, Ministry of Interior. Numbers do not include votes for, and seats allocated to, independent candidates or minor parties running under the coalitions' labels.

\* The Socialist Party of Chile was not a Concertación member in 1989.

losses. The Concertación's third component, the Socialist Party of Chile, has also been declining in strength since 1993. All three parties currently have a modest gender gap, as women clearly seem to prefer the centre-right. Both of the two main centre-right parties have a positive gender gap among females, but women seem to prefer the more rightwing UDI. The UDI is now Chile's largest party, having taken over as senior partner of the centre-right coalition

sometime after 1997, probably with Lavín's 1999 presidential candidacy, since he was its general secretary. These gender gaps should not be exaggerated, however, because these electoral shifts from left to right have occurred among both men and women, although at slightly different rates.

Several observers have noted that an increasing number of Chileans, especially young people, are failing to register or vote. Since 1993 voter registration has been voluntary, and for those who register but fail to vote the penalties are minimal. In addition, it is alleged that an increasing number of voters, alienated from a political class that has grown distant and reluctant to bring about social reforms, have spoiled their ballots in protest. This has changed the demographics of the electorate, according to Manuel Antonio Garretón, resulting in fewer young voters and a higher proportion of women.<sup>11</sup>

Calculating electoral turnout is fairly easy if we only want to know how many registered voters went to the polls; but it becomes more complicated if we wish to know how many *eligible* voters registered. To calculate the latter I took estimates of Chile's total population for every year that there was a presidential or congressional election. Then, using the 1992 Census as a base, I estimated that the men and women of voting age (18 or over) was 65 per cent of the total population and that males constituted 48 per cent of that. That gave me my universe of eligible potential voters, against which I could use official electoral statistics to measure what proportion of the eligible population registered, and of those what proportion actually voted. I was also able to calculate how many of those voting cast spoiled and blank ballots.

Table 5 confirms, at least in part, the generalisations about decreasing electoral participation cited above. It appears that since 1993 more Chileans, of both sexes, have been failing to register. There has been a relative decline among females and an absolute decline among males. Moreover, there has been an absolute decline among both sexes in the number and percentage of those registered who actually vote in congressional elections. Since this decline is sharper among males there has been gradual increase in the percentage of voters casting a ballot who are women. Of those who vote, there has also been a sharp increase in the proportion of null and blank ballots. This reached a truly disturbing peak in the 1997 congressional elections, when over one voter in six either spoiled his or her ballot or voted for no one. This decreased somewhat in the 2001 elections, but still remained in

<sup>11</sup> Drake and Winn, 'Presidential Election of 1999/2000,' pp. 2–4; Brian Loveman, *Chile: The Legacy of Hispanic Capitalism*, 3rd ed. (New York, 2001), pp. 319, 323; Manuel Antonio Garretón, 'Chile's Elections: Change and Continuity,' *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2000), p. 81.

Table 5. *Participation in Congressional Elections, by Sex*

Type of Participation	1989	1993	1997	2001
<i>Total eligible voters (est.)</i>	8,405,800	8,978,645	9,503,000	10,017,420
MALES	4,034,784	4,309,750	4,561,440	4,808,361
FEMALES	4,371,016	4,668,895	4,941,560	5,209,059
<i>Registered Voters</i>	7,557,537	8,085,493	8,077,743	8,075,446
% of eligible voters	89.91	90.05	85.00	80.61
MALES	3,664,857	3,903,135	3,882,755	3,866,635
% of eligible males	90.83	90.57	85.12	80.41
% of registered voters	48.49	48.27	48.07	47.88
FEMALES	3,892,685	4,182,358	4,194,988	4,208,811
% of eligible females	89.06	89.58	84.89	80.79
% of registered voters	51.51	51.73	51.93	52.12
<i>Actual Voters</i>	7,158,646	7,385,016	7,046,351	6,991,504
% of registered voters	94.72	91.34	87.23	86.58
MALES	3,428,300	3,518,805	3,318,336	3,288,065
% of registered males	93.55	90.15	85.46	85.04
% of actual voters	47.89	47.65	47.09	47.03
FEMALES	3,730,346	3,866,211	3,728,015	3,703,439
% of registered females	95.83	92.44	88.87	87.99
% of actual voters	52.11	52.35	52.91	52.97
<i>Null and Blank Votes</i>	361,524	646,157	1,250,578	884,364
% of total votes	5.05	8.75	17.75	12.65
MALES	174,162	320,386	620,673	453,787
% of male votes	5.08	9.10	18.70	13.80
FEMALES	187,362	325,771	629,905	430,577
% of female votes	5.02	8.43	16.90	11.63

Source: Chile, 1992 Census; Chile, Ministry of Interior; and *El Mercurio*, 14 December 1989, p.A-10, for 1989 voter registration figures.

double-digits. Throughout this entire period men were more likely than women to mis-mark their ballots or cast blank ones.

In 1989 and 1993 the percentage of registered voters who turned out to vote in the presidential and congressional elections, which were held simultaneously, was almost exactly the same. There were many fewer null and blank ballots in the presidential races, however: about half as many in 1989 and 40 per cent fewer in 1993. In each case the drop was almost exactly the same for men and women. The 1999–2000 presidential race was a different story. In the first round, only 82 per cent of the men and women presumably eligible to vote actually registered, thus continuing the decline that had set in after 1993. However, given the closeness of the race voter turnout increased: to 88.51 per cent of males and 91.27 per cent of females (compared to 87.23 per cent and 88.87 per cent, respectively, in 1997). Moreover, the null and blank votes dropped sharply: to only 2.91 per cent of male voters and 3.04 per cent of female voters, as compared to 18.70 per cent and 16.90 per cent, respectively, in 1997. With excitement at a high pitch, the second round saw



an increase in voters of both sexes casting their ballots: 90.50 per cent of registered males and 91.63 per cent of females went to the polls. Null and blank votes dropped even further, to 1.96 per cent of all male votes cast and 2.07 per cent of all female votes.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, women in contemporary Chile have been *less* likely than men to cast null or blank ballots in most elections. This seems particularly true when high levels of such voting patterns seem to reflect feelings of protest. In the past, women were slightly less likely to register as voters, but that changed in the two most recent elections. Once registered, women are less likely than men to abstain from voting. As voters, they consistently lean toward the right. This does not mean that most women always vote for the right. Throughout this period the centre-left obtained majorities, or at least pluralities, from women voters. What this does mean, however, is that a larger percentage of women than men always vote for the right, while a larger percentage of men than women always vote for the left. There is a definite, persistent gender gap, though it is not large. Unlike pre-Pinochet Chile, it remains in single-digits.

#### *Class and gender in metropolitan Santiago*

Metropolitan Santiago is one of Chile's 13 administrative regions. It contains 39 per cent of both the country's population and total voters. Sixteen of the 60 electoral districts are located there, allowing the region to elect 32 congressional deputies. Females constitute 52 per cent of Santiago's population, as compared to 51 per cent nationally. In terms of electoral participation, a slightly higher percentage of eligible voters register and go to the polls, and these participation rates tend to be higher for women than for men. Women comprise 54 per cent of all registered and active voters in Santiago, as compared to 52 per cent nationally. Null and blank voting in congressional races has been slightly lower than the national average, except for the 2001 election. Males are slightly more likely to cast such votes.

In the 1989 congressional elections the centre-left was stronger in Santiago Metro, and the centre-right weaker, than was the case nationally, as a comparison of Tables 3 and 6 will indicate. That was true of both sexes. In 1993, the centre-left's vote rose, but to a lesser extent than it did nationally. Thereafter it fell rather sharply, as Table 6 shows, so that by 2001 it was between eight and nine percentage points lower than its 1993 peak among both men and women. In part, this was due to a steady growth in the centre-right's support; but – especially between 1993 and 1997 – it also reflected competition from a revived Communist Party. Gender gaps in Santiago Metro tend to be slightly larger than the national average: more strongly favourable to the centre-right, more strongly unfavourable to the centre-left

Table 6. *Male and Female Congressional Preferences (Metropolitan Santiago)*

Coalition	1989	1993	1997	2001
<i>Centre-Left (Concertación)</i>				
% of total vote	52.70	54.70	47.78	45.84
% of male vote	55.61	55.66	48.71	46.95
% of female vote	50.20	53.89	47.01	44.93
F/M difference	-5.41	-1.77	-1.70	-2.02
No. Deputies elected	20	18	17	16
<i>Centre-Right</i>				
% of total vote	34.53	36.66	38.35	45.66
% of male vote	31.26	34.66	35.27	42.84
% of female vote	37.33	38.37	40.90	47.97
F/M difference	+6.07	+3.71	+5.63	+5.13
No. Deputies elected	12	14	15	16
<i>Communists &amp; Allies</i>				
% of total vote	4.40	6.47	9.12	6.26
% of male vote	4.76	7.49	10.98	7.70
% of female vote	4.09	5.60	7.57	5.08
F/M difference	-0.67	-1.89	-3.41	-2.62
No. Deputies elected	0	0	0	0

*Source:* Chile, Ministry of Interior.

and communists. Nevertheless, men, too, have been shifting their votes toward the centre-right, which has finally achieved parity with the Concertación in terms of congressional representation from Santiago. In conformity with national trends, the far-right UDI has replaced the Christian Democrats as the leading party. This is true among both men and women, although the UDI draws more of its support from women.

The Santiago Metro region contains both the nation's capital as well as surrounding countryside in the fertile central valley. It is bounded to the east by the Andes Mountains and to the west by a coastal range of mountains. Thus, its 52 communes comprise both highly urban and some rural populations. In addition to giving each commune's population, Chile's 1992 Census also provides statistics on educational levels and how many people are employed in the primary, secondary, and tertiary economic sectors. Since information about incomes was not available, level of education became a surrogate. Using these data, I classified Santiago's communes as follows: (1) **Upper Class:** 30 per cent or more had some higher education; under 20 per cent were employed in the primary or secondary sectors; (2) **Upper Middle Class:** 15-29 per cent had some higher education, and under 35 per cent were in the primary or secondary sectors; (3) **Lower Middle Class:** less than 15 per cent had some higher education, and under 35 per cent were in the primary or secondary sectors; (4) **Proletarian Communes:** 50 per cent or more of the population had only primary education, or no education, and

35 per cent or more were in the secondary sector; **Peasant Communes:** 50 per cent or more had only primary, or no, education, while 35 per cent or more worked in the primary sector.<sup>12</sup>

As Table 7 shows, regardless of their class women were almost always more inclined to vote for the centre-right than men, and almost always – regardless of class – less inclined to vote for the centre-left or the communists. Furthermore, these gender gaps had an overall tendency to increase as one descended the class ladder. Put another way, upper class men and women tended to vote more alike (that is, more conservatively) than did proletarian or peasant men and women. Not surprisingly, upper class people of both sexes voted overwhelmingly for the centre-right throughout the entire period, and their support rose constantly. The centre-left's political dominance rested on upper-middle class, lower-middle class, and proletarian voters of both sexes. After 1993, however, that support gradually waned. Although the Concertación continued to win pluralities in the lower-middle class and proletarian communes, it lost its primacy in the upper middle class, and among lower-middle class and proletarian women its pluralities were very slim. The peasant communes seemed to be the most divided along gender lines, with women usually voting conservative and men more likely to favour the left. In every class, however, the centre-right was in a stronger position in 2001 than it had been in 1993.

Because the Ministry of Interior published no statistics on registration or null and blank ballots at the commune level for 1989, it was impossible to do an accurate analysis of electoral participation by both class and gender. With only valid votes to work with, there was no way of telling whether a rise or decline in a commune's vote was due to abstentionism or a change in population. With that caveat in mind, I will simply report that throughout Santiago Metro there was a 14.7 per cent decrease in valid votes, when comparing the 1989 and 2001 elections. That decrease was even greater for males: a drop of 17.48 per cent. Thirteen of 51 communes had an increase in the number of valid votes cast, however. Seven of those were in the 'peasant commune' category, where population density was the lowest. The 'peasant' category as a whole increased its share of the total Santiago Metro vote, and the 'upper class' category suffered the smallest decrease. As Table 8

<sup>12</sup> **Upper Class Communes:** La Reina, Las Condes, Providencia, Vitacura. **Upper Middle Class Communes:** Lo Barnechea, Ñuñoa, Macul, San Miguel, Santiago. **Lower Middle Class Communes:** Buin, Cerrillos, Estación Central, Independencia, La Cisterna, La Florida, Lo Prado, Maipo, Quinta Normal, San José de Maipo, Talagante. **Proletarian Communes:** Cerro Navia, Conchalí, El Bosque, Huechuraba, La Granja, La Pintana, Lo Espejo, Pedro Aguirre Cerdo, Peñaflor, Peñaloén, Pudahuel, Puente Alto, Quilicura, Recoleta, Renca, San Bernardo, San Joaquín, San Ramón. **Peasant Communes:** Alhué, Calera de Tango, Colina, Curacaví, El Monte, Isla de Maipó, Lampa, María Pinto, Melipilla, Padre Hurtado, Paine, Pirque, San Pedro, Tiltil.

Table 7. *Congressional Voting by Class and Sex (Metropolitan Santiago Communes)* **BOLD** = won majority or plurality

I. Upper class (N=4)					II. Upper middle class (N=5)					III. Lower middle class (N=11)				
A. <i>The Centre-Right Vote</i>					A. <i>The Centre-Right Vote</i>					A. <i>The Centre-Right Vote</i>				
	Ave.			F/M		Ave.			F/M		Ave.			F/M
Year	Vote	Males	Females	diff	Year	Vote	Males	Females	diff	Year	Vote	Males	Females	diff
1989	<b>58.24</b>	<b>58.16</b>	<b>58.67</b>	+0.51	1989	37.37	34.68	39.61	+4.93	1989	33.80	30.49	36.76	+6.27
1993	<b>61.45</b>	<b>61.87</b>	<b>61.15</b>	-0.72	1993	41.30	39.86	42.48	+2.62	1993	36.42	33.95	38.27	+4.32
1997	<b>60.73</b>	<b>60.39</b>	<b>60.99</b>	+0.60	1997	41.16	39.19	42.76	+3.57	1997	36.77	33.79	39.32	+5.53
2001	<b>64.29</b>	<b>64.07</b>	<b>64.45</b>	+0.38	2001	<b>49.60</b>	<b>47.51</b>	<b>50.91</b>	+3.40	2001	44.40	41.63	46.64	+5.01
B. <i>The Centre-Left Vote</i>					B. <i>The Centre-Left Vote</i>					B. <i>The Centre-Left Vote</i>				
	Ave.			F/M		Ave.			F/M		Ave.			F/M
Year	Vote	Males	Females	diff	Year	Vote	Males	Females	diff	Year	Vote	Males	Females	diff
1989	35.95	36.36	35.64	-0.72	1989	<b>47.74</b>	<b>49.91</b>	<b>45.87</b>	-4.04	1989	<b>53.77</b>	<b>56.78</b>	<b>51.18</b>	-5.60
1993	34.62	34.26	34.88	+0.62	1993	<b>49.68</b>	<b>50.29</b>	<b>49.17</b>	-1.12	1993	<b>56.14</b>	<b>57.01</b>	<b>54.94</b>	-2.07
1997	32.57	32.66	32.51	-0.15	1997	<b>46.46</b>	<b>46.85</b>	<b>46.15</b>	-0.70	1997	<b>48.67</b>	<b>49.57</b>	<b>47.88</b>	-1.69
2001	31.52	31.26	31.72	+0.56	2001	42.63	43.03	42.30	-0.73	2001	<b>48.01</b>	<b>48.87</b>	<b>47.19</b>	-1.68
C. <i>The Communist Vote</i>					C. <i>The Communist Vote</i>					C. <i>The Communist Vote</i>				
	Ave.			F/M		Ave.			F/M		Ave.			F/M
Year	Vote	Males	Females	diff	Year	Vote	Males	Females	diff	Year	Vote	Males	Females	diff
1989	1.76	1.98	1.61	-0.37	1989	5.96	6.51	5.52	-0.99	1989	3.97	4.25	3.71	-0.74
1993	1.70	1.87	1.57	-0.30	1993	5.75	6.65	5.01	-1.64	1993	6.37	7.66	5.41	-2.25
1997	3.06	3.53	2.70	-0.83	1997	8.07	9.61	6.96	-2.65	1997	9.45	11.23	7.94	-3.39
2001	2.47	2.89	2.15	-0.74	2001	5.90	7.17	4.88	-2.29	2001	5.25	6.54	4.19	-2.35
D. <i>No. of Communes w/Centre-Right plurality</i>					D. <i>No. of Communes w/Centre-Right plurality</i>					D. <i>No. of Communes w/Centre-Right plurality</i>				
Year	Total	Males	Females		Year	Total	Males	Females		Year	Total	Males	Females	
1989	4	3	4		1989	1	0	1		1989	0	0	1	
1993	4	4	4		1993	1	1	1		1993	0	0	1	
1997	4	4	4		1997	1	1	1		1997	4	1	4	
2001	4	4	4		2001	4	3	4		2001	5	4	6	

IV. Proletarian communes ( $N=18^*$ )A. *The Centre-Right Vote*

Year	Ave. Vote	Males	Females	F/M diff
1989	28.24	24.71	31.41	+6.70
1993	29.72	27.16	31.88	+3.62
1997	33.95	29.90	37.37	+7.47
2001	40.93	37.26	43.97	+6.71

B. *The Centre-Left Vote*

Year	Ave. Vote	Males	Females	F/M diff
1989	<b>57.94</b>	<b>60.83</b>	<b>55.36</b>	-5.47
1993	<b>60.14</b>	<b>60.84</b>	<b>59.53</b>	-1.31
1997	<b>49.16</b>	<b>50.47</b>	<b>48.05</b>	-2.42
2001	<b>48.17</b>	<b>49.71</b>	<b>46.79</b>	-2.92

C. *The Communist Vote*

Year	Ave. Vote	Males	Females	F/M diff
1989	4.94	5.37	4.56	-0.81
1993	8.18	9.28	7.22	-2.06
1997	11.78	14.05	9.81	-4.24
2001	7.84	10.16	6.84	-3.32

D. *No. of Communes w/Centre-Right plurality*

Year	Total	Males	Females
1989	0	0	0
1993	0	0	0
1997	2	1	4
2001	5	2	9

\* = 19 Communes after 1993.

V. Peasant communes ( $N=13$ )A. *The Centre-Right Vote*

Year	Ave. Vote	Males	Females	F/M diff
1989	42.18	37.66	<b>46.44</b>	+8.78
1993	39.05	36.26	41.88	+5.62
1997	<b>47.35</b>	<b>42.92</b>	<b>51.56</b>	+8.64
2001	<b>47.13</b>	43.34	<b>50.63</b>	+7.29

B. *The Centre-Left Vote*

Year	Ave. Vote	Males	Females	F/M diff
1989	<b>47.89</b>	<b>51.19</b>	44.40	-6.79
1993	<b>53.16</b>	<b>54.40</b>	<b>51.93</b>	-2.47
1997	40.46	42.14	38.87	-3.27
2001	43.67	<b>45.14</b>	42.31	-2.83

C. *The Communist Vote*

Year	Ave. Vote	Males	Females	F/M diff
1989	2.60	2.84	2.35	-0.49
1993	6.15	7.39	4.89	-2.50
1997	7.64	9.40	5.97	-3.43
2001	7.38	9.13	5.76	-3.37

D. *No. of Communes w/Centre-Right plurality*

Year	Total	Males	Females
1989	3	0	8
1993	3	0	5
1997	10	7	10
2001	5	5	9

Table 8. *Valid Votes Cast in Metropolitan Santiago, by Class and Gender: 1989 and 2001 (Percentages)*

Class of Commune	% of votes cast				% decline in votes cast		
	1989		2001		Total	Males	Females
	Males	Females	Males	Females			
Upper Class	42.97	57.03	42.21	57.79	-9.97	-11.55	-8.78
Upper Middle Class	45.45	54.55	44.81	55.19	-21.61	-22.71	-20.70
Lower Middle Class	46.41	53.59	45.01	54.99	-15.26	-17.81	-13.04
Proletarian	47.31	52.69	45.46	54.54	-15.89	-19.18	-12.94
Peasant	51.83	48.17	47.84	52.16	+7.14	-1.09	+16.01
<b>All Santiago</b>	<b>46.57</b>	<b>53.43</b>	<b>45.05</b>	<b>54.95</b>	<b>-14.70</b>	<b>-17.48</b>	<b>-12.28</b>

demonstrates, women in all of the class categories increased their share of the vote relative to the males, and the gains in the 'peasant' communes were chiefly due to a large increase in women voters.

It is worth noting, too, that the relative importance of the female vote increases as one ascends the class ladder. In sum, as of 2001 upper class and peasant women, especially, were increasing their electoral influence – and these were two sectors where the centre-right traditionally did well.

#### *Gender support for women candidates*

Running for office, and serving if elected, are important aspects of political participation. Therefore, I wanted to see how many females ran for office in Metropolitan Santiago, which political coalitions nominated them, how many were elected, and how much support did they attract from either sex. What I found was that women were a small minority of all the candidates seeking election to the Chamber of Deputies, but that their numbers grew between 1989 and 2001. In 1989 only 20 candidates out of 123 were women, and in 1993 they were only 20 out of 117. In 1997, however, the number of female candidates jumped to 35 out of 124, after which they settled in 2001 at 33 out of 120 aspirants. The number of women who succeeded in getting elected also rose. Out of 32 seats at stake, they won six in 1989, three in 1993, six in 1997 and ten in 2001.

Of the 108 women candidates between 1989 and 2001, the largest number by far were nominated by coalitions of leftwing parties. The 'New Left' Humanist and Green parties nominated a total of 35, or about a third of all candidates. The communists and their allies nominated 22, and the centre-left Concertación added another 25. The centre-right nominated only 19, but 14 of those were in the last two elections, which suggests that they were beginning to realise the vote-getting potential of female candidates. The

remaining seven nominees were either independents or from minor parties. Six of them ran in the 1989 race.

The centre-right may have been a bit slow to encourage female nominees, but it was quite successful in getting its women elected to office. Of the 25 races won by women, twelve went to the centre-right – six of those in the most recent election, in 2001, out of a total of ten successful women candidates. The centre-left also got twelve women elected to office since the 1989 elections, while the 'New Left' elected one woman in 1989 and none thereafter. The communists and other minor parties elected none of their female candidates.

The data from Santiago Metro also seem to show that, for both men and women voters, the coalition or party label means more than the candidate's sex. I tested this by taking the number of 'opportunities' in each congressional election that women voters had to show their support of women candidates. Each coalition or individual party running separately had the right to field two candidates in each of the 16 electoral districts, which in turn were divided into 51 communes in 1989 and 1993, and 52 in 1997 and 2001. The number of female candidates running in each of these communes constituted an 'opportunity'. In 1989 there were 65 of these opportunities, but in only 13 cases did the percentage of the female vote exceed that of the male vote. The numbers for 1993 were 57 and 17, for 1997 they were 110 and 29, and for 2001 they were 103 and 26. On the average, then, women supported women more than men did only about one out of four times. Or, to put it another way, men were about three times more likely to support women candidates than women voters were.

This result is not so surprising when it is recalled that women were much more likely to support conservative candidates. Of the total number of 'opportunities' in which women candidates got more votes from females than males, 38 out of the 85 were for women candidates of the centre-right. Women candidates for the centre-left were favoured in 22 'opportunities' and a female communist in one. The 'New Left' parties, which were more likely than any other group to nominate women, succeeded in getting more support from female than from male voters in 16 cases, all but one of them in the 1993 and 1997 elections. However, their slender share of the total vote (only in 1997 did they exceed 3 per cent), and the fact that in all but the 1993 elections they received a lower percentage of their vote from women than from men, is an indication of how weak the left is.

### *Conclusions*

Chilean women disprove almost all of the conventional wisdom about how women participate in politics. Although they were slow to register and vote

just after winning the suffrage, they soon become crucial participants in Chile's elections. Today they constitute a majority of all registered and active voters; and when they vote they are less likely than men to spoil their ballots. It is true, however, that women are more conservative than men, and that this holds true across all social classes. That being the case, women will not vote for another woman simply on the basis of her sex. Female candidates from the left have a more difficult time attracting women's votes than do female candidates from the right. Of course the reverse is true: men are more likely than women to vote for a female candidate from the left, but less likely to vote for one from the right.

The fact that there is a real 'gender gap' in Chile, and that it is persistent across time, region, and class, should not obscure the fact that the gap is relatively narrow. It is narrowest in the upper classes, where both men and women apparently recognise their common class interests. It is widest at the bottom of society, by around six or seven percentage points. That is not a huge gulf, although it could be critical in a close election. In general, however, men and women voters move in the same direction. In the 1989 and 1993 elections they both lent their majority support to the centre-left ticket; in the 1997, 1999 and 2001 elections they both began a shift to the centre-right. Throughout the 51 or 52 communes wherever support for a coalition rose among voters of one sex it also tended to rise among voters of the other sex as well, though not always to the same degree. Today, given Chile's recent rightward trend, it would appear that males are conforming more to female preferences than the other way around.