PARTICIPATION IN NEIGHBOURHOOD ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN LOW-INCOME NEIGHBOURHOODS OF SANTIAGO, CHILE: 1983-1995

by

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ABSTRACT

In the early 1980s, participation in neighbourhood organizations in low-income neighbourhoods in Santiago and other Chilean cities increased significantly. Among the organizations were community kitchens, food buying cooperatives, savings groups and cooperative workshops. Many observers interpreted the emergence of these organizations as an indication of burgeoning values for 'community'. The decline of neighbourhood participation in the early 1990s led many observers to identify a breakdown of 'community' values. To understand how such an increase and subsequent decrease in participation could occur, this thesis examines the cultural, political and economic factors which have influenced participation in neighbourhood organizations in Chile since the early 1980s using theories of community development and cultural change.

The thesis focusses on *La Victoria*, a neighbourhood in Santiago where both local residents and outside observers argue participation was high during the early 1980s but decreased substantially after 1990. By comparing *La Victoria* with other low-income neighbourhoods it is possible to identify the main factors which influence neighbourhood participation. In all neighbourhoods, residents must contend with forces which promote and forces which stigmatize collective action. In *La Victoria*, an ideology supporting

collective action has traditionally enabled residents to overcome many of the obstacles to neighbourhocd participation.

However, a series of factors associated primarily with Chile's transition to democracy and neoliberal economic system has begun to undermine neighbourhood organization in *La Victoria*. The loss of an unequivocal enemy in the figure of former dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1990 has diminished the sense of common struggle in the neighbourhood, while frustration with the form of democracy that has emerged in Chile has led many residents to feel that neighbourhood organization is ineffective. Furthermore, the ideology of neoliberalism has become hegemonic in Chilean society and has instilled individualistic attitudes in many Chileans, particularly the generation which grew up under military rule (1973-1990).

The thesis concludes that neighbourhood participation in *La Victoria* will continue to be relatively low in the near future, but that neighbourhood organization is subject to a cyclical effect in which frustration with private pursuits will eventually lead to a return to public action.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Emergence of Neighbourhood Organizations in the 1980s

In the early 1980s, Chilean and foreign observers began to remark on the proliferation of neighbourhood-based popular organizations in the *poblaciones* of Santiago and other Chilean cities.[1] The organizations included community kitchens, food buying cooperatives, community vegetable gardens, income generating production workshops, savings groups, self-housing committees, first aid stations, health groups and neighbourhood coordinating bodies. Women made up over 90% of the participants of these organizations which

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[1] ***Población*** (plural: ***poblaciones***) is often translated as shantytown or slum, but this does not adequately portray the Chilean meaning of the word. Literally it means "population"; however, in Chile it also refers to the low-income urban neighbourhoods which have been sanctioned by the state since 1957. These may equally consist of apartment buildings, neat private houses built from concrete or poorly constructed shacks of tin and wood. Many *poblaciones* resulted from illegal land seizures which gave birth to *campamentos* or squatter settlements. When the state granted formal ownership of the land to the squatters, the *campamento* became a *población*. Other *poblaciones* resulted from official state housing programs which provided constructed or partially constructed houses (kitchen and bathroom) to low-income families. Spatially, no point in most *poblaciones* is further than a ten minute walk from any other point. The population within such an area might range from 4,000 to 30,000 residents. In this thesis I will refer to *población* and neighbourhood interchangeably.

Metropolitan Santiago is composed of thirty-four municipalities (*comunas*) and the *poblaciones* are generally located in the poorer municipalities to the north, west and south of the city core. See map: Appendix 1.

The inhabitants of *poblaciones* are known as ***pobladores*** (feminine: ***pobladoras***).

functioned almost exclusively at the neighbourhood level. Practically all of the organizations began as subsistence-oriented groups to confront the harsh economic conditions created by the economic policies of the Pinochet dictatorship.[2] The first neighbourhood organizations formed under the protective umbrella of the Vicariate of Solidarity of the Chilean Catholic Church, established in 1976. Neighbourhood organizations also received considerable support from the large number of Chilean non-governmental organizations which had formed by the end of the 1970s. The number of neighbourhood organizations rose from 487 in 1982 to 1,259 in 1986 to 2,305 in 1989.[3] In 1986, the Labour Economics Program (*Programa de Economía del Trabajo* - PET)

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[2]In 1983, the national unemployment rate in Chile was 31%, but in many *poblaciones* unemployment was over 70%. The strict neoliberal economic doctrine of the dictatorship prohibited the implementation of measures to lessen the social impact of the crisis. See: Alejandro Foxely, Latin American Experiments in Neoconservative Economics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

[3]Estimates of the number of neighbourhood organizations and numbers of *pobladores* who participated in them vary from study to study. For example, Teresa Valdés stated that over 200,000 *pobladores* participated in 'base level' organizations in 1985. Philip Oxhorn claimed that 220,000 people, 16% of all *pobladores*, participated in 1987. However, because of the widespread use and respect for the statistics collected by Luis Razeto et al, I offer these numbers. Teresa Valdés, "El movimiento de pobladores, 1973-1985: La recomposición de las solidaridades sociales," in Decentralización del estado: Movimiento social y gestión local. ed. Jordi Borda et al. (Santiago: FLACSO, 1987): 43.

Philip Oxhorn, "Where did all the Protesters Go?" Latin American Perspectives 21, 3 (1994): 56.

Luis Razeto, Arno Klenner, Apolonia Ramírez and Roberto Urmeneta, Las organizaciones económicas populares 1973-1990. 3rd ed. (Santiago: Programa de Economía del Trabajo (PET), 1990): 224. PET's focus is on 'Popular Economic Organizations' (PEOs), and emphasizes the strong local orientation of the vast majority of these.

estimated that over 10% of all *pobladores* participated in neighbourhood-based subsistence organizations and that 25% of *pobladores* benefited directly from that participation.[4]

During the same time period, and particularly between 1983 and 1986, *pobladores* participated widely in a series of national protests against the Pinochet dictatorship. The protests were organized by Chilean left-wing and centrist political parties and formed the basis of their opposition strategy until 1986, when they switched to a process of negotiation with the dictatorship. The protests themselves took place primarily in the *poblaciones. Pobladores* lit bonfires, erected barricades to keep the police from entering their *población,* and cut off electricity to other parts of the cities. Frequent clashes with the police occurred. After police killed a Catholic priest in *población La Victoria* in 1986 because of his promotion of neighbourhood organization, over 30,000 *pobladores* accompanied his coffin to the centre of Santiago. Many other massive protest marches took place as well.[5]

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[4]Razeto, Luis, "Popular Organizations and the Economy of Solidarity," in Kenneth Aman and Cristián Parker, eds., Popular Culture in Chile: Resistance and Survival. trans. Terry Cambias. (Boulder: Westview, 1991): 83. The interpretation of these statistics has been rather ambiguous. Organizations such as PET have interpreted 10% participation as significant, while others, such as SUR have argued that 10% is relatively insignificant.

[5]See various issues of Hechos Urbanos, published in Santiago by SUR. It recounts protest activity and conflicts with the police and government on a monthly basis. In particular, see numbers: 22 (June 1983), 34 (July 1984), 46 (October 1985), 50 (February 1986), 57 (September 1986), 64 (June 1987), 65 (July 1987), 68 (October 1987) and 72 (March 1988).

From the late 1950s until the military coup in 1973, most local organizations in the *poblaciones* were directly connected with Chilean political parties or with the 'popular promotion' initiatives of the governments of Eduardo Frei (1964-1970) and Salvador Allende (1970-1973). These organizations had focussed on demanding rights and services, such as houses, electricity, potable water and sewage, from the state and were frequently directed by middle class political leaders who did not live in the *poblaciones* where they worked.

After the military coup, the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet killed, disappeared or forced into exile almost all leaders who had been active in organizations in the *poblaciones*. For ten years following the coup, the vast majority of *pobladores* were inactive both politically and in neighbourhood organizations. Opponents of the authoritarian regime therefore reacted with great hope when new local organizations, apparently autonomous from political party control, began to form in the early 1980s. The new organizations were seen to promote collective self-sufficiency, solidarity, cooperation, mutual help, friendship, social empowerment and personal growth among their participants. The neighbourhood organizations represented not only the formal organization of *pobladores*, but also the strengthening of informal community ties which already existed in many *poblaciones*.

Many observers of the *poblaciones* interpreted the new neighbourhood organizations as an indication of a growing sense of community among *pobladores*. For example, Philip Oxhorn stated that "the idea of community [is] embodied in popular sector organizations."[6] Fernando Calderón, Alejandro Piscitelli and José Luis Reyna remarked that:

> At the community level, new practices have appeared that have caught the attention of social scientists. Ideas of reciprocity, cooperation, and solidarity ... have been strengthened and amplified.... Communal kitchens in poor urban neighbourhoods, mother's committees, consumer cooperatives, other kinds of communitarian traditions ... are only a few of the proliferation and reinvigoration of social relations forms at the community level.[7]

For many researchers, the emergence of locally-based collective subsistence organizations represented not only temporary survival strategies but also a more profound cultural change in the values, beliefs and world views of *pobladores*. To many analysts, the apparent strengthening of community relationships at the *población* level indicated both the possibility of a long-term strategy to combat poverty and to improve the quality of life in many poor neighbourhoods, and a promising vehicle for challenging the Pinochet dictatorship and bringing about a more democratic

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[6]Philip Oxhorn, "The Popular Sector Response to An Authoritarian Regime." Latin American Perspectives 18, 1 (1991): 77.

[7]Fernando Calderón, Alejandro Piscitelli and José Luis Reyna, "Social Movements: Actors, Theories, Expectations," in The Making of Social Movements in Latin America. ed. Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez (Boulder: Westview, 1992): 33.

and equitable distribution of power and wealth in Chilean society.

The Breakdown of Community?

In the late 1980s the apparent effects of the political and economic changes involved in Chile's negotiated transition to democracy and economic 'miracle'[8] led many observers to claim that a breakdown of community was taking place in the *poblaciones*. Cathy Schneider argued that "since the inauguration of the democratic government in March 1990 many grass-roots militants have returned to their homes and participation in grassroots organizations has dramatically declined."[9] Schneider also claimed that Chile had been transformed "both culturally and politically from a country of active, participatory grassroots communities to a land of disconnected, apolitical individuals."[10] Philip Oxhorn remarked on a "problem of growing apathy and lack of citizen participation ... apparent as early as October 1990."[11] Numerous Chilean intellectuals, including Patricio Aylwin,

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[8]Between 1987 and 1995 Chile experienced high rates of economic growth, a considerable rise in foreign investment and exports, and drops in unemployment, inflation and indicators of poverty.

[9]Cathy Schneider, "Mobilization at the Grassroots: Shantytown Resistance in Authoritarian Chile," Latin American Perspectives 18, 1 (1991): 112.

[10]Cathy Schneider, "Chile: The Underside of the Miracle," Report on the Americas 27, 4 (1993): 31.

[11]Philip Oxhorn, "Understanding Political Change After Authoritarian Rule," Journal of Latin American Studies 26 (1994): 750.

president of Chile from 1990 to 1994, have exhibited much concern over the loss of morals and the increase of materialism, consumerism, hedonism and immediatism at all levels of Chilean society.[12]

These suggestions of a breakdown raise important questions for an understanding of the current possibilities for neighbourhood community in the *poblaciones*: Can community relationships really decay so quickly, and indeed, how do they develop in the first place? What effect did neighbourhood organization in the 1980s actually have on the formation of stronger community relationships? Was the growth of neighbourhood organizations in the 1980s only a reaction to specific economic and political circumstances, or also an indication of a deeper socio-cultural change towards the development of stronger neighbourhood communities?

The Denial of Community

The word 'community' is very problematic. Many analysts question the value of talking about neighbourhood communities in an era dominated by the concentration of power and communications in transnational corporations and global media networks, the ascendency of individualistic behaviour and ideals, and the 'postmodern' celebration of

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[12]Patricio Aylwin, interviewed by María Eugenia Camus, La Epoca (December 31, 1994): A4-A5.

heterogeneity which would seem to make the unity necessary for local communities unlikely if not impossible. In the nineteenth century, Ferdinand Töennies, Emile Durkheim and many other sociologists argued that in the transition from traditional rural society to industrial urban society the bonds which held communities together in the past were broken down irrevocably. They considered life in the city to be the antithesis of community.

The conceptual vagueness of the word community itself further compounds the difficulties of analysis. No agreed upon definition of community exists and increasingly the word is used to describe only groups sharing common interests, such as the academic or gay 'communities.' In Chapter Two I will develop a working definition for 'community'. Many community theorists contend that the notion of territorially defined communities has little relevance in contemporary society.[13] However, I believe that the concept of neighbourhood community remains important both as a means of understanding and responding to recent political and economic changes in Chile and perhaps in other countries as well.

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[13]See for example: Israel Rubin, "Function and Structure of Community: Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis," International Review of Community Development 21-22 (1969): 111-119.

The Context for a Territorial Conception of Community

There are several reasons for arguing in favour of a territorial conception of community, at least in the Chilean context. To begin with, the participation[14] and identity of *pobladores* have been overwhelmingly concentrated at the local neighbourhood level.[15] Most *pobladores* do not participate in organizations outside their *población* and tend to identify with their own *población* as distinct from others.[16] Larry Lyon has argued that when people live near one another a certain level of interaction and common identity are forced upon them.[17] Peter Willmott observed that when people own cars and telephones, community networks tend to spread out beyond the limits of specific neighbourhoods and are not confined by spatial dimensions.[18] This has clearly been the case in North America and Europe. However, in Santiago and in most Latin American cities, few

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[14]By **participation**, I refer to active membership in a neighbourhood organization, attending meetings, doing assigned work, recruiting new members and perhaps playing a leadership role.

[15]Alfredo Rodríguez, "Veinte años de pobladores," Proposiciones 14 (1987): 9.

[16]Francisco Sabatini remarks on an almost "xenophobic" prejudice of *pobladores* against other *poblaciones*. Francisco Sabatini, "Community Participation among Housewives of a Low-Income Settlement in Santiago", Chile (PhD. dissertation (unpublished), University of California, Los Angeles, 1993).

[17]Larry Lyon, The Community in Urban Society (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987): 111.

[18]Peter Willmott, Social Care, Informal Networks and Public Policy. (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1986).

pobladores own telephones or motorized vehicles and the bus systems remain relatively expensive. Furthermore, the *poblaciones* are located on the peripheries of Santiago, isolating them from the rest of the city and thereby making a territorial basis for community more likely. Manuel Castells argued that, "the growing urban population of the Third World is clearly oriented towards the building and preserving of spatially defined local communities."[19]

The neoliberal economic strategy of reducing the role of the state in the provision of social services and the growing acceptance at all points on the political spectrum in Chile (and the rest of the world) of the need to limit public spending to correspond with public revenue mean that *pobladores* in Chile will have to continue to rely on themselves and their neighbours in the solution of their daily problems. Alvaro Díaz argues that despite Chile's sustained rates of macroeconomic growth and reduced levels of unemployment since the late 1980s, the new jobs available in Chile's economy are unstable, precarious and insufficient to satisfy the basic needs of many poor families.[20] He suggests that only the character of poverty has changed. Local community participation and organization therefore continue to be important and may be the only means by which

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[19]Manuel Castells, The City and the Grassroots (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 210.

[20]Alvaro Díaz, "Nuevas tendencias en la estructura social chilena," Proposiciones 20 (1991): 117.

poverty can be overcome and the quality of life in the *poblaciones* improved. As Milton Esman and Norman Uphoff asserted:

> A vigorous network of membership organizations is essential to any serious effort to overcome mass poverty under the conditions that are likely to prevail in most developing countries for the predictable future.... While other components - infrastructure investments, supportive public policies, appropriate technologies, and bureaucratic and market institutions - are necessary, *we cannot visualize any strategy of ... development combining growth in productivity with broad redistribution of benefits in which participatory local organizations are not prominent.*[21]

Government planners in Chile have also become increasingly interested in promoting the self-help capabilities of individuals, families and neighbourhoods.[22] In 1992, Enrique Correa, then Secretary General of the Chilean Government, clearly stated:

> The more social participation we have, the more people will find their own solutions to problems. We are going to work toward putting an end to a culture in which all hopes have been placed on the central government.[23]

Whether or not such efforts represent an attempt to coopt neighbourhood organizations or to facilitate the reduction of social services, the reality remains that neither

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[21]Milton J. Esman and Norman T. Uphoff, Local Organizations: Intermediaries in Rural Development (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1984): 40 (emphasis added).

[22]MIDEPLAN (Ministerio de Planificación y Cooperación), Participación de la comunidad en el desarrollo social: logros y proyecciones (Santiago, 1992).

[23]Enrique Correa, interviewed in El Mercurio. December 7, 1992 (my translation).

neoliberal economic doctrine nor the overwhelming foreign debtload, which arguably makes neoliberal economic policies necessary, are likely to disappear in the near future. People must continue to learn to rely on themselves and their families, friends, and neighbours and less on the state in the satisfaction of their basic needs.

Norberto Lechner argues that there is also a growing social and psychological need for community in Chile to confront the profound insecurity experienced by many people as a result of Chile's highly competitive free market economic system.[24] Lechner sees a search for community manifested in the regression to absolute certainties and closed-in identities represented by the growth of Evangelical churches, the rise of populist politics and an increase in political terrorism.[25] The development of

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[24]Norberto Lechner, "The Search for Lost Community: Challenges to Democracy in Latin America," International Social Science Journal. (1991): 541-553.

[25]The proportion of Evangelical Protestants in Chile is 16%. The proportion of evangelicals in poor neighbourhoods is argued to be as high as 50%. The reason for the growing influence of evangelical churches has been attributed to a search for beliefs and rites which offer security in the midst of a reality characterized by great economic, political and physical insecurity. See: Marta Molina, "El panorama de la religión en Chile," La Epoca. (April 15, 1995): 5B-6B.

Populist political parties, such as the Movement of the Allendist Democratic Left (*Movimiento de la Izquierda Democrática Allendista - MIDA*) and the right-wing Independent Democratic Union (*Unión Democrática Independiente* - UDI) have come to play an increasing role in Chilean politics. In 1989, Javier Francisco Errázuriz won over 15% of the presidential vote on a populist platform and his Centre-Centre Union (Unión Centro-Centro - UCC) won over 8% of the vote in 1992 municipal elections. See: Oxhorn, "Where Did All the Protesters Go?": 64.

Left-wing political terrorism continues to affect Chile in the 1990s. The assassination of General Gustavo Leigh in 1990 as well as

neighbourhood communities offers a more progressive alternative to these fundamentalist phenomena and could also confront the frustration, despair and alienation felt by many *pobladores* in the face of their inability to find good jobs or to participate in either the political system or the consumer culture glorified by the Chilean media.

Perhaps paradoxically, the strengthening of local communities may be the only means of challenging the increasing concentration of power in transnational corporations and the one-way flow of information from global media networks. Manuel Castells asks rhetorically:

> Why the emphasis on local communities? Have people not understood that they need an international working class movement to oppose the multinational corporations, a strong, democratic parliament, reinforced by participatory democracy, to control the centralized state, and a multiple, interactive communications system to use the new technologies of the media to express (not to suppress) the cultural diversity of society? Why, instead of choosing the right ones, do people insist on aiming at the local targets?[26]

Castells' answer to this question is that people have no other choice. While they may not be able to control international flows of capital, people can organize to impose conditions on any corporation trying to establish

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numerous bank robberies have been linked to guerrilla groups, particularly the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (FPMR) and the Lautoro Youth Front (FJL). See: Jorge Nef, "Democratic Transition and the Entrenchment of Authoritarian Capitalism in Chile," Paper presented to the International Studies Association, 34th Annual Convention, Acapulco, Mexico (March 1993): 14.

[26]Castells, The City and the Grassroots: 329.

itself in their community. Castells concludes that "when people find themselves unable to control the world, they simply shrink the world to the size of their community."[27] However, he also insists that local communities are more than just a "last symbolic stand and desperate cry" against the loss of local power and meaning, but are symptoms of the contradictions of that loss and "therefore potentially capable of superseding these contradictions."[28]

The Possibilities For Neighbourhood Community in the *Poblaciones*

In the context of the apparent flourishing of community relationships during the 1980s and the more recent suggestions of their subsequent breakdown, I became interested in the current prospects for community in the *poblaciones*. I chose to focus my research on *La Victoria*, a *población* described during the 1980s as possessing strong community relationships and well known in Chile for its local organizations and combative political tradition. *La Victoria's* history of local organization and its strong collective identity are not typical of most other *poblaciones*. It is important to understand that while all *poblaciones* share very general characteristics related to low incomes and inadequate urban services, each has its own

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[27]Ibid.: 331.

[28]Ibid.: 331.

history and traditions which influence the beliefs and behaviour of its residents. However, the experiences and insights of *La Victoria's* residents do help to understand more clearly how neighbourhood communities form as well as some of the challenges that currently face community relationships in the *poblaciones*.

Field Research: *La Victoria*

La Victoria is in the municipality of Pedro Aguirre Cerda (part of San Miguel until 1992) in the southern zone of Metropolitan Santiago.[29] Although there are no economic statistics specific to *La Victoria*, in 1992 in Pedro Aguirre Cerda (population 130,000) 25% of the adult population was unemployed and 23% of the total population lived in conditions of extreme poverty.[30] There are no important industries in the municipality, the principal sources of income are commerce, small production and construction in other parts of Santiago. *La Victoria* was created in 1957 by the first illegal land occupation to be sanctioned by the Chilean state. Through the land siezure, residents of *La Victoria* developed close ties to the Chilean Communist Party and developed a strong tradition of social, economic and political organization. *La Victoria* was one of the four or

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[29]See map in Appendix 1.

[30]Mario Hanna D., Beatriz State, Enrique Saldivia, "La comuna de Pedro Aguirre Cerda y su experiencia con el mundo microempresarial comunal," Propocisiones 25 (1994): 260.

five most active *poblaciones* in the national protests against the Pinochet dictatorship and as a result was the object of considerable repression from the army and *carabineros* (national police).[31] All of the local residents I spoke with identified strongly with and expressed considerable pride in their *población*, referring to themselves as *Victorianas* and *Victorianos*.[32] *La Victoria* is also the object of a considerable urban myth which sees it as extremely hostile to outsiders and a hot-bed of Marxist-fed criminals and degenerates.[33]

Physically, *La Victoria* is similar to many other *poblaciones*. It has a population of 32,000 (6,500 families) and is roughly .5 square kilometres in area.[34] Most of the residents are directly related to the original 3,200 families who settled in the *población* in 1957, most of which still remain. As a result, *La Victoria* is home to many

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[31]The best available statistics state that between 1982 and 1987, out of a close-knit population of 30,000, 7 people were killed during protests, 3 were disappeared, 1 was executed and 16 were given long term prison sentences. In addition, the *población* was the object of numerous *allanamientos*, in which *carabineros* forced people out of their homes which they then ransacked allegedly searching for weapons; they often took men into custody for short periods of time as an additional act of intimidation. Numerous people were also wounded by stray bullets from *carabineros*. See: Juan Lemuñir Epuyao, Crónicas de la Victoria: Testimonios de un Poblador. (Santiago: Centro de Estudios y Promoción Social, Ediciones Documentas, 1990).

[32]Feminine and masculine forms.

[33]Many non-residents of the *población* could not believe that I was doing research in *La Victoria* and claimed that if they were to enter the *población* they would surely be attacked and robbed.

[34]See map of *La Victoria*, Appendix 2.

large, extended families. The *población* is geographically distinguished by three main streets, a large empty field, and Santiago's southern railroad tracks, features which give the *población* a sense of physical separateness from the surrounding urban environment. Little traffic enters the *población* itself and most transportation is by foot or bicycle. The streets themselves are all paved, which is unusual, and is the result of a concerted effort of all the residents in a *población*-wide initiative which became the basis of a government "participatory paving program."[35] The houses are small and mostly constructed of wood, but vary in design and appearance and demonstrate the creativity of their residents. Almost all the houses are separated by wooden or wrought-iron fences typical of Chilean homes, and most have plants or small gardens in their front yards. Almost all households own a television set.

Many of the houses are home to more than one family, or to one large extended family of several generations, which causes problems of stress and frustration related to lack of personal space and privacy.[36] Although there are oddly dispersed home-made benches throughout *La Victoria* and also several small green spaces, there are few public gathering places. There is an office of the Neighbourhood Council

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[35]Paula Casanova, "El programa de pavimentos participativos financió 744 proyectos vecinales durante 1994," La Epoca. (February 21, 1995): A19.

[36]The Chilean term used to describe people who do not have a house of their own, living with family or friends is *allegado.*

(*Junta de Vecinos*), a community centre used mostly for workshops and meetings, a Pensioners Centre, a Parish building also used as a day care and distribution centre for the food buying cooperative, one Catholic church, three Evangelical churches, a medical clinic, a drug store and a very small library. For most people the street is the most important meeting place, which can be pleasant during the summer but more difficult during the cold and wet winter months. On weekdays a makeshift public market takes place along eight blocks of the street *Dos de Abril*. Local shops sell food staples, clothing and hardware and local street hawkers travel through the *población* selling newspapers, cooking gas, vegetables and sharpening knives. The walls bordering the central street through the *población* (*30 de Octubre*) are filled with political murals denouncing political corruption and injustice and celebrating *La Victoria*'s history; they are a constant reminder of the power of collective action and neighbourhood solidarity. Walking through the streets of *La Victoria* one notices an atmosphere of conviviality: neighbours talking to one another, passers by saying hello and children playing in the street. The human scale of the *población* and the presence of basic local services has tended to encourage the formation of strong community bonds.

In the last two years the number of young drug addicts and incidents of theft in the *población* have risen

considerably. As one neighbourhood leader explained: "Here there is everything. There is drug addiction and delinquency, but there are also many very honest and proud people." Despite the growing problems of drug use and crime among young people, many residents of the *población* continue to be united by a sense of pride in their history and the accomplishments of those who participated in the 1957 land siezure. These feelings of common identity were clearly manifested during the week long celebrations of the anniversary of the seizure in October 1995.

My analysis of *La Victoria* is based on semi-structured interviews with community leaders, many conversations with local residents and much time spent simply watching and listening to local residents.[37] I visited *La Victoria* two or three times a week over the course of three months between February and April 1995. In order to develop a comparative understanding of *La Victoria,* I also visited several *poblaciones* in other parts of metropolitan Santiago and referred extensively to case studies of other *poblaciones.*

In this thesis I hope to explain how and why urban neighbourhood communities form, in the context of Santiago's *poblaciones*, and what bases for community currently exist in the *poblaciones.* In Chapter Two, I will establish a basic working definition of community, and probe the Chilean

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[37]See Appendix 3 for a description of interviewees and Appendix 4 for the list of questions asked in interviews.

debate over community in the *poblaciones* to consider how understandings of community and of neighbourhood participation have been affected by the political struggles of the 1980s. Chapter Three analyses methodological tools for understanding community, places the roots of community in Chilean popular culture and explores the processes through which culture changes. In Chapter Four, I explore the dominant cultural tensions which have affected the development of community in the *poblaciones* and in Chapter Five, I try to explain why *La Victoria* possesses stronger feelings of community than most other *poblaciones*. Finally, in Chapter Six, I will examine the influence of recent major political and economic changes in Chile on the continued possibilities for community in *La Victoria* and other *poblaciones*.

Chapter Two

Defining Community

Before any more can be said about the *poblaciones* in Santiago, it is necessary to establish a working definition of community. This is not a simple task, for although the word 'community' has been frequently used in discussions of urban neighbourhoods, it also suffers from considerable ambiguity. In a review of sociological literature in 1955, George Hillery found 95 definitions of community.[38] Moreover, Colin Bell and Howard Newby have argued that "there has never developed a theory of community, nor even an adequate definition of what community is."[39]

It is important not to be overwhelmed by the lack of conceptual clarity with which 'community' is often used. Larry Lyon has noted that in the social sciences some of the most important terms are often the most imprecise.[40] The competing and sometimes contradictory meanings given to community should be seen as an indication of its importance

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[38]George A. Hillery, "Definition of Community - Areas of Agreement," Rural Sociology 20 (1955): 111-123.

[39]Colin Bell and Howard Newby, Sociology of Community (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1974), xliii. Nor has a specifically Latin American or Chilean understanding of community developed.

[40]Lyon, The Community in Urban Society: 4.

as a concept and of the richness of its semantic field, rather than as a problem requiring a singular definition. Hillery grouped the many meanings ascribed to community into three broad categories: 1) those based on a fixed territorial space, 2) those based on shared identity, and 3) those based on social relations within a specific territory.[41] My use of community falls into the final grouping - community as a description of the relationships between residents in an urban neighbourhood. I explained my reasons for preferring such a conception in Chapter One.

So, what criteria are to be used to determine when and where community exists? I do not wish to simply add another definition to the already long list of meanings given to community. Thus, it is with caution that I will propose a basic working definition of community drawing from the work of other researchers who have studied urban neighbourhoods to construct an 'ideal type' of neighbourhood community. First, it is helpful to look at the history of community.

Community: An Historical Perspective

From an historical perspective, community has been an object of inquiry since the Industrial Revolution and the beginnings of sociology as a discipline in the nineteenth century. Interest in community began to emerge as it became increasingly evident that the bonds which held traditional

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[41]George Hillery, "Definition of Community".

rural communities together were breaking down. Ferdinand Töennies saw the transition from traditional rural life to industrialized urban life as a shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft.*[42] *Gemeinschaft* is characterized by a strong identification with place of residence and with neighbours, emotionalism, holistic conceptions of other members of the community, the dominance of group over individual interests and adherence to traditional values and beliefs. *Gesellschaft,* by contrast, is distinguished by little or no identification with place of residence and neighbours, rational self-interest, individualism, segmented images of other members of society and the breakdown of traditional beliefs. Emile Durkheim argued that industrialization forced a breakdown of "mechanical solidarity," in which members of a community conformed to traditional values and were not distinguished by separate roles. This left behind "organic solidarity", in which society was held together only by the mutual interdependence of its members based on their different roles.[43] Neither Töennies nor Durkheim believed that any perfect community existed as an observable reality. Rather, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* or mechanical and organic solidarity were seen as ideal types at opposite ends of a continuum of community-ness. While no village or

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[42]Ferdinand Töennies, Community and Society ed. Charles P. Loomis (New York: Harper and Row, 1963 [orig. 1887]).

[43]Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labour in Society. trans. W.D. Halls (London: MacMillan, 1984 [orig. 1893]).

neighbourhood could ever be completely *Gemeinschaft* or *Gesellschaft*, some could certainly be more community-like than others.

It was in cities where the loss of *Gemeinschaft* and mechanical solidarity were considered to be most acute. Georg Simmel saw relationships in the city as limited to calculated monetary exchanges in which individuals remained emotionally isolated from one another.[44] Louis Wirth argued that as cities grew in population and density and became more heterogeneous, individualism and the destruction of community ties increased.[45] Moreover, modernization theorists in the 1950s and 1960s argued that community and kinship ties hindered the development of modern nation states and asserted that citizens in 'developing' countries must become self-oriented rather than collective-oriented and must learn to judge others according to their functional roles and not personal relationships.[46]

The city itself is not necessarily antithetical to community relationships. Murray Bookchin argues that the union of people in cities such as the ancient Greek *polis*

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[44]Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in The Sociology of Georg Simmel. trans. Kurt Wolff (New York: Free Press, 1950 [orig. 1905]): 409-424.

[45]Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," American Journal of Sociology 44 (1938): 1-28.

[46]See for example: Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe, Il.: The Free Press, 1951); and W.W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

and the medieval commune created arenas for a deep sense of community, social responsibility, solidarity and self-limited growth. It is the association of the city with capitalism which has diminished the once "high traditions of urbanism" by distorting both human relationships and the physical layout of cities to serve the interests of capital rather than those of human beings.[47]

Advances in communications technology have contributed to the growth of a mass society on a global scale. Global and especially urban society has become increasingly standardized, homogeneous and devoid of substantial regional and local variation.[48] Néstor García Canclini observes the impact of globalization and the spread of mass culture on community relationships in Latin America:

> The fact that ... the population is now concentrated in big cities and is connected to national and transnational networks means the contents, practices and rites of the past ... are reordered according to a different logic. Radio, TV and video ... imply the passage from direct, microsocial interactions to the distant consumption of serially produced goods within a centralized system.[49]

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[47]Murray Bookchin, The Limits of the City (Montréal and Buffalo: Blackrose Books, 1986); Murray Bookchin, Urbanization Without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship (Montréal and Buffalo: Blackrose Books, 1992).

[48]Larry Lyon, The Community: 14.

[49]Néstor García Canclini, "Cultural Reconversion," in On Edge: The Crisis of Contemporary Latin American Culture trans. Holly Staver, ed. George Yúdice, Jean Franco and Juan Flores (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1992): 33.

In Chile, the growing mechanization of agriculture, the worsening conditions of rural labour, the decline of the nitrate industry and the lure of industrial employment opportunities in the early twentieth century led to a massive migration from the countryside to the city, and primarily to Santiago. By 1952, 50% of Chile's population was urban. Coupled with rapid natural urban growth due to declining mortality rates and a relatively constant birth rate, Chile experienced a process of 'hyper-urbanization' in which population growth quickly outpaced the expansion of urban infrastructure, housing and employment. 85% of Chile's population of 14 million is now urban, with over 40% concentrated in metropolitan Santiago.

Until the 1970s, most studies of community in urban settings in Latin America focussed on the relationships between city dwellers and their rural pasts.[50] However, in Santiago by 1987, over 60% of the population had been born in the city;[51] *La Victoria* recently began its third generation of native-born residents. Whatever bonds of community that exist between people have formed through their experience of living together in the city.

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[50]See: Janice Perlman, The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

[51]Eugenio Tironi, "Marginalidad, movimientos sociales y democracia," Proposiciones 14 (1987): 11.

Neighbourhood Community

Following Töennies' and Durkheim's constructions of community in a traditional rural context as an ideal type, community in urban neighbourhoods should also be understood as a relative rather than absolute concept. No ideal neighbourhood community exists, but if interpreted as an ideal type at one end of a continuum, some neighbourhoods resemble community more than others.

Community in a contemporary urban context cannot have the same meaning as community in the traditional rural settings referred to by Töennies and Durkheim. The obedience to traditional values and the dominance of group over individual interests which united traditional rural communities are neither possible nor desirable in contemporary urban neighbourhoods. What then is implied when the word 'community' is used to describe an urban neighbourhood?

Peter Willmott proposed a typology for community, beginning with "territorial community," then "community of interests," and finally the most advanced stage, "community of attachment."[52] 'Territorial community' is simply the geographical space in which a group of people lives, such as a neighbourhood. A 'community of interests' exists when those people experience similar daily living situations, problems and challenges. 'Community of attachment', Willmott

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[52]Willmott, Social Networks: 83-84.

suggests, exists when people feel a strong sense of identity with the local place in which they live and of solidarity with the other people who live there.

A survey of the Chilean and Latin American literature on urban neighbourhoods reveals a basic set of characteristics related to community. To begin with, people must know and interact with one another, and their relationships must exemplify equality, trust, democracy, cooperation, mutual-help and holistic conceptions of one another. Although not often emphasized, I add the condition that these characteristics must be present in relationships between men and women; true communities cannot have two different classes of residents. Community development implies the strengthening of community relationships. Secondly, people must feel a sense of identity based on their neighbourhood and of solidarity with their neighbours. Solidarity implies that people are able to imagine themselves in the place of others and feel that other people are inseparable parts of themselves.[53] People may possess other identities as well, perhaps based on gender, occupation, age or political beliefs; the neighbourhood need not be their principal source of identity, but in some way it must shape people's conceptions of who they are. It is also important that the identity drawn from place of

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[53]Cecilia Dockendorff, Solidaridad: La construcción social de un anhelo (Santiago, Chile: Unicef, Mideplan, Fosis, 1993): 21-26.

residence be positive and that people feel proud to live where they do. Benedict Anderson argued that all communities are "imagined."[54] Even in a small village or neighbourhood, all of the residents are not likely to ever know all the other residents well. To feel a sense of solidarity and common identity then requires them to 'imagine' common bonds with people they do not know. This act of imagination is easiest when residents interact frequently with other people in their neighbourhood.

Building and maintaining a strong community that can withstand external pressures and internal conflicts requires more than just cooperation and mutual help between neighbours and a shared identity. People must be willing to participate in formal or semi-formal local organizations; they must actively nurture existing bonds of cooperation and reciprocity and work to create new ones. In a cross-cultural examination of urban communities M. Janowitz and J.D. Kasarda found that:

> community sentiments were substantially influenced by participation in social networks. Whether or not a person experienced a sense of community, or would be sorry to leave the community was found to be strongly influenced by his local friendship and kinship bonds and formal and informal associational ties.[55]

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[54]Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1983): 15.

[55]M. Janowitz and J.D. Kasarda, "The Social Construction of Local Communities," Sociological Theory and Survey Research ed. T.Legget (London: Sage, 1974): 88.

The creation of and participation in neighbourhood organizations rarely occurs spontaneously. Saul Alinsky, argued that strong local communities can only be developed with the vigorous and continuous efforts of shrewd community organizers.[56] Although many observers have celebrated the apparent autonomy of local urban communities from outside control and the spontaneity of local organization, a closer look reveals that few low-income urban neighbourhood communities function without considerable external leadership and support, whether from religious institutions, non-governmental organizations or government agencies.[57] The need for scarce material resources, information, organizational capacity and innovation can rarely be met completely within a low-income neighbourhood. In these respects, outside help should not be seen as diminishing the importance of local initiatives and culture, but simply as a necessary part of any strong community.[58]

Neighbourhood cooperation and local self-reliance are increasingly attracting the interests of neo-conservative politicians and planners as alternatives to state funded social services that would operate within established political and economic systems. Traditionally, promoters of

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[56]Saul Alinsky, Reveille for Radicals (New York: Vintage, 1969 [orig. 1946]).

[57]John Friedmann, Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1992): 143-144.

[58]Ibid.: 144.

neighbourhood communities have seen community as an alternative to dominant profit-driven and consumer oriented economic and social systems that is capable of bringing about deep social, political and economic changes.[59] The process of local organization and participation, they argue, leads to the raised consciousness and ultimately the empowerment of ordinary people to bring about transformations aimed at a more democratic, equitable and sustainable society. Often implicitly, local communities are assumed to be anti-institutional, anti-hegemonic and alternatives to mainstream capitalist modes of production and consumption. This perception contradicts the actual reasons most *pobladores* in Santiago participate in neighbourhood organizations and maintain strong relationships with their neighbours. Few *pobladores* are interested in grand projects of social change; rather, to them, community organization is a means of gaining control over their neighbourhoods in order to improve living conditions and to better integrate into the same society that promoters of community often reject and seek to replace. While local self-help and cooperation are appealing as responses to difficult situations, in and of themselves

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[59]Ignacio Irarrázaval, "The Role of Community Organizations in Fighting Poverty in Chile," Community Organizations in Latin America ed. Juan Carlos Navarro (Washington: Inter-American Development Bank, 1994): 24.

they assume no fundamental changes in regional, national and international power relationships.[60]

There is a tendency in many studies of community to idealize community as an answer to all of society's ills and as a utopia of human social organization. While stronger neighbourhood communities can offer responses to many contemporary problems, it is essential not to overlook many less attractive elements of community. As much as it implies cooperation, mutual help and solidarity, neighbourhood community also means that neighbours must live under one another's constant scrutiny and may be forced to live and work with people they dislike or disagree with. Small differences tend to become aggravated when denied an escape valve and limited to a confined territory. In a study of neighbourhood participation, Solange Hevia discovered that many *pobladores* perceived local organizations as a source of conflict as much as of cooperation.[61] Larry Lyon asserts,

> Typically, communities are viewed in their *Gemeinschaft*-like nature of inhibiting free thought and action - requiring conformity to the dictates of local values. And this more common view is largely an accurate one ...most [communities] will discourage those actions that run counter to the community's norms.[62]

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[60]John Friedmann, Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987): 222.

[61]Solange Hevia, "La organización de los pobladores y la relación del agente externo," Revista de Trabajo Social (Santiago: Pontífica Universidad Católica de Chile) 57 (1990): 147.

[62]Lyon, The Community: 251.

Community tends to produce strict forms of social control exercised to maintain conformity to established cultural norms and values and thereby to limit expressions of cultural diversity and the formation of non-traditional identities. Ana María Correa and Cristina Labán found that gossip and rumours, ranging from general observations to vicious criticism, constitute the principle means of communication and social control in the *poblaciones*, and have a negative effect on trust between neighbours.[63] In the *población* of *Hirmas II*, Francisco Sabatini found that almost all conversations between local residents contained some elements of gossip.[64] Communities generally impose relatively narrow limits on what is considered acceptable, and while they might be open to certain forms of non-traditional behaviour, they are prone to exclude others. This is perhaps a natural and inevitable requirement for the survival of local communities, for as social diversity within a neighbourhood increases so too do the common bonds with which local residents can identify.

Theorists such as William Cortlett and Chantall Mouffe have tried to develop a non-binding conception of community, or a "community without unity" in Cortlett's words, which

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[63]Ana María Correa and Cristina Labán, "Estudio de las características de las redes sociales en una población marginal de la comuna de Santiago como recurso potencial para la familia y su comunidad." (PhD. dissertation (unpublished), Pontífica Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile, 1984): 170.

[64]Francisco Sabatini, "Community Participation": 160.

does not demand cultural conformity of its members, but rather revolves around the common social participation of its members.[65] However, exactly how such a community is to function remains unclear and no concrete examples of such heterogeneous communities yet exist.

Community also demands responsibilities of its members. Cooperation, mutual help and trust among neighbours break down if they are not willing to accept certain obligations to help one another. In this respect, community implies an infringement on individual rights and freedoms. Members of a community may not always do as they choose, but must accept the limitations involved in relying on one another and managing local organizations.

Conditions for Neighbourhood Community

A neighbourhood is more likely to resemble a community if certain conditions are present. First, a degree of homogeneity is necessary. Although not essential, it is helpful if people are alike in social class, income level and ethnic background. Homogeneity and heterogeneity are relative, not absolute concepts. Differences between people will exist in every neighbourhood; what is important is that

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[65]William Cortlett, Community Without Unity (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989); Chantal Mouffe, "Democratic Citizenship and the Political Community," Community at Loose Ends ed. Miami Theory Collective (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991): 70-82.

despite their differences, people are able to identify with what they share in common.

Second, community is facilitated if people share common cultural beliefs and a common history that are exclusive to the local territory.[66] Peter Willmott observes that this is most likely to occur when there has been relative population stability in a neighbourhood, a large proportion of people have had lengthy and continued residence in the area and when people have family living in the neighbourhood.[67]

Third, it is important that people form a "community of interests", to use Willmott's terminology, sharing common daily living situations and challenges, and interests in finding solutions to their problems.[68]

Fourth, in order to come together as a community, residents of urban neighbourhoods generally must feel themselves under an external threat or share a lack of resources. Louise Fortman and Emery Roe remark that "people tend to come together to cooperate in a community only when they have to ... because they are under some resource stress."[69] Community is much more likely to form in a neighbourhood when people perceive cooperation and sharing

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[66]Randy Stoeker, Defending Community (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994): 17.

[67]Willmott, Social Networks: 96.

[68]Ibid.: 83.

[69]Louise Fortman and Emery Roe, "On Really Existing Communities - Organic or Otherwise," Telos 95 (1993): 145.

as necessary in order to achieve certain specific ends. Ruth Cardoso has argued that:

> the construction of an egalitarian community does not come about because of the possession of some positive attributes but rather through a shared "lack" or oppression. ... Differences that may exist among the participants are de-emphasized.[70]

The formation of communities in reaction to a felt absence or threat is problematic. There is a fundamental difference between organizing for something and organizing against a perceived wrong. John Friedmann observes that it is always easier to unite people "against some deep seated wrong, than to mobilize them around a reconstructive program for a 'new society'."[71] A major stumbling point for many local communities occurs when the external threat or lack of resources that first united people disappears or is overcome and the community no longer has anything against which to unite people and to construct a collective identity. To overcome this obstacle communities must move beyond being reactive to being proactive.

Fifth, in order to achieve this transformation, communities must be guided by an overarching ideology. By ideology, I refer to a relatively coherent set of beliefs

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[70]Ruth Cardoso, cited in Edward MacRae, "Homosexual Identities in Transitional Brazilian Politics," The Making of Social Movements in Latin America ed. Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez (Boulder: Westview, 1992): 193.

[71]Friedmann, Planning: 382.

with the power to guide and legitimate social practices.[72] This ideology must provide a value system capable of supporting community relationships and organizations in an atmosphere of ideological hostility created by messages from the mass media. Perhaps the major problem for community is that it directly violates mass society's guiding ideological principles: individualism, competitiveness and efficiency. These ideals are so powerful and penetrate so deeply into society, that in order to survive, neighbourhood communities must be supported by a counter-hegemonic ideology from which their members can draw moral support and direction. Indeed, Murray Bookchin looks to the power of ideology to "rise above material interest" and to work in socially progressive directions as the key to re-developing urban values for community relationships.[73] John Friedmann outlines the basic characteristics required of such an ideology, which he calls a "transformative theory":

1) It focusses on the structural problems of capitalist society viewed in a global context - problems such as racism, patriarchy, class domination, resource degradation, impoverishment, exploitation, and alienation;

2) It provides a critical interpretation of existing reality, emphasizing those relations that, from period to period, reproduce the dark underside of the system;

3) It charts, in a historical, forward-looking perspective, the probable future course of the problem,

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[72]For an analysis of the meaning of ideology, see: Terry Eagleton, Ideology (London and New York: Verso, 1991): 1-31.

[73]Bookchin, The Limits of the City: 175.

assuming the absence of countervailing, transformative struggles;

4) It elaborates images of a preferred outcome based on an emancipatory practice; and

5) It suggests the choice of a "best" strategy for overcoming the resistance of the established powers in the realization of desired outcome.[74]

Friedmann adds that such an ideology cannot be simply invented; it must grow organically from experience. Moreover, in order for an ideology to truly shape the beliefs and behaviour of a group of people, it must become a part of their subconscious system of dispositions and practices. I will further elaborate this relationship in an examination of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus in Chapter Three.

Finally, community is most likely to flourish when a neighbourhood's physical layout and design encourage rather than discourage regular, casual contact between neighbours and a sense of separate neighbourhood identity. Community is not likely to develop in areas where residents are physically isolated from one another - whether by excessive traffic in the streets, a lack of public meeting places, highrise apartment buildings which promote feelings of insignificance and isolation in their residents, or the need to leave the area to work, study and shop.[75] Community has

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[74]Friedmann, Planning: 389.

[75]See in particular: Bruno Bettelheim, "Mental Health and Urban Design," in Surviving and Other Essays (New York: Vintage Books, 1980): 201-220.

greater chances of prospering when physical surroundings are reduced to a more human scale: where walking and bicycles are the primary means of transportation and traffic does not isolate one side of the street from the other; where people can and do work within or near to their neighbourhood; where basic services such as groceries, schools and medical care can be found within the area; where there are public places for people to meet, converse and organize; and where the size and design of buildings promotes feelings of involvement rather than isolation from the surrounding area.[76]

The conception of *poblaciones* as communities became part of a heated debate during the 1980s over the political power of *pobladores*. This debate had a penetrating influence on Chilean understandings of neighbourhood community.

Community and the Población: Context for a Debate

The emergence of neighbourhood organizations and the widespread participation of *pobladores* in the national protests between 1983 and 1986 raised the *poblador* and the *población* to heightened positions of social, political and economic importance in the eyes of many observers. During the 1980s, there was a virtual "boom" of research into the political and cultural dispositions of *pobladores*. Political

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[76]See: Christopher Alexander, A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings and Construction (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); and Raul Gonzáles, "El Barrio," Hechos Urbanos (Santiago: SUR) 85 (1989): 3-6.

and labour organization were illegal under the Pinochet dictatorship, and in their absence the *poblaciones* became the primary locus of social and political struggle in Chile. Interpretations of the significance of local organization and protest took up two basic and essentially opposing positions, which Ton Salman labelled *movimientismo* and *institucionalismo*[77]. At the heart of the debate which developed between the *movimientistas* and *institucionalistas* lay the question of whether or not there existed a *pobladores'* social movement, understood within the framework of the growing body of international literature on new social movements.[78] This debate had serious implications for Chilean understandings of community in the *poblaciones*. Aspects of community tended only to be studied in relationship to their potential as the basis for a much broader and politically powerful *pobladores'* movement, incorporating many *poblaciones* and organizations. Much of the understanding of community in the *poblaciones* was misshapen as a result of its development within the broader debate over the formation of a social movement and the

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[77]From the Spanish for "movementism" and "institutionalism". It is important to note that these terms represent only basic intellectual positions and do not represent actual groups of researchers. See: Ton Salman, "The Diffident Movement: Gender and Generation in the Vicissitudes of the Chilean Shantytown Organizations, 1973 - 1990," Latin American Perspectives 21, 3 (1994): 8-31.

[78]For specifically Latin American examples see the collection of essays and bibliography in: Arturo Escobar, and Sonia Alvarez, The Making of Social Movements in Latin America (Boulder: Westview, 1992).

highly emotional political climate of the struggle against the Pinochet dictatorship in the 1980s. It is therefore important to briefly look at the understandings of community in the *poblaciones* which formed through the social movement debate.

Movimientismo

Movimientistas were very optimistic about the organizational capacity of *pobladores* and their potential to form a social movement. From their perspective, the protracted economic crisis not only produced terrible poverty, but also "projected nationally the powerful actor, the *poblador*."[79] They saw the *poblaciones* as the most important source of resistance against the dictatorship, and considered the participatory decision-making allegedly practiced in *población* organizations as the most propitious base for redemocratization in Chile. *Movimientistas* tended to equate the most active of the local leaders and the most organized *poblaciones* with all *pobladores* and all *poblaciones*.[80] They focussed primarily on the growing number and levels of participation in neighbourhood organizations, interpreting these as statistically important phenomena.[81]

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[79]Valdés, "El movimiento de pobladores": 296 (my translation).

[80]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 4.

[81]See Appendix 3 for PET's charting of the growth of PEOs between 1982 and 1989.

However, they often failed to differentiate between the participation of different social groups, such as women, men and youth. When they did focus on the participation of women, they generally overlooked the implications for community of the non-participation of many men and youth. *Movimientistas* heavily emphasized the democratic and egalitarian values they saw the *población* organizations to embody, and which they argued led to processes of personal growth and empowerment. They also tended to describe neighbourhood organizations as autonomous from other social and political actors; they emphasized cooperative, partner-like relationships, as opposed to clientelist ties, with the Catholic Church and NGOs, and particularly stressed *pobladores'* rejection of traditional party politics. Protest activity was widely interpreted as a manifestation of a *pobladores'* social movement and an indication of a new *poblador* identity. Through organization and protest, *pobladores* were seen to be transforming themselves from "victims to protagonists, from social outcasts to social actors."[82]

Movimientistas also argued that popular culture was changing: community participation, cooperation, mutual help, solidarity and self-sufficiency, independent of political party influence, were argued to becoming much more important

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[82]Fernando Ignacio Leiva and James Petras, "Chile's Poor in the Struggle for Democracy," Latin American Perspectives 13, 4 (1986): 5.

in the beliefs and values of *pobladores* and to form the basis of a growing alternative community culture which rejected the values of mainstream society. In an atmosphere of hope, the *población* was often glorified as the natural basis of an almost utopian community and as the root of an alternative and more socially progressive society. Chilean NGOs, working in the *poblaciones* were particularly responsible for the generation of such a romantic image. The following passage is typical of the view espoused by many NGO researchers:

> Local space is also the world of face-to-face relations, in which inhabitants look at each other, greet each other, talk, argue, visit each other, share problems and common needs, and where they work out solutions for their hopes and dreams. On the block, in the neighbourhood, or in the *población* they create and recreate common bonds from day to day; the place where they live generates natural ties of proximity and social interdependence that make it the natural base for organizing, proposing, and carrying out local action aimed at improving the conditions of life and habitat of those sharing that territory.[83]

Institucionalismo

Institucionalistas, on the other hand, argued against anything resembling community in the *poblaciones* and asserted that the overwhelming desire of *pobladores* was to integrate into mainstream middle class Chilean society. Strongly influenced by the long legacy of marginality theory

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[83]Beatriz Micheli, "El desarrollo local frente a los desafíos de la democratización; notas para un debate," Trabajo Social (Santiago) 57 (1990): 142 (my translation).

in Latin America,[84] *institucionalistas* saw *población* organizations as nothing more than temporary strategies in response to an acute economic crisis and considered the protests to be only sporadic outbursts of frustration and discontent initiated by left-wing political parties. Genaro Arriagada described the *poblaciones* during the protest years as "comprised of a mass of unorganized individuals and a few, weak, and underfinanced organizations of several thousand residents" and classified the protests as "spontaneous and unorganized violence."[85] *Institucionalistas* asserted that *pobladores* only joined neighbourhood organizations after they had exhausted all other options for survival and felt they had reached the lowest level of economic deterioration. They denied that neighbourhood organizations represented a cultural change oriented towards community integration and the rejection of mainstream societal values.[86] Rather, they emphasized the middle class aspirations of most *pobladores* and claimed that neighbourhood participation only represented an attempt to integrate as individuals into middle class society and to imitate middle class consumption patterns. They dismissed basic elements of community such as the sharing of resources

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[84]See: Perlman, The Myth of Marginality.

[85]Genaro Arriagada, Pinochet: The Politics of Power (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988): 61.

[86]Guillermo Campero, "Organizaciones de pobladores bajo el régimen militar," Proposiciones 14 (1987): 90.

and information among neighbours and interpreted the numbers of local organizations as statistically unimportant.[87] The only element of community readily acknowledged was that embodied in gangs of unemployed delinquent youths.[88] Furthermore, *institucionalistas* argued that the Catholic Church and NGOs were directly responsible for the growth of neighbourhood organizations; the personal efforts required of *pobladores* to make the organizations effective were generally glossed over.[89] *Institucionalistas* also tended to ignore the personal growth and empowerment experienced by many women who participated in neighbourhood organizations and to focus on the individual and informal work strategies generally pursued by men. They argued that rather than community, the culture emerging in the *poblaciones* was characterized by social disintegration, alienation, anomie and conformity to dominant social norms. The research institute SUR carried out an extensive survey from which researchers argued that most *pobladores* mistrusted their neighbours, preferred clientelist relations with the state over community organization as a means of solving problems and attributed very little importance to solidarity.[90] At a

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[87]Eduardo Valenzuela, "Identidad y representaciones en el mundo popular," Proposiciones 13 (1987): 104.

[88]Tironi, "Marginalidad": 14.

[89]Ibid.: 12.

[90]Valenzuela, "Identidad": 78-104.

conference also organized by SUR, Alain Tourraine described the world of urban poverty and marginality as savage and absolutely anti-communitarian, and compared the *poblaciones* to descriptions of the slums of Paris and London in the novels of Emile Zola and Charles Dickens. Tourraine asserted that "a *población* is not a community and processes of community integration do not exist in the *poblaciones* in a dominant manner."[91]

The Need for Revision

Much evidence exists to support the arguments of both the *movimientistas* and the *institucionalistas*. While important aspects of community could be identified in many *poblaciones*, as the *movimientistas* attested, the *institucionalistas* were also correct in pointing out that only a minority of *pobladores*, including very few men, participated in neighbourhood organizations and that only a small number of *poblaciones* ever really resembled communities. Furthermore, the *institucionalistas* were probably correct in arguing that the dominant economic and cultural trends of the late twentieth century work against the development of neighbourhood communities. The *movimientistas* were also perhaps too enthusiastic in the association of local organizations and protest with the

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[91]Alain Tourraine, "La centralidad de los marginales," Proposiciones 14 (1987): 217 (my translation).

socio-cultural formation of new community-based identities rather than seeing organization and protest as linked to specific economic and political circumstances.

As stated before, the debate over a *pobladores'* movement had a significant impact on understandings of community in the *poblaciones*. Although the debate fuelled much important research, a better understanding of the possibilities for community must move beyond the confines of the dichotomy between *movimientismo* and *institucionalismo*. Neighbourhood community is best understood in the context of the culture and traditions of each *población*.

The perspectives of the *movimientistas*, in particular, were influenced by the heated political struggle against the Pinochet dictatorship and the undebatable importance of the *pobladores* in the national protests. In the hope for a challenge to the dictatorship and a return to democracy, interpretations of the significance of neighbourhood organization were often exaggerated. Such a tendency was not exclusive to Chile. Jorge Castañeda argues that the Latin American Left in the 1980s "hypostasized" the importance of grassroots organizations:

> Both the armed left (since Che Guevara's death) and the peaceful reformist left (since Allende's) had been defeated in their respective quests for power; perhaps a new left, it was thought, emanating from the plural, proliferating popular movements could succeed where others had failed.[92]

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[92] Jorge Castañeda, Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993): 200.

New social movement theory and examples of burgeoning movements in other countries offered hope for deep changes at the level of culture and identity when it had become clear to the many in the Chilean Left that revolutionary strategies could not succeed in transforming society. As Ton Salman noted:

> NGOs in particular contributed to image construction around these [neighbourhood] organizations that sometimes owed more to ... the influence of the international new social movement approach than to careful observation of the processes taking place.[93]

Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez have also noted in much of the research on new social movements in Latin America that "new identities" have often been "celebrated prematurely."[94] A better understanding of the possibilities for community in the *poblaciones* requires a more careful analysis of the processes by which identities and culture change and a deeper understanding of the cultural tensions which affect community relationships in the *poblaciones* in isolation from ideological hopes and expectations.

Interestingly, many of the researchers who studied and wrote about the *poblaciones* in the 1980s went into government positions after the inauguration of the *Concertación* Government in 1990 and are no longer doing research or writing. Many other NGOs and researchers who

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[93]Salman, "The Diffident Movement": 27, #4.

[94]Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez, "Introduction: Theory and Protest in Latin America Today," in The Making of Social Movements in Latin America.: 5.

focussed on neighbourhood organizations and community in the *poblaciones* have shifted their interests towards the environmental movement and the development of small businesses.

The change in strategy by the Chilean political parties in 1986 from social mobilization and popular protest to a negotiated transition to democracy and the closely related collapse in 1988 of the principle coordinating organization of *pobladores*, the Unitary *Pobladores* Command (*Comando Unitario de Pobladores - CUP*) destroyed the hopes of most observers for the growth of a *pobladores'* movement. While there was a "boom" of community related research in the 1980s, there is now a notable paucity. This does not mean that community itself has disappeared or become any less important. As Kenneth Aman argued in 1991:

> the cooperative structures that the poor fashioned between 1970 and 1990 are as necessary today as ever, but they will be put to new tests within a changing sociopolitical context.[95]

In the next chapter I will develop more rigorous methodological guidelines for understanding how community relationships in urban neighbourhoods function and change. This will make it possible to move beyond the ideological conflict between *institucionalismo* and *movimientismo* and to better understand the ways in which poor urban

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[95]Kenneth Aman, "Introduction: Placing Chile's Popular Culture in Context," Popular Culture in Chile: Resistance and Survival. trans. Terry Cambias. boulder: Westview, 1991: 7.

neighbourhoods in Chile are currently responding to changing political and economic conditions.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Tools for Understanding Community Development

The Rational Actor

Many studies of low-income neighbourhoods and squatter settlements in Latin America have emphasized the rational and strategic nature of residents' behaviour. Such a 'rational actor' perspective suggests that people with low incomes possess a wide range of strategies, to achieve their objectives, which might range from acquiring potable water or electricity for their neighbourhood to dealing with food shortages or the need for day-care facilities for their children. Depending on the political and economic circumstances and the nature of their problems, residents might opt for individual strategies, patron-client relationships with the state or political parties, street demonstrations, or self-sufficient community organization. Alejandro Portes argued that neighbourhood organization represented rational and strategic responses of squatters to specific external political circumstances:

> Utilitarian considerations dictate that, when problems which require communal action become relevant, participation in voluntary communal associations increases. On the other hand, solutions of problems, fulfilment of aspirations, and absence in general of socially relevant issues result in decreasing participation. Organizations at such times lay dormant. They remain, however,

> latent as potential instruments to be employed in future confrontations. From the point of view of the slum inhabitants, *the communal association is not an artificial group to be maintained for its own sake but an instrumental tool to be employed when necessary.*[96]

The rational actor approach has not been limited to the 1970s. More recently Louise Fortman and Emery Roe also argued that rational decision making underlies community organization: "People ... cooperate in a community only when they have to. They do so because they are under some resource stress."[97]

Despite the appealing simplicity and straightforwardness of the rational actor perspective to explain the growth and decline of community organization and participation, it does not seem to account for the behaviour of *pobladores* in *La Victoria* or any other *poblaciones* in Chile. Communities relationships in the *poblaciones* did not form simply because they are necessary or because individualistic ways of doing things are not working. During the early 1980s, when unemployment in many *poblaciones* was as high as 70% and the state refused to expand social assistance, only a small minority of *pobladores* organized communal strategies to confront their problems. The

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[96]Alejandro Portes, quoted in Anthony Leeds and Elizabeth Leeds, "Accounting for Behavioral Differences: Three Political Systems and the Responses of Squatters in Brazil, Peru and Chile," in The City in Comparative Perspective ed. John Walton and Louis Mascotti (New York: Halstead Press, 1976): 234 (emphasis added).

[97]Fortman and Roe, "On Really Existing Communities": 145.

phenomena included very few men; most men continued to pursue individual work strategies despite the futility of this means of earning income. Furthermore, the levels of community organization did not correspond geographically with the severity of economic problems; some of the most organized *poblaciones* were among those least affected by the crisis and some of the *poblaciones* hardest hit by the crisis hardly organized at all.[98] In *población La Alborada*, Blanca Velasco and Arodys Leppe found many families who did not have enough to eat, but who would not participate in the local community kitchens.[99]

While neighbourhood organization may have been a 'rational' choice for those who did become active in their *poblaciones*, it also required strong predispositions which favoured increased participation. Neighbourhood organization was not part of the 'logic' which guided the everyday behaviour of many *pobladores*. The rational actor approach accounts for community only as a strategy, but in order to develop, community relationships must be supported by culture and ideology. An understanding of why people cooperate with their neighbours and form strong community relationships in their neighbourhoods therefore requires an

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[98]Schneider, "Mobilization at the Grassroots": 93.

[99]Blanca Velasco and Arodys Leppe, "Appropriate Technologies: A Way of Meeting Human Needs," in Social Policy from the Grassroots: Nongovernmental Organizations in Chile ed. Charles Downs et al, trans. Paula Orr (Boulder: Westview, 1989): 107.

examination of the cultural and ideological beliefs - or, 'popular culture' - which operates in the *poblaciones*.

Gramsci's Concept of Popular Culture

According to Kenneth Thompson in reference to Antonio Gramsci, popular culture is composed of many diverse and often contradictory beliefs which have accumulated like cultural layers and have "sedimented" through history. These cultural layers are based on both the dominant beliefs of previous historical periods, which have been incorporated into 'common sense,'[100] and on standard ways of resolving daily living situations according to the cultural messages of the dominant or "hegemonic" ideology.[101] While the popular culture of the low-income and working classes can be distinguished by different behaviour and practices, it adheres to the hegemonic culture's basic values and beliefs. An understanding of popular culture therefore also requires an understanding of the broader hegemonic culture from which it receives its guiding principles. Hegemony operates, not through the coercion of the dominated, but rather, through their consent. A class or group becomes hegemonic when it

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[100]For Gramsci, 'common sense' is the set of fragmented, ambiguous, contradictory, spontaneous and subconscious beliefs which form the world view of ordinary people. Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks (New York: International Publishers, 1971): 198, 321-322, 419, 423.

[101]Kenneth Thompson, Beliefs and Ideology (Sussex: Ellis Horwood, 1986): 107-120.

succeeds in shaping the beliefs and values of other classes in a way that reflects its interests.

The Opposing Forces within Popular Culture Affecting Community

In the *poblaciones*, the values and beliefs which support community relationships coexist with other beliefs which act as a barrier to the further development of community bonds. The frequent exchange of favours, money, information and material resources between close neighbours and a more widespread cooperation and solidarity in times of crisis, such as fires, floods and deaths, are core elements of community oriented cultural practices which exist in almost all *poblaciones*.[102] These basic elements of community have been trivialized by many analysts but they are of critical importance to those who live on low incomes, and often function, to use Cristián Parker's words, as an "informal social security system."[103] These patterns of mutual help exist primarily because of economic necessity, but have also become established traditions of *población* culture and are the basis from which stronger community bonds might develop.

Many researchers have noted the widespread desire of women, and specifically wives and mothers (who account for

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[102]Correa and Labán, *Estudio*: 142.

[103]Cristián Parker, in the introduction to Razeto, "Popular Organizations": 81.

almost all women), in the *poblaciones* to initiate cooperative efforts aimed at improving their neighbourhoods.[104] Francisco Sabatini found that almost all women in *Hirmas II población* expressed an interest in joining neighbourhood organizations and cooperating more actively with other residents of the *población*.

However, the tradition of mutual help and cooperation has limits. While *pobladores* have tended to work collectively in reaction to certain problems such as natural disasters or deaths, there has been much less cooperation around issues like health or education, generally considered more private concerns. Alejandro Portes observed that the initiation of collective action in Latin American cities has generally been limited to quests for housing and home ownership, needs for which collective action is considered both necessary and socially acceptable. Once these basic needs have been satisfied, survival and progress have tended to return to the sphere of individual private action.[105]

Elements of popular culture in the *poblaciones* which reflect the beliefs and values of Chile's dominant culture restrict the desire of both women and especially men to participate in neighbourhood organizations and to form stronger community bonds with their neighbours. Sabatini

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[104]Eugenio Tironi and Ernesto Ortega, Pobreza en Chile (Santiago: CED, 1988).

[105]Portes, Urban Latin America: 98-102.

found a large gap between women who were interested in joining neighbourhood organizations and those who actually did so.[106] The strength of countervailing beliefs which stigmatize community relationships and promote individualistic behaviour helps to explain why such a gap exists and why most *pobladores* have limited collective action to certain critical issues.

The Pinochet dictatorship tried to maintain authoritarian rule through both coercion and a concerted attempt to win the consent of the majority of Chileans. It attached great importance to culture and ideology and sought to change the basic values and beliefs of Chileans.[107] According to Hugo Frühling, the ultimate aim of the dictatorship was not only to "destroy the left as a political and ideological alternative", but also to "restrict political and cultural thinking that could challenge the government."[108] Playing on the fears and insecurities of the perceived chaos of Allende's socialist government, the Pinochet dictatorship sought to depoliticize Chilean society by discouraging collective behaviour and instituting individual hard work and competition and a value

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[106]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 7.

[107]Ronaldo Munck, Latin America: The Transition to Democracy (London: Zed, 1989): 70.

[108]Hugo Frühling, "Repressive Policies and Legal Dissent in Authoritarian Regimes: Chile 1973-1981," International Journal of Law and Sociology 12, 4 (1984): 355.

for order and progress as the new guiding social principles.[109] The mass mobilization which marked Allende's years in government (1970-1973) were replaced with the dream of individual upward mobility.[110] As an editorial in the conservative newspaper, El Mercurio stated in 1982:

> Instead of spending energy in the struggle for the change of structures as a means of social ascent, the great revolution of this government consists in each person making decisions on an individual basis, taking that which is rightfully theirs, and understanding in practice the dynamic value of property.[111]

The legitimacy of the Pinochet dictatorship rested on its ability to promote economic prosperity and to maintain a sense of public order. As one *pobladora* declared, "I am with this government because there is order."[112]

Chilean popular culture has also been heavily influenced by the products of U.S. mass culture, including television programs, comic books, film, magazines and music. Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart studied Disney comics, which were very popular among adults in the *poblaciones* in the 1960s and 1970s, and found that the overriding moral instructed readers: "Don't try to change anything! Put up with what you have or chances are things will probably get

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[109]Giselle Munizaga, El discurso público de Pinochet: Un análisis semiológico (Santiago: CESOC / CENECA, 1988): 19-20.

[110]Munck, Latin America: 70.

[111]Quoted in Ibid.: 71.

[112]Cited in by Munizaga, El discurso: in epitaph (my translation).

worse."[113] Watching television constitutes the primary form of recreation among *pobladores* and almost all households in the *poblaciones* own or have access to a television set.[114] The most powerful message of the U.S. and U.S.-style programs which dominate Chilean television is that individual effort is the best means to success, which is characterized by the consumption patterns of Chile's wealthy minority. Although these consumption patterns were and still are beyond the reach of *pobladores*, it is still possible to aspire to them and imitate the individualistic behaviour presented as the most effective means for achieving these aspirations. Supporting this argument Guillermo Campero found that among *pobladores*, "individual social mobility persists even when the expectation of achieving it is very limited."[115]

The adoption of the values and behaviour of the dominant culture in Chilean society represents the primary means by which economically and socially marginalized *pobladores* can try to integrate into the society which stigmatizes and marginalizes them.[116] Imitating the dominant culture is often an important means for *pobladores* to affirm

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[113]Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, How to Read Donald Duck trans. David Kunzle (London: International General, 1975): 43.

[114]Mariana Schkoinik, Realidad y perspectivas del sector informal en Chile Documento de Trabajo No 64 (Santiago: PET, 1989): 12.

[115]Campero, "*Organizaciones de pobladores*": 88 (my translation).

[116]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 142.

their human dignity. Given the overwhelming pervasiveness and appeal of the dominant cultural messages in Chilean society and the widespread absence of convincing alternative messages, it is understandable that the vast majority of *pobladores* do want to better integrate into middle class Chilean society.

John Friedmann also argues that most *pobladores* are not interested in community oriented "social experiments" but simply want a job, a decent income, freedom from police harassment and a little house with a garden.[117] Saul Alinsky also asserts that "the poor" have no interest in counter-cultural ideologies, but rather: "they want a bigger and fatter piece of these decadent, degenerate, bankrupt, materialistic, bourgeois values and what goes with it."[118] The progression from traditions of exchanging favours and cooperating in times of crisis to widespread neighbourhood organization and the formation of strong community relationships encounters a powerful barrier in the cultural messages which dominate Chilean society. The formation of stronger community relationships requires *pobladores* to reject, or at least to negotiate their way around the cultural messages which stigmatize collective action. This is not a simple process and demands both a practical need for collective action and a strong ideological belief in the

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[117]Friedmann, Empowerment: 150.

[118]Alinsky, Reveille for Radicals: 229.

principle of community organization. Offering evidence of how *pobladores* responded to the need for neighbourhood organization without the ideological support for doing so, Loreta Jansana tells of women so ashamed of their participation in community kitchens that they carry their pots of food to their homes wrapped in newspaper to disguise their participation.[119]

A more specific examination of the most important of the tensions affecting community development is the subject of the next chapter. But first, because community relationships are rooted in culture and ideology, in order to understand the possibilities for *pobladores* to successfully negotiate these tensions and to develop strong neighbourhood communities, it is necessary to consider the processes through which culture changes.

How Does Culture Change?

Any change in practical activity involves a process of learning. John Friedmann distinguishes between two types of learning. One involves the relatively straightforward acquisition of new technical skills to solve specific problems. The other, deeper process, Friedmann calls "social learning," which entails transformations in values, beliefs,

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[119]Loreta Jansana, *El pan nuestro: Las organizaciones populares para el consumo* (Santiago: PET, 1989): 29.

In community kitchens, women prepared and cooked food together but then divided it into their individual pots and returned to their homes to feed their families.

attitudes and perceptions of reality.[120] The development of community relationships among people who act and understand the world primarily as individuals clearly requires more than just the acquisition of new skills; it also demands the deep changes in the way they perceive themselves and their relationships with neighbours that social learning implies. As Robert Chin and Kenneth D. Benne assert:

> Patterns of action and practice are supported by commitments on the part of individuals to these norms. Socio-cultural norms are supported by the attitude and values systems of individuals - normative outlooks which undergird their commitments. Change in a pattern of practice or action, according to this view, will occur only as the persons involved are brought to change their normative orientations to old patterns and develop commitments to new ones. And changes in normative orientations involve changes in attitudes, values, skills and significant relationships, not just changes in knowledge, information and practice.[121]

Social learning is not easy. People tend to become very attached to their ways of behaving and understanding. Values, beliefs and perceptions acquire very definite structures often in spite of changing external circumstances. Peter Marris argues that an attachment to familiar relationships and patterns of behaviour is basic in all human beings. He describes a "conservative impulse" that is fundamental to all human behaviour.

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[120] Friedmann, Planning: 185.

[121] Robert Chin and Kenneth D. Benne, "General Strategies for Effecting Changes in Human Systems," in The Planning of Change 3rd ed., ed. Warren G. Bennis et al (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976): 23.

> [the conservative impulse] is as necessary for survival as adaptability: and indeed adaptability itself depends upon it. For the ability to learn from experience relies on the stability of the interpretations by which we predict the pattern of events. We assimilate new experiences by placing them in the context of a familiar, reliable construction of reality. This structure in turn rests not only on the regularity of events themselves, but on the continuity of their meaning.[122]

People become attached to the familiar not because of any instrumental purpose it may serve, but rather, precisely because it is familiar and offers a secure and constant means of understanding the world. Changes from the familiar require risks, and the margin for risk in low-income neighbourhoods is small. Changes from the familiar are also painful and demand sacrifices.[123] Even when not changing is likely to bring on more pain, Friedmann claims that people will tend to "discount the pain of the present while magnifying in the mind the pain of future changes."[124] Marris also supports this view: "it is slow, painful and difficult for an adult to reconstruct a radically different way of seeing life, however needlessly miserable his preconceptions make him."[125]

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus helps to further explain the processes of social learning and cultural

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[122]Peter Marris, Loss and Change (London: Routeledge and Kegan Paul, 1974): 6.

[123]Ibid.: 6.

[124]Friedmann, Planning: 215.

[125]Marris, Loss and Change: 9.

change.[126] Habitus is the whole set of internalized social patterns which gives shape to a class, group or individual. It is a group's or individual's subconscious system of understanding the world and shaping their behaviour in accordance with that understanding. Habitus is conditioned by economic, social, historical and ideological factors. It is at the level of habitus that community relationships operate.

Habitus guides a group's or person's perceptions and their actions in a cyclical pattern in which new experiences and ideas are filtered through a system of understanding based on previous experiences and perceptions. In this process, habitus reinforces itself by favouring information complementary to pre-established perceptions and avoiding or rejecting ideas that call its system of understanding into question. As a result, habitus is slow to change. The accumulated weight of previous experiences shapes a group's or individual's system of understanding such that new ideas which do not fit within their system of perceiving and acting are not easily adopted. Habitus can become very durable and can survive long past the economic, political and social conditions in which it forms. Thus, although the

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[126]The following summary of Bourdieu's concept of habitus is drawn from: Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," Text of lecture delivered at the University of San Diego, March 1986; Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Richard Harker, Cheleen Mahar and Chris Wilkes, eds., An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu: The Practice of Theory (London: MacMillan, 1990).

circumstances in which people live may change, they will continue to act and perceive their circumstances on the basis of a system of understanding gained through previous experiences. Behaviour or ideas which might seem rational in the context of new circumstances might not be rational at all in the context of an understanding based on the past experiences which dominate habitus.

If changes in circumstances are sustained habitus will slowly begin to change in response. However, because new experiences are much less significant in comparison with the many past experiences which have shaped the habitus, these past experiences have much greater importance than new ones in shaping subsequent perceptions and behaviour.

Bourdieu's conception of habitus refers primarily to class, understood in economic and ideological terms. However, in the case of the *poblaciones*, economic class is not the only factor which shapes habitus; ideology also plays an extremely important role. *Poblaciones* which share very similar economic and physical characteristics may differ considerably in patterns of social behaviour because of ideological differences. Therefore, in addition to class, I also use habitus to refer more specifically to the patterns of internalized behaviour which characterize specific *poblaciones*, such as *La Victoria*.

Habitus is strongly influenced by ideology. As a particular ideology becomes hegemonic in a group or society,

the systems of belief or behaviour which define habitus will begin to shift in correspondence with the ideology's guiding principles. Indeed, the transformation of habitus is a clear indication of hegemonic change. As habitus continually reinvents itself, shifting ideological influences will transform it to reflect the hegemonic ideology.

Bourdieu does not indicate how much time is required for habitus to change. In a study of a community-oriented housing project in Peru, Friedmann found that three years was not enough time for effective social learning to occur.[127] Marris argues that systems of understanding evolve over generations and implies that deep changes in systems of meaning probably also require generations. Transformations in habitus appear to be most evident in the social behaviour of new generations. As an ideology becomes hegemonic, its guiding principles first become evident in the social patterns of new generations in which habitus is reproduced without the experience of previous ideological influences. As I will argue in Chapter Six, the process of habitus transformation is evident in *La Victoria* with the shifting of social patterns from a community based ideology, strongly influenced by experiences between 1957 and 1973, to an ideology rooted in individualism and competition, promoted by the military dictatorship and business elite.

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[127]Friedmann, Empowerment: 152.

Cultural changes may occur more quickly in certain circumstances. Changes which violate dominant cultural norms are clearly more difficult than those which follow the hegemonic patterns of progress and modernization. Change which corresponds with hegemonic beliefs is supported by the full weight of a society's dominant ideology. The possibilities for counter-hegemonic change increase when hegemony itself is weak. Juan Eduardo García-Huidobro, asserts that according to Gramsci, the breakdown of hegemony begins when the hegemonic group or class can no longer make a convincing case that its interests represent the interests of all groups.[128] In Chile, in the *poblaciones*, the 1982 economic crisis created a situation in which the individualistic behaviour encouraged through the Pinochet regime's ideological messages was insufficient for securing the basic needs of hundreds of thousands of people. The result was that this tenet of the regime's power began to weaken. As Kenneth Aman argues, "necessity - particularly economic necessity - breaks down traditional relations at a frightening pace."[129] Even more important than the breakdown of the regime's hegemony in the *poblaciones* was its loss of legitimacy among Chile's middle class. The economic crisis had serious costs for the middle class in terms of

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[128]Tomás Valdivia, pen name for Juan Eduardo García-Huidoboro, "Antonio Gramsci y el marxismo: otra forma de concebir la política," Mensaje (Santiago) 277 (1979): 144.

[129]Aman, "Towards a Theory of Popular Culture": 212.

employment, income and the availability of products and services. Much of the support from this sector for the dictatorship began to crumble when it could no longer guarantee social order and economic prosperity. As support for the government waned so too did the intensity of the ideological messages which promoted individualism and stigmatized collective behaviour.

Robert Park argued that patterns of behaviour and beliefs may also change rapidly, if only partially, during periods of population movement. "Every advance in culture," he stated, "commences with a new period of migration and movement of population."[130] The massive disruptions in surroundings and lifestyle often involved in migration facilitate the breakdown of old cultural patterns and beliefs, and open people to the adoption of new ones. The process of rapid rural-urban migration and the subsequent internal urban population movement connected with the land seizures which took place in Chile between the 1940s and 1970s were important in opening people to the development of neighbourhood community beliefs.

Gramsci maintained that counter-hegemonic change requires a counter-hegemonic ideology to support it.[131] In

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[130]Robert Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," American Journal of Sociology 33, 6 (1928): 881.

[131]Joseph V. Femia, Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Process (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981): 52-56.

Chile, the Communist Party was central in promoting beliefs in community during the period of land seizures. After the 1973 coup almost all sources of ideological dissent were silenced. It was the Catholic Church which eventually initiated the basis of a counter-ideological force against the military regime by providing both practical and moral support to *pobladores* organizing subsistence strategies at the local level.[132] Only after the 1982 economic crisis and the widespread loss of legitimacy of the Pinochet regime among Chile's middle classes did a significant counter-hegemonic force emerge. In 1983, the political opposition parties developed a strategy specifically based on the mass mobilization of *pobladores* in protests against the dictatorship. The political opening created by the economic crisis also allowed Chilean NGOs to become much more active in promoting neighbourhood organization and participation. The presence of NGOs in the *poblaciones* extended far beyond their importance in providing resources, training and information. They also provided significant ideological support for neighbourhood organization.

The mere presence of a counter-cultural ideology is not sufficient for counter-cultural change to develop. Gramsci also argued that an "organic" relationship must form between the carriers of the counter-hegemonic ideology and the

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[132]Pamela Lowden, "The Ecumenical Committee for Peace in Chile (1973-1975): The Foundation of Moral Opposition to Authoritarian Rule in Chile," Bulletin of Latin American Research 12, 2 (1993): 189-203.

ordinary people (*pobladores*) so that they themselves become adherents of the ideology. Through workshops, discussions and training aimed at consciousness raising, first the Chilean Communist Party and later progressive members of the Catholic Church and representatives of NGOs taught not only specific skills to facilitate the formation and maintenance of neighbourhood organizations, but also tried to instill basic beliefs and values related to community. In some cases, *pobladores* did develop deeply rooted beliefs in the value of community relationships and local organization. This is what I will argue occurred in *La Victoria* as the result of organic relationships formed by militants from the Communist Party following the land seizure in 1957.

The development of a counter-hegemonic ideology and culture occurs most easily when it is conceived in a context of struggle against a perceived threat or enemy. It is much easier to organize people in reaction against something than to unite people around pro-active changes. In Chile, the Pinochet dictatorship was an unambiguous enemy against which many people developed a common sense of unity and an opposition ideology to support the growth of an opposition culture oriented towards community.

The Oscillating Pattern of Public and Private Interest

The theoretical perspective presented thus far sees strong community relationships as a product of people's

basic dispositions, which are relatively slow to change. During certain historical moments, such as a land seizure or a severe economic crisis, opportunities may open for the further development of people's attitudes towards community. Then, a strong ideological influence is required to sustain collective action beyond the particular critical situation in which it was initiated. Slowly, as people's experience with collective action accumulates, a value for it enters into the beliefs and dispositions which regulate their daily decisions and actions.

However, long-term observation and analysis of community relationships in different parts of the world and of collective action at different points in history shows that the strength of community relationships and rates of participation in collective action are not constant. As Alejandro Portes explains,

> the pattern encountered in most lower-class settlements in Latin America is not one of sustained or increasing participation ... but of sharp ups and downs, with surges of interest and collective spirit followed by periods of collective apathy.[133]

While much of the literature on community development places an absolute value on participation in local initiatives, always preferring participation to non-participation, Portes argues that this is unrealistic to expect.

Albert Hirschman has tried to explain the cyclical pattern of public and private interests. He argues that

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[133]Portes, Urban Latin America: 94.

human societies are "predisposed towards oscillations between periods of intense preoccupation with public issues and of almost total concentration on individual improvement and private welfare goals."[134] Hirschman sees both public and private life to have monopolizing tendencies such that over time a person's and indeed a society's activities will become increasingly devoted either to the public or the private realm. That monopolization however, leads in turn to disappointment and subsequently to a turn to the other realm of activity: "Just as public life comes as a relief to the boredom of private life, so does the latter provide a refuge from the paroxysm and futility of public endevours."[135] Hirschman also refers to a "rebound effect" in which those most intensely dedicated to one realm of activity are also those who return with the greatest disappointment and force to the other realm.[136] Hirschman's study concludes with the assertion that a pattern of change from private interests to public action is not only inevitable but also desirable in the long run. The movement from public to private is necessary in order for a return to public activity.

The idea of an oscillating pattern of community participation may appear to contradict the concepts of

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[134]Albert Hirschman, Shifting Involvements: Private Interest and Public Action (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982): 3.

[135]Ibid.: 129.

[136]Ibid.: 78-79.

social learning and habitus change elaborated earlier. However, they are in fact quite compatible. Indeed, the ups and downs of interest in community are part of the processes of social learning and habitus formation. As Hirschman argued, shifts in interest, especially from the public to the private realm, can occur relatively quickly once an individual's or society's expectations of the given realm have been disappointed. Hirschman also points out that shifts from public action to private interest are particularly likely after periods of intense public involvement and during periods of rapid economic growth.[137] In Chapter Six, I will consider how these conditions apply to current circumstances in Chile.

The next chapter will focus on the formation of community relationships by examining the principal tensions between cultural forces which have supported community development and those which have acted as a barrier against it. In Chapter Five, I will try to explain why *pobladores* in *La Victoria* have been able to build stronger community relationships than exist in most other *poblaciones*.

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[137]Ibid.: 15.

Chapter Four

Negotiating the Tensions of Neighbourhood Participation

Participation in neighbourhood organizations and the development of community relationships among *pobladores* must be understood in the context of a difficult process of negotiation between cultural forces which support community and others which oppose it. *Pobladores* must contend with the individualistic messages of the mass media, the lasting impact of the discourse of the military regime which stigmatized collective action, NGO and Church activists who promote participation, and their own financial and social needs. While respecting the dangers of generalization, it is clear that the gender[138] and generation of *pobladores* are the two most important distinctions which influence beliefs and attitudes towards participation in neighbourhood organizations and community relationships. This chapter focusses on the effects of the cultural forces listed above on the community attitudes of adult women and men, and youth of both sexes in a broad range of low-income neighbourhoods. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the basic attitudes and interests of these social groups and the

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[138]By gender, I refer to the culturally defined differences between men and women, as opposed to sex which only refers to physiological differences.

subsequent implications for participation in neighbourhood organizations. In the next chapter I will focus more specifically on *La Victoria* to see how residents there have been able to overcome some of the obstacles to community development experienced in many other *poblaciones*.

Women and Community

Women made up over 90% of the participants in the neighbourhood organizations which emerged in the *poblaciones* during the 1980s. Researchers have observed similar numbers of women in neighbourhood organizations in other Latin American countries.[139]

In order to understand the participation of women in neighbourhood organizations, it is first necessary to acknowledge the sexual division of labour and the gender roles assigned to women in Chilean society generally and in the *poblaciones* specifically. The organization of a *pobladora*'s daily life and the meaning given to her life have been traditionally determined by her responsibilities for her children, husband and household.[140] These roles are

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[139]For **Ecuador** see: Lilia Rodríguez, "Barrio Women: Between the Urban and Feminist Movement," Latin American Perspectives 21, 3 (1994): 32-48. For **Brazil** see: Yvonne Corcorán-Nantes, "Female Consciousness or Feminist Consciousness?: Women's Consciousness Raising in Community-Based Struggles in Brazil," in Viva: Women and Popular Protest in Latin America ed. Sallie Westwood and Sarah A. Radcliffe (London and New York: Routledge, 1993): 136-155.

[140]Teresa Valdés, "Being Female and Poor: A Double Oppression," in Aman and Parker, Popular Culture in Chile: 97-112.

deeply embedded in Chilean society and have been reproduced from generation to generation.

Womens' Roles: Mother, Wife, Household Labour

Being a mother is the most important and most legitimate role assigned to *pobladoras*. Motherhood is a crucial cultural symbol in which the virtues of self-denial and self-sacrifice are glorified. A woman is expected to live for her children without personal ambitions. The identity of a *pobladora* is overwhelmingly constructed around motherhood. In Chilean society, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods, there is a strong belief that a woman who does not have children is incomplete and that her life lacks meaning. Iñes, a forty-seven year old *pobladora* attests:

> With the two children I have now, I at least feel like a complete woman because when you have kids, it's different. You have a reason to struggle. ... If you've already raised your kids, what more is there to live for?[141]

Being a wife complements a woman's role as a mother. Becoming a wife confirms a woman's adulthood and is often the only opportunity for a young woman to escape patriarchal domination in her parents' household. Teresa Valdés argues that because being a wife is so important to many *pobladoras*, the choice of a husband is often secondary to the decision to get married.[142] Women's responsibilities for

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[141]Ibid.: 99.

[142]Ibid.: 100.

their children frequently extend to their husbands as well, who often demand levels of attention similar to that required by children.

The house is the physical space allotted to *pobladoras* for the fulfilment of their responsibilities as mothers and wives. In this way it corresponds with the gender division between public and private space, where men occupy the public sphere and women the private. The house is the only place where many women may legitimately exercise any real degree of personal autonomy and individuality. Having a house is thus very important to most *pobladoras*. According to Alejandro Portes, homeownership is an important source of respectability as well as insurance against economic hardship. Owning a house, no matter how modest, also establishes individuals and families as permanent members of a community and as neighbourhood 'citizens'.[143] Nora who lives with her husband, daughter and sister in a shack built in the yard of a relative, describes her feelings: "I'm happy being married because all I wanted was to have a house, no matter how small, just a house to call my own."[144]

Traditional beliefs hold that women should stay in their houses regardless of whether they have housework to do, and that only women who stay at home may be considered

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[143]Alejandro Portes, Urban Latin America: The Political Condition from Above and Below (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1976): 80.

[144]Ibid.: 101.

respectable. However, domestic and maternal responsibilities are often not enough to provide women with a sense of personal satisfaction. As Berta, from *Hirmas II*, explained: "Here at home I feel useless, because I feel like I'm only in this world to raise my children and nothing else."[145] Emilia, also from *Hirmas II* elaborates further: "Staying at home doesn't fill your day. There's time to get bored because sometimes there's nothing to do."[146] Many women experience a tension between a lack of fulfilment with their traditional gender roles and the social imperative that they be confined to these roles.

Women's Traditional Roles and Unfulfilled Needs for Personal Development as Motivations to Join Neighbourhood Organizations

Throughout Latin America scholars have argued that low-income women have joined collective self-help groups in order to help fulfil their domestic and maternal responsibilities during periods of economic crisis. In this process, the neighbourhood has often been described as an extension of the private, domestic sphere of the household.[147]

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[145]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 130.

[146]Ibid.: 130.

[147]See for example: Caroline O.N. Moser, "Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs," World Development 17, 11 (1989): 1801; Amy Conger Lind, "Power, Gender and Development: Popular Women's Organizations and the Politics of Needs in Ecuador," in Escobar and Alvarez, ed., The Making of Social Movements:

The argument posits that women's involvement in the public sphere is only considered legitimate in traditional thinking when justified by their domestic responsibilities in the private sphere. Tasks such as sweeping the sidewalk or walking to buy groceries, which take place in the public sphere, in fact correspond much more closely with women's traditional roles in the private sphere. However, many women also exploit such tasks to contest their confinement to the private sphere. Thus, while the overt reasons for participating in a neighbourhood organization may appear entirely related to women's domestic responsibilities, the participation itself challenges and expands the possibilities for women's participation in the public sphere. And yet, neighbourhood organizations, especially those composed entirely of women are not fully part of the public sphere; as Verónica Schild points out, there remains a big step between developing the courage to speak out and act confidently amidst a group of women and doing the same amongst a group of men, and an even bigger step when speaking or acting outside of the familiar surroundings of the neighbourhood.

The path from the private world of the home to the public world of the neighbourhood is far from easy or direct for women in the *poblaciones*. Becoming involved in neighbourhood organizations requires women to challenge

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culturally established patriarchal definitions of appropriate feminine behaviour, which deny women a place in the public sphere and stigmatize collective action.

Challenging the patriarchal order is very difficult for many *pobladoras*, not only because they may be directly subordinated by the will of their husbands or fathers, but also because many women find the principal source of fulfilment in their lives through their roles as mother and wife. Since their identities are often formed around their domestic and family responsibilities, to challenge patriarchal oppression would upset the primary source of fulfilment many women experience. However, very few *pobladoras* seem to have completely internalized the patriarchal ideology which confines them to their homes. Almost all *pobladoras* at least express an interest in participating in neighbourhood organizations, as a means of fulfilling their gender-defined responsibilities, to realize their needs for sociability and personal growth, and as an opportunity to escape the loneliness and isolation of the house.[148] Kenneth Aman suggests that because of their narrowly defined gender roles, women often disguise their needs for personal development as a motivation to join neighbourhood organizations and offer economic justifications which they consider more likely to be

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[148]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 6.

accepted.[149] Because of their subordinate position and isolation in their homes, many *pobladoras* suffer from depression, anguish and feelings of uselessness, emptiness and exploitation. Sabatini found that over half the women in *Hirmas II* said they had experienced such emotions.[150]

Participation in neighbourhood organizations represents one of the most effective and accessible ways in which women can confront these problems. In meetings of all-female neighbourhood organizations, women typically spend a considerable amount of time discussing personal issues not directly related to the stated objectives of the organization.[151] Discussion of relationships with children and husbands, and other personal feelings are common in the meetings of neighbourhood organizations and help women first to question and then to challenge their gender subordination. Moira, a *pobladora* from *Hirmas II* attests:

> The groups teach you to value yourself as a woman. Before, my husband walked all over me. Now, he doesn't get away with as much; he dominates part of my life, but not all. Little by little we have to set some limits.[152]

Norma, another *pobladora* from *Hirmas II* explains the impact of participating in neighbourhood organizations on her life:

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[149]Aman: 214.

[150]Ibid.: 134.

[151]Personal Interviews.

[152]Ibid.: 135.

> I have only positive memories of my participation in different groups in the *población*. I learned to defend myself in life, to value myself as a person. Before, I felt like I was worth nothing. In the groups I learned to value what I was ... I learned that I could give a lot as a person.[153]

Participating in neighbourhood organizations gives women direct evidence that collective action can help to solve economic problems and promote personal growth. It also helps women to realize that they do not need to be confined by traditional beliefs and practices.

Machismo as an Obstacle to Womens' Participation

The greatest obstacle to womens' participation in neighbourhood organizations is *machismo*, which is manifested in two primary ways. First, *machismo* represents the direct domination of husbands over their wives. Second, it is a series of culturally established beliefs which assert the physical, intellectual, sexual and emotional superiority of men. *Machismo* is particularly strong in Latin America and especially in low-income areas.

Machismo is closely related to the sexual division of labour in the *poblaciones*. While the traditional role of women is in the private sphere of the home as mother and wife, the role of men is in the public sphere, as the generator of income and head of household. Although unemployment and unstable jobs threaten men's role as

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[153]Ibid.: 124.

economic providers, few men have changed their expectations of fulfilling this responsibility. Most men prefer to work extremely long hours at very low paying jobs so that their wives do not 'have to' work or participate in neighbourhood organizations.

What men find most unacceptable about their wives' participation in neighbourhood organizations is that it becomes a means of obtaining material benefits (such as food from community kitchens) and income (from productive workshops), which threatens men's role as economic provider, often jeopardized already by unemployment or the lack of a secure job. Men's opposition to their wives' participation is also rooted in their own fears and selfishness. Men worry that their wives will neglect their domestic duties, which include looking after men themselves. This fear seems to be diminished when women stay shut up in their houses.

Although single mothers and female heads of households do not suffer from the direct domination of husbands, their ability to participate in neighbourhood organizations is also affected by the *machista* beliefs of neighbours. Regardless of whether a participating woman is married or single, neighbours will tend to make comments and gossip that she is neglecting her responsibilities at home. This has a negative impact on the participation of single as well as married housewives. Having internalized the belief that leaving the house constitutes an abandonment of duties, many

pobladoras are extremely reluctant to participate in activities outside their homes. According to Emilia, from *Hirmas II*: "They say that women who participate neglect their houses... A woman's place is in the home. Because there's so much work to do around the house... I would never neglect the house."[154] Lilia Rodríguez has observed a similar tendency in low-income neighbourhoods in Quito, Ecuador for neighbours to make comments about women neglecting their duties whether they have completed their housework or not.[155] What is important is that women remain at home; while it is acceptable for women to spend long hours watching television, it is unacceptable for them to leave the house unless absolutely necessary (to buy food or take children to school). Because of their selfishness, fear of gossip and concern for respectability, men will often not allow their wives to participate in self-help organizations such as community kitchens or productive workshops even when the family is experiencing critical economic circumstances. Brigida, a *pobladora* from *Hirmas II* attests:

> There are some sexist husbands who don't want their wife to join the Community Kitchen. It embarrasses them. I don't know what it is that embarrasses them. They get food brought to them which is undoubtedly a benefit. I know some couples who, at times, literally don't have enough to scrape together a meal, and the

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[154]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 118.

[155]Rodríguez, "Barrio Women": 37.

husbands still get angry with the woman for joining a community kitchen.[156]

Womens' Negotiation of the Tensions Created by Neighbourhood Participation

The desires of *pobladoras* to fulfil their domestic responsibilities and to satisfy their needs for personal growth through participation in neighbourhood organizations conflict directly with their husbands' opposition and the *machista* cultural beliefs which limit women's place in society to the household. This conflict creates a difficult tension both for women who want to, and those who already do, participate in neighbourhood organizations. Almost all women who do participate are criticized for neglecting their household duties, and those who are married suffer continuous pressure from their husbands to quit. These pressures mean that women must often rush through their housework in order to make time to participate in organizations or must rush to and from meetings and activities in order to be at home for their husbands, who generally expect to be served by their wives. Many women also risk starting an argument or being physically abused by their husband every time they go to a meeting. Moira, whose husband opposes her participation in activities outside the house, describes her experiences:

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[156]Quoted in Sabatini, "Community Participation": 126.

> When I joined the Women's Group, out of which the Community Kitchen was formed, I had a lot of arguments with my husband over it. It took a lot out of me ... A lot of tears, and it's still taking its toll, but I'm not going to let him twist my arm so easily ... He has never agreed with my activities. ... I've thought about dropping out of the Community Kitchen, because my husband has become abusive. Since he sees that I'm participating, he often doesn't give me money because he knows that I'll make do. My husband is an alcoholic and he can become depraved. I always have to be ready for a fight. I do it for the children.[157]

In Quito, Ecuador, Lilia Rodríguez observed that many women dropped out of neighbourhood organizations in order to avoid conflict with their husbands, while others tried to hide their participation. In some cases Rodríguez found that women actually broke up relationships with husbands in order to reconcile the tensions created by their desires and needs to participate.[158]

The economic circumstances in which many women live mean that they cannot, or believe they cannot, afford to jeopardize relationships with their husbands. Eugenia, a *pobladora* from the southern zone of Santiago, describes some of the painful tensions involved for *pobladoras* in challenging the authority of their husbands and the traditional beliefs which limit their behaviour:

> Exploring our identity as women, the ways we have been taught to behave like "proper women" in many areas of our lives, and learning that we can move beyond these is often very painful. Many times in this process of personal growth we leave our husbands behind. The outcome can be very good for the couple in the long

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[157]Ibid.: 120.

[158]Rodríguez, "Community Participation": 42.

> run, but more often it means the end of the marriage. For *pobladoras* who have little or no economic security this can be a very high price to pay.[159]

Given the opposition and risks many *pobladoras* face, it is in many ways remarkable that they participate in neighbourhood organizations at all. The negotiation of the tensions between the desire to participate and the sexist ideology which confines women's activities and ambitions to the household is very painful for many women. The process of social learning and changes in behaviour and identity, often described as relatively fluid, is in fact agonizing for many *pobladoras*. Often, the obstacles to change are too great. Although women may participate in neighbourhood organizations periodically, their participation often does not lead to a process of change deep enough to sustain a belief in participation and community. In these cases, women participate principally for economic reasons but are so overwhelmed by the cultural beliefs and pressure from neighbours and husbands urging them not to participate, that they drop out of the organizations as soon as their economic situation improves (if not earlier) and do not experience social learning or a change in their attitudes as a result of their participation.

Women's participation is also negatively affected by the dominant conservative ideology in the *poblaciones* which

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[159]Verónica Schild, "Recasting 'Popular' Movements: Gender and Political Learning in Neighbourhood Organizations in Chile," Latin American Perspectives 21, 2 (1994): 74.

stigmatizes collective action. A belief in the value of individual effort and a lack of legitimacy accorded to collective action as means of solving problems is particularly strong among male *pobladores* and will be discussed in greater depth in the next section ("Men and Community"). However, it is important to emphasize here the impact of the dominant ideology on women in the *poblaciones*. 'Not interfering with anyone' and 'not asking for favours' are considered positive values by many *pobladores*. Emilia, a *pobladora* from Hirmas II explained the importance of independence and freedom from her neighbours: "I like my *población* because I don't interfere with anyone and no one interferes with me."[160]

Despite the power of traditional beliefs and pressure from neighbours and husbands to discourage participation, many of the *pobladoras* who have been able to negotiate these tensions and to sustain their participation in neighbourhood organizations have undergone a process of social learning and a transformation of attitudes and behaviour. Through their experiences, these women have learned to value community relationships and participation in neighbourhood organizations, and to develop dispositions enabling them to challenge with greater confidence the traditional limitations on female behaviour. Once underway, this process of change develops deep roots which are not easily

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[160]Quoted in Sabatini, "Community Participation": 144.

disturbed. As Margarita, a *pobladora* from *La Victoria*, explained: "The people who enjoy participation and see the importance of working together will never stop."[161] That women participate continuously in a specific neighbourhood organization is not important. As women's economic and personal needs change, so their participation. What is crucial is the development of a belief that organization and participation are legitimate, worthwhile and necessary means of progress. However, the obstacles to participation and the tensions created by the desire to participate prevent most *pobladoras* from experiencing such a process of change.

In some cases the participation of *pobladoras* in neighbourhood organizations reinforces the traditional sexual division of labour and only adds to women's work and responsibilities. Maruja Barrig found that because of their community participation, low-income women in Lima, Peru, actually had more work to do, both at home and in their neighbourhoods.[162] Caroline Moser states that increasingly women in developing countries play a triple role: in addition to reproductive work, involving child rearing and household tasks, they must also often engage in paid work outside the home as well as managing the community

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[161]Personal Interview, April 1995 (my translation).

[162]Marruja Barrig, "The Difficult Equilibrium Between Bread and Roses: Women's Organizations and the Transitions from Dictatorship to Democracy," in The Women's Movement in Latin America and the Transition to Democracy, ed. Jane S. Jaquette (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

organizations needed to fulfil their domestic responsibilities.[163]

State planning agencies and NGOs have often taken for granted women's participation in neighbourhood organizations by promoting collective self-help projects which rely on women's volunteer involvement. In doing so they add to women's burden of labour and do little to challenge the unequal sharing of labour between women and men. If state and NGO efforts are truly to contribute to community development in low-income neighbourhoods, they must recognize the central role played by women in collective consumption and self-help neighbourhood organizations and work to redress the imbalance in the sexual division of labour, not simply take advantage of it through projects which rely heavily on women's voluntary input.

Although the participation of *pobladoras* in neighbourhood organizations represents a progression from the confines of the household to the broader sphere of the neighbourhood, it does not necessarily symbolize, as many scholars have suggested,[164] a complete crossing of the barrier between the private and public spheres. Barrig asserts, in the case of Peru, that because women's participation is focussed on domestic and consumption needs, they have not created a new public space for themselves but

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[163]Moser, "Gender Planning": 1801.

[164]See for example: Ibid.: 1801.

instead have expanded the private sphere into the realm of the neighbourhood.[165] Verónica Schild found that *pobladoras* sometimes develop a capacity for decision making and public speaking in all-female collective consumption organizations, but continue to be marginalized in higher-level *población* and inter-*población* coordinating bodies dominated by men.[166] Nevertheless, the importance of women's participation should not be undervalued although the neighbourhood may only represent an intermediate space between the private and the public spheres, women's participation still signifies an important challenge to the traditional beliefs which confine women's activities and ambitions to the household. Women's neighbourhood involvement is also a central step towards gender equality and the development of egalitarian community relationships in the *poblaciones*.

Women's Changing Attitudes Towards Community

Maxine Molyneux argued that as women participate for longer periods of time, the 'practical gender interests', which relate to childcare and domestic work and first led them to participate, begin to converge with 'strategic gender interests' which involve a redefinition of

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[165]Barrig, "The Difficult Equilibrium": 119.

[166]Schild, "Recasting": 72.

traditional gender relations.[167] As women negotiate the tensions created by neighbourhood participation and share their feelings and experiences with other women in their neighbourhoods, they inevitably come to question and eventually challenge, albeit not without pain, the traditions and beliefs which define and limit their roles as women. The agendas of women working for NGOs in low-income neighbourhoods often contribute to such a process of change. Female NGO workers (usually of middle class background) often try to raise the level of consciousness of *pobladoras* regarding traditional gender limitations by raising issues and asking questions. Some Chilean NGOs have helped form neighbourhood organizations to deal specifically with issues related to women's personal development. Rosa Cañadell noted that between 1983 and 1986, the number of such organizations in Santiago grew from 38 to 220.[168]

In the definition of community in Chapter Two, the condition was introduced that community relationships, based on equality, trust, democracy, cooperation, mutual help and holistic conceptions of other people, apply to relationships between men and women, not just to relationships between men or between women. The challenge to traditional gender

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[167]Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization Without Emancipation? Women's interests, state and revolution in Nicaragua," Feminist Studies 11, 2 (1985): 227-254.

[168]Rosa Cañadell, "Chilean Women's Organizations: Their Potential For Change," trans. John F. Uggen, Latin American Perspectives 20, 4 (1993): 51.

relationships which can result from women's participation in neighbourhood organizations is as important a factor in the long-term development of community relationships in the *poblaciones* as the relationships forged among women who participate in community kitchens or food buying cooperatives. The relationships among women remain crucial however, because it is often precisely through these relationships that women develop the confidence to challenge and demonstrate the futility of traditional gender roles. The entry of large numbers of women into the paid workforce necessitated by the economic crisis of the 1980s has also helped to challenge the unequal nature of relationships between men and women in the *poblaciones*.

Men and Community

The attitudes of male *pobladores* toward neighbourhood participation and community relationships are also influenced by the sexual division of labour in the *poblaciones*. The traditional role assigned to men is to earn an income and to be the head of a household. Men are expected to be visible, if not active, in the public sphere which includes the neighbourhood and the world beyond it. Men who appear to do too much domestic work risk considerable social stigmatization and often believe they would be suspected of homosexuality.

Men made up less than 10% of the participants of the neighbourhood organizations which emerged during the 1980s; this number corresponds with less than 2% of all male *pobladores* in comparison with the approximately 20% of women who participated. Few studies have focussed specifically on men's participation.[169] Sabatini found that men's participation in *Hirmas II* was concentrated almost exclusively in athletic organizations and religious groups, primarily Preparation Groups, in which participation is obligatory, to receive the Sacraments (Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation and Marriage).[170] Both types of organizations create opportunities for their members to share experiences and to develop informal community relationships outside of the organization itself. However, neither type of organization tends to push beyond traditional gender defined neighbourhood relationships. Because athletic organizations almost never include women, there is little opportunity for women to become involved in the community relationships that might develop. Preparation Groups for the Sacraments break up after the particular sacrament is received and thus these groups generally do not meet for long enough periods of time to generate a belief in

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[169]See Rubén Katzman, "Why are men so irresponsible" CEPAL Review 42 (1992): 79-87.

[170]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 81.

participation likely to be carried beyond the specific group experience.

Schild observed that men's participation was most prominent in the *población* and inter-*población* representative bodies of neighbourhood organizations, where most of the political decisions concerning the strategy of the organizations were made.[171] Salman argues that the men who participated in neighbourhood organizations tended to have long histories of involvement in political parties and chose to participate in neighbourhood organizations because other sites of resistance had been closed off.[172] As I will further explain in Chapter Six, many of these men left the neighbourhood organizations to work in the political parties when they began to be reestablished in 1987. However, Pinochet's hegemonic campaign against collective action and public involvement drastically reduced the social value and legitimacy of politics, even at the neighbourhood level. Those men who have returned to organized political activity since the late 1980s have found that their activity is granted much less legitimacy than it was before 1973.

Mens' Neighbourhood Roles: Leadership and the Public Sphere

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[171]Schild, "Recasting": 72.

[172]Salman, "The Diffident Movement": 28. Before the 1973 coup, Chilean social life was highly politicized and party politics dominated organized activity from high school student councils to labour unions.

In a survey of neighbourhood organizations throughout the developing world, Caroline Moser found that collective consumption and self-help organizations tend to be run by women, while more politically oriented organizations tend to be controlled by men; that is, women play a community managing role and men play a community leadership role.[173] This is a global phenomena not limited to low-income neighbourhoods or developing countries. However, the distinction between the public-leadership role of men and the private-managing role of women appears to be particularly strong in the *poblaciones*. While women do the daily work in neighbourhood organizations, men generally retain decision making power, especially in neighbourhood wide bodies and in relationships between the neighbourhood and outside government bodies.

This distinction was evident at a meeting of the presidents of the Neighbourhood Councils in Viña del Mar, a city close to Santiago. While it is clearly women who are most active in local organizations, 53 of the 56 Neighbourhood Council presidents at this meeting were men, the majority appearing to be over 65 years old.[174] According to the female treasurer of the *Unión Comunal*, the body which

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[173]Caroline O.N. Moser, "Are there few women leaders or is it that the majority are invisible?" Paper presented to Conference on Local Leaders and Community Development and Participation. Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1987.

[174]Meeting of the Unión Comunal, Viña del Mar, October 5, 1995.

coordinates all of the Neighbourhood Councils, when women are elected to the executive of their Neighbourhood Councils it is usually to positions as secretary or treasurer and almost never president.[175]

Lilia Rodríguez observed that men in Quito, Ecuador accounted for their community leadership roles as an extension of their leadership role within the household: because they were heads of households and made all the important decisions in the private sphere, they believed that they should also be heads of community organizations in the public sphere of the neighbourhood.[176] Rodríguez also observed that men in Quito were willing to participate in neighbourhood organizations for 'housing needs,' which include houses, potable water, electricity, sewer service, street paving and public transportation, but not in organizations for 'household needs,' including food, childcare, education and health; women participated in both.[177] This separation of 'housing' from 'household' needs also corresponds with the distinction between the public and private domains. As noted in Chapter Three, Alejandro Portes observed that only housing needs - the responsibility of men - have been traditionally considered an appropriate

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[175]Interview with executive of Unión Comunal, Viña del Mar, October 5 1995.

[176]Rodríguez, "Barrio Women": 36.

[177]Ibid.: 37.

justification for collective action in low-income Latin American neighbourhoods. Although struggles for housing needs have often united large numbers of people in collective efforts, as occurred in the land seizures in Santiago in the 1960s and until 1973, once basic housing needs have been met, the efforts and progress of local residents usually revert to private and individual strategies.[178]

The Repression of the Public Sphere, 1973-1989

From 1973 until 1989 collective action in politics and in the public sphere generally were physically repressed by the Pinochet dictatorship, which also sought to de-politicize and privatize Chilean life as part of its hegemonic political project. In contrast to the governments of Eduardo Frei (1964-1970) and Salvador Allende (1970-1973), which had been relatively sympathetic to popular demands and had promoted local organization, the Pinochet dictatorship was absolutely unresponsive. Thus, the traditional roles of community leadership and political organization played by men in their neighbourhoods not only became ineffective but were also repressed. As Ton Salman put it, men lost "the world where action could do some

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[178]R. Arévalo, and P. Astaburuaga, Participación en la organización territorial: estudio de caso. Working Paper #8. (Santiago: Equipo de Vivienda y Gestión Local, 1989). See also: Dennis Burnett, "Grass Root and Political Struggle - The Pobladores Movement in Chile 1968-1973," vierteljahresberichte. 78 (1979): 377.

good."[179] Faced with this situation, rather than transferring their organizational experience to the private sphere, most male *pobladores* retreated to their remaining roles in the sexual division of labour as income providers and heads of households.

The Symbolic Value of Work and Earning an Income

The importance of earning an income for male *pobladores* is far more than financial. In modern society the idea that one works for what one receives is one of the most important standards for judging human respectability. In low-income neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro, Janice Perlman found that "being a hard worker" was one of the qualities most respected in people and that paid work was very often the basis of evaluations of both self-worth and the worth of other people.[180]

The dominant conservative beliefs in the *poblaciones* dictate that only the self-effort of individuals may be considered legitimate work (the reproductive labour of women is not considered work at all). This individualistic ideology means that non-individual ways of confronting problems are poorly regarded. Obtaining resources through neighbourhood participation is often perceived as receiving something that is unearned and taking the easy way out.

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[179]Salman, "The Diffident Movement": 16.

[180]Perlman, The Myth of Marginality: 155.

Among men in particular, this often provokes feelings of shame. Luis, a *poblador* from *Hirmas II* explains why he does not participate in neighbourhood organizations:

> If I were in bad shape, without anything to eat, I wouldn't want to resort to the organizations, neither the [community] kitchens nor any other. It would be humiliating, especially if my wife went to a Community Kitchen. I would feel small, even in front of my own family. Nor would I like others to know that we were resorting to the organizations. I would feel worthless, incapable. I can't stoop that low.[181]

Participation in the *POJH (Programa de Empleo de Jefes de Hogar)*, a government makework program for unemployed male heads of households created by the dictatorship to mask unemployment (salaries were 25% of the minimum wage), provoked similar feelings of embarrassment. As one *male poblador* explained, "It is humiliating to work in the *POJH*, but there is no other choice. The lack of work destroys you, it is the biggest problem we have."[182]

Men have generally preferred to work long hours at very poorly paying jobs in the informal economy, often completely exhausting themselves, in order to 'earn' an income, however small, rather than to participate in collective self-help organizations which could provide alternatives to traditional means of income generation. Even when the chances of finding a job or earning enough money have been very small, male *pobladores* have not abandoned the *ideal* of

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[181]Quoted in Sabatini, "Community Participation": 165.

[182]Quoted in Jansana, El pan nuestro: 143 (my translation).

the male head of household as primary economic provider for the family, although in reality women and other family members have come to make increasing contributions to family income. Rubén Katzman has observed that the inability of many men to fulfil their traditional obligations has led them to further abandon these obligations. As a result, the burdens of familial responsibility have fallen increasingly on women's shoulders.[183]

The general lack of participation among male *pobladores* in consumption oriented organizations does not mean that men do not have a role in neighbourhood organizations; they do, but the traditional leadership roles for men became ineffective and dangerous under the dictatorship. Participation in subsistence oriented self-help groups in the *poblaciones* does not fit into the rationale of most male *pobladores*. For men, the purpose of remunerated work and community organization is most often related to upward social mobility, whereas the majority of neighbourhood organizations in the *poblaciones* in the 1980s were structured around women's responsibilities and geared towards basic subsistence.[184] Having little interest in women's work, men perceived these organizations as having

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[183]Katzman, "Why are men so irresponsible": 84.

[184]Salman, "The Diffident Movement": 16.

little to offer them.[185] Furthermore, participation in collective self-help organizations seemed only to confirm the poverty, hopelessness, dependence on assistance from the Church and NGOs, and low social status that most male *pobladores* sought to escape. With respect to the division of labour between men and women in the *poblaciones*, Ton Salman found that men tend to be largely responsible for the upward mobility of the family and that women tend to be more focussed on the health, education and well-being of their children.[186] Of course, many neighbourhood organizations have produced tangible material gains for their members and their families, especially the community kitchens, production workshops, self-housing groups and savings committees.[187] But it is often precisely because women's participation in such groups threatens men's role as economic provider and

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[185]The only domestic work generally performed by men is that which involves muscular strength, physical danger of technical knowledge of how to assemble or repair appliances. See: José Weinstein, and Juan Eduardo García-Huidobro, "Men of the Street, Women of the Household: Youth in Popular Sectors," Aman and Parker, ed., Popular Culture in Chile: 128.

[186]Salman, "The Diffident Movement": 16.

[187]**Self-housing groups** met to receive technical advice from NGOs on making improvements to their homes and then worked collectively to make improvements to the homes of individual group members.

In **savings committees,** participants pooled their financial resources, usually on a monthly basis, to save for major purchases and home improvements. One example is a group of twelve families in *La Victoria* who each contributed one twelfth the cost of a television set each month for a year so that by the end of a year all twelve owned a television set.

responsibility for upward mobility that men oppose their wives' participation.

Can Men's Attitudes Change?

The attitudes and behaviour of male *pobladores* has not remained immune to women's participation in neighbourhood organizations. Evidence shows that men's opposition to their wives' participation in collective self-help organizations has decreased over time, and that some male *pobladores* have gradually come to accept their wives' material and financial contributions to their families' welfare, especially during times of crisis. Loreta Jansana cites testimonial evidence, although somewhat out of context, from male *pobladores* participating in Community Kitchens and food buying cooperatives: "I learned that I am not less of a man because I have learned to cook"; "Here we divide the work equally among everyone, men and women, we all knead bread, cook, and gather and distribute rations"; "My wife and I work hard together to help the organization [food buying cooperative] progress."[188]

Such examples of men actually participating in self-help organizations are rare. For the most part, changes in men's attitudes have involved an acceptance of women's additional roles in neighbourhood organizations and in paid work outside the home, but have not corresponded with a

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[188]Jansana, El Pan Nuestro: 55 (my translations).

change in men's roles. Most men continue to view their responsibilities only in terms of providing an income and being head of the household, which does little to reduce the burden of additional labour taken on by women involved in neighbourhood organizations. Women continue to be wholly responsible for domestic tasks. As a male neighbourhood leader in Viña del Mar explained: "If my wife doesn't cook, I don't eat."[189]

Despite the additional burdens entailed, participation in collective self-help organizations helps *pobladoras* to break down the barriers between the private and the public domains. Negotiating the tensions involved in participation in neighbourhood organizations requires women to challenge gender subordination and discrimination. Although the entrance of women into the public sphere and the realm of neighbourhood organization and politics may create additional burdens and responsibilities for women, it is also a very important step in challenging discrimination against women and the unequal burden of labour women already carry. Such a challenge is essential for the functioning of community relationships and more importantly, for the well-being of women themselves.

Men's attitudes towards women's neighbourhood participation will not change quickly. Habitus formation and social learning are slow, gradual processes. Transformations

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[189]Personal interview, October 15, 1995.

in gender roles and the sexual division of labour are only possible as women challenge traditional beliefs and men adjust to changes in the relationships with women. Such changes occur primarily over generations. According to Margarita, from *La Victoria*, *machista* attitudes are becoming less prevalent among young men:

> Younger couples, young men are not as *machista*. Often, both partners work and this makes a difference. One of the positive legacies of the dictatorship was the increased activity and participation of women, and the men had to accept our participation. But it is only young men who are really less *machista*.[190]

Men have slowly accepted the participation of women in neighbourhood organizations. As women expanded their traditional domestic roles from the individual household level to the collective realm of the neighbourhood, they also challenged many of the traditional barriers to women's participation in the public affairs of the neighbourhood, traditionally the exclusive realm of men. Gradually, men have also accepted an increasing role for women in public-leadership activities. This is a considerable step towards gender equality, a condition I maintain is crucial for genuine community relationships. However, while women's roles in the public sphere of the neighbourhood have expanded considerably, the involvement of men in the private sphere has not.

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[190]Personal interview, April 1995, (my translation).

The neighbourhood roles of men have become much more ambiguous. Decreases in wages and job security during the 1970s and 1980s coupled with rising consumer expectations have undermined men's ability to fulfil their role as economic provider. Pinochet's drive to discredit political activity and to replace collective action with individual effort also reduced the value for men's traditional roles in the neighbourhood of public-leadership and involvement in politics. Although many women have created new roles for themselves in their neighbourhoods, most men have not. While men's traditional roles are becoming more and more irrelevant, "the norms and values attributed to men and women have not changed."[191] It is not yet clear what the gulf between expectations and the limited possibilities of achieving them means for the neighbourhood involvement of men. At present it appears that men's roles are simply shrinking into the private world of work and leisure.

Youth and Community

Along with women, 'youth' have been frequently cited as central players in the neighbourhood organizations and protests which took place in the *poblaciones* during the 1980s.[192] However, the term 'youth' has often been used

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[191]Mercedes González de la Rocha, "The Urban Family and Poverty in Latin America" Latin American Perspectives 22, 2 (1995): 25.

[192]See for example: Leiva and Petras, "Chile's Poor", 5; R. James Sacouman, and Henry Veltmeyer, "'Los de Abajo': Women, Youth and Changes

without specifying the age of the actors or whether it refers to young men, young women, or both.[193] Few studies have explained how the neighbourhood involvement of young *pobladores* differed from that of older generations or even why young *pobladores* participated in the first place. Instead, researchers have tended to group 'women and youth' together as if both groups participated in the same organizations and for the same reasons.

No concensus exists on the number of youths who participated in neighbourhood organizations. Some researchers, such as Cathy Schneider, have suggested that youth were the primary actors, while other observers have commented on the abysmally low participation of youth.[194] All of the neighbourhood leaders I interviewed agreed that the participation of youth was lower than that of older residents. In many cases it appears that the role of youth, primarily young men, in the protests was confused with the participation of adult women in consumption oriented organizations. This misreading overlooked the many differences between the actions of adult women and young men.

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in the Structural Potential for Transformation in Chile", Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies 15, 30 (1990): 113-137.

[193]I give a broad definition of youth, corresponding with that of the United Nations, as ages 15 to 29. See: John Durston, "Erroneous theses on youth in the 1990s" CEPAL Review 46 (1992): 90.

[194]Schneider, "Radical Opposition Parties": 101, 103.

Most studies of the *poblaciones* in the 1980s focussed on the experiences of the generation of *pobladores*, now in their forties and fifties, who took part in the land seizures of the 1960s and early 1970s and participated in the 'popular promotion' campaigns of the Frei and Allende governments.[195] The experiences of *pobladores* in collective action organizations during the 1960s and 1970s have been frequently cited as a central factor in the capacity of *pobladores* to participate in neighbourhood organizations in the 1980s. Theories of grassroots action emphasize the importance of previous collective experiences in trying to explain why people act collectively at the local level.[196]

However, *pobladores* born after 1965 represent a different generation with virtually no experience or memory of either collective action or participatory citizenship.[197] Their identity, values and patterns of behaviour formed largely, if not completely, under conditions imposed by the dictatorship. For this reason, in Chile, this generation is often collectively referred to as the 'children of Pinochet' (*hijos de Pinochet*). Furthermore, youth were affected very

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[195]See: Rodríguez, "Veinte años de poblaciones": 42.

[196]See: Albert O. Hirschman, Getting Ahead Collectively: Grassroots Experiences in Latin America (New York: Pergamon, 1984), especially Chapter Four: "The Emergence of Cooperative Action: Prior Mobilization": 42-57.

[197]It is perhaps significant to note here that in the 1989 national elections, 46.5% of the electorate voted for the first time. This group included people up to the age of 34. Appendix, Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies 15, 30 (1990): 306.

differently than adult *pobladores* by the social and economic policies of the dictatorship. While avoiding the cliche that 'youth are the future', it is clear that any attempt to understand current and future possibilities for community development in the *poblaciones* must pay special attention to the experiences, beliefs and attitudes of young residents. In *La Victoria*, youth make up 42% of the population.[198]

It has been well established that the social and economic policies of the dictatorship had a more negative impact on youth in the *poblaciones* than on any other social group.[199] According to the assessment of José Weinstein and Juan Eduardo García-Huidobro: "To be young and poor" in the 1980s was "to live, for the most part, a life of social exclusion."[200] Estimates of youth unemployment during the mid-1980s range from 50% to 70% and were even higher in some *poblaciones*.[201] Housing was also virtually inaccessible for many young *pobladores*. Javier Martínez and Eduardo Valenzuela found in 1984 that 54.2% of young married couples in the *poblaciones* lived with either their parents or

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[198]Lemuñir, Crónicas: 106.

[199]See: Javier Martínez, and Eduardo Valenzuela, "Juventud chilena y exclusión social," Revista CEPAL 29 (1986): 95; Alejandro Foxley and Dagmar Raczaynski, "Vulnerable Groups in Recessionary Situations: The Case of Children and the Young in Chile." World Development 12 (1984): 223-246.

[200]Weinstein, and García-Huidobro, "Youth in Popular Sectors": 134.

[201]Ibid.: 138.

inlaws, and that another 20.6% were *allegados*, living on the property or in the houses of other relatives or neighbours.[202]

Young female *pobladoras*, frequently glossed over by the ungendered term 'youth,' did not participate in the protests or in local organizations to the same extent as their male counterparts. As among adult *pobladores*, traditional gender roles and expectations distinguished the ways youth in the *poblaciones* experienced and responded to the economic and social exclusion imposed by the dictatorship. Traditionally, young women have been confined to doing domestic work in their parents' homes until they have married and started families of their own. The absence of other opportunities for young women during the 1980s reinforced this pattern. Often, as Kenneth Aman explained, the lack of apparent alternatives led young women to seize hold of traditional reproductive roles as the only source of security, satisfaction and positive identity available to them.[203] The critical shortage of housing meant that young women were very often denied the autonomy of their own household - the only physical space where they might expect any significant personal freedom or independence.

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[202]Ibid.: 103.

[203]Kenneth Aman, "Conclusion: Towards a Theory of Popular Culture - Some Chilean Excursions", in Aman and Parker, Popular Culture in Chile: 212.

For reasons that remain largely unstudied, few young women participated in neighbourhood organizations. Perhaps they lacked the self-confidence to go against tradition or maybe, because they were often living in their parents' homes, they did not feel the same sense of responsibility for their families' welfare which motivated many of their mothers to join neighbourhood organizations. Several mothers I spoke with reported leaving their eldest daughters at home to look after younger siblings while the mother left the house to work or participate in a local organization. As the Chilean economy began to improve in the late 1980s, many young women began to work outside of their homes. Although often poorly paid, the simple earning of an income has helped to create more equal relationships between young women and men.

For young male *pobladores*, life during the 1980s was in many ways even more frustrating than it was for young women. Although not confined in the same way as young women, the possibilities for young men to fulfil their primary traditional role of earning an income, were almost hopeless. Financial independence, the principal criteria for adulthood, became an impossible dream. Thus, although still sexually capable of reproducing, the chances of satisfying the second basic expectation for young men, to start a family and become the head of a household, were also virtually impossible. In a culture where the neighbourhood

'citizenship' of men was often based on their role as head of a household, the economic exclusion of young men meant that they were also often socially excluded, and effectively denied status as full adults even when they had reached an age associated with adulthood.

The behaviour of young male *pobladores* was profoundly shaped by the frustration which resulted from their exclusion and inability to fulfil traditional expectations, as well as by the need to occupy unfilled time and a perhaps natural aversion to the values of their parents' generation.[204] The majority of young men took part in neither the protests nor local organizations, but spent their time, in the words of one young *poblador*, "idle on the streetcorners."[205] Weinstein and García-Huidobro interpreted these gatherings as a response to the need for belonging and community, but also argued that the generational identity of young men in the *poblaciones* was shaped more by a common sense of exclusion than by any positive or inclusive attributes such as solidarity.[206] Klaudio Duarte describes the street corner groups as "spaces of escape from daily problems", and cites young *pobladores* who explain their

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[204]Weinstein and García-Huidorbro, "Youth in Popular Sectors": 133.

[205]Ibid.: 132.

[206]Ibid.: 132.

activity as an alternative to "being bored at home", and a way to "kill time."[207]

Francisco Sabatini asserted that youth did and continue to participate at the neighbourhood level, but in much less formal ways than adults, and in different types of organizations.[208] They continue to possess a strong local identity, but also an aversion to established organizations, such as the Neighbourhood Councils, which they generally perceive, often correctly, to be dominated by old people, old values and partisan politics. Most young *pobladores* feel little identification with the cultural symbols or political ideals that emerged from the poblaciones in the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than the folk music and *peñas* of their parents' generation, most young *pobladores* identify much more closely with the cultures of rap, punk or heavy metal.[209] Indeed, some of the strongest groupings of youth are the gangs of *raperos* and the 'tribes' of punks.

Both Ton Salman and Eduardo Valenzuela have argued that youth participation in the protests was not, for the most part, guided by any self-conscious political project in terms of demanding or proposing specific changes, but rather was primarily a barely harnessed expression of anger and

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[207]Klaudio Duarte, Juventud popular. Santiago: Colectivo Educación Juvenil Newence, 1994: 84.

[208]Personal interview, November 1995.

[209]See: Tito Escárate, Frutos del País: historia del rock chileno. Santiago: Triunfo, 1993: 84.

frustration.[210] The calls to protest simply provided an outlet for these emotions.

The spatial dimension of the protests raises some important issues concerning their relationship to community. Not only did the protests take place mainly within the *poblaciones* in which the protesters lived, but the strategy of the protests also generally involved lighting bonfires, digging ditches and erecting barricades to keep the police and army from entering the *poblaciones*. In this way, the protests represented an attempt, especially by youth, to reclaim a space for themselves. It is perhaps significant that the spaces they struggled to reclaim were the same neighbourhoods in which they lived.

The organized involvement of young men was oriented primarily towards cultural activities, such as street theatre and mural painting and to sports, primarily soccer. However, as Weinstein and García-Huidobro suggest, these organizations catered more to a need to occupy time than to a more positive expression of identity.[211] In many cases youth turned away from the struggle against the dictatorship, associating it with the 'old ideals' of their parents' generation. *Aparato Raro*, a popular Chilean rock group in the 1980s sang: "You've grown tired of shouting,

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[210]Salman, "The Diffident Movement": 19; Valenzuela, La rebelión de los jovenes (Santiago: SUR, 1984): passim.

[211]Weinstein and García-Huidobro, "Youth in Popular Sectors": 134.

tired of struggling, for justice, hunger, liberty, you've grown tired of shouting 'He[Pinochet]'ll fall'."[212]

The involvement of young men and women in the protests has often been exaggerated and oversimplified. That the involvement of young people was often neighbourhood based and collective is not necessarily an indication that it embodied values of community. The experiences of the majority of youth in the *poblaciones* during the 1980s do not suggest, as many observers implied, a development of community values and beliefs, but rather were primarily manifestations of frustration and apathy, vented at the neighbourhood level. As I will explain in Chapter Six, the principal concern of all the neighbourhood leaders interviewed was the apparent disinterest of young people in the development of their neighbourhoods. It is not simply that young *pobladores* do not participate in the organizations dominated by their parents' generation; youth have different interests and needs, expressed through different organizational forms. However, it appears very doubtful that the newer, more flexible organizations of youth in the *poblaciones* reproduce community relationships and values to the same extent as the organizations which emerged during the 1980s, whose primary participants were women, or even the older organizations such as the neighbourhood councils.

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[212]Cited in Salman, "The Diffident Movement": 19.

Tensions Between the Leaders and Participants of Neighbourhood Organizations as an Obstacle to Community Development

Many studies of neighbourhood organizations in the *poblaciones* and in poor neighbourhoods throughout Latin America have championed an apparent process of participatory, democratic decision making as a key aspect of these organizations.[213] However, the prevalence of participatory decision making is in many cases exaggerated. Although neighbourhood organizations do represent a much more local level of decision making than any other political or institutional structures, there often exists a deep imbalance between the power of the leaders of neighbourhood organizations and the *pobladores* who participate in them. This inequality leads to unreasonable demands being placed on local leaders and creates an atmosphere of generalized suspicion and mistrust, both of which deter participation in neighbourhood organizations and block the development of community relationships in the *poblaciones*. Francisco Sabatini found that 44% of the women who dropped out of neighbourhood organizations in *Hirmas II* gave "mistrust of leaders" as their primary reason for doing so.[214] In another *población*, local leaders asserted that a food buying

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[213]See for example: Oxhorn, "The Popular Sector Response": 77.

[214]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 200.

cooperative could not function because nobody would trust the leaders with their money.[215]

The dominant understanding of authority in the *poblaciones* is highly stratified, being influenced by the political culture of clientelism and *caudillismo* rooted in the *hacienda* system inherited from Spain.[216] In this conception, authority is based primarily on social rank, rather than democratic elections. Furthermore, it is common in Chilean society to mistrust and criticize anyone who becomes successful.

This hierarchical political culture creates serious problems for the emergence of local leaders within the *poblaciones*. Local leaders are often seen to be manipulating and taking advantage of other residents in order to increase their personal power and social status. In some cases, these perceptions may be true. A prominent neighbourhood leader from *La Victoria* conceded that, "there are some people who

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[215]Interview, *Población Libertad*, Viña del Mar, October 1995.

[216]***Haciendas*** were large land holdings owned and run by a single *patrón*, who held absolute authority over the peasants who worked on his land. The *patrón* was also responsible for the well-being of his peasants and his authority was in part legitimized by his ability to provide information, material assistance and special services, such as those of a priest, to the peasants. The *Hacienda* was the predominant system of land tenure throughout Latin America until the mid twentieth century.

Clientelism is a set of personal relationships that link patrons and clients together in a system of exchanging favours and loyalty.

Caudillismo is based on the Spanish word *caudillo*, typically translated as "strong man" or leader, but also implying charismatic, personal and authoritarian leadership.

See: Ernest E. Rossi and Jack C. Plano, The Latin America Political Dictionary (Santa Barbara and Oxford: ABC-Clio Inc., 1980).

become community leaders as a way of raising themselves above other people, of distinguishing themselves above the rest of the *población*."[217] Local leaders are also frequently suspected and accused of stealing money from neighbourhood organizations. According to Renata, a *pobladora* from *Hirmas II*, "A leader can't, for example, buy a new dress, because they [other *pobladores*] will immediately say she bought it with community funds."[218]

In most cases these suspicions are unjustified and emerge from a general mistrust in all politics rather than from specific experiences. Local leaders are mistrusted almost regardless of their actual behaviour and it is common in the *poblaciones* for anyone connected with power to be suspected of abusing their authority. A mistrust of politics in Chile has been deepened by the experiences of the dictatorship and is especially strong among youth. Although it has in many ways led *pobladores* to become less dependent on the state, their attitudes towards local leaders have not necessarily become any less paternalistic or dependent. Jo-Marie Burt and César Espejo found a very similar mistrust in and dependency on local leaders in poor neighbourhoods in

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[217]Personal interview, March 1995, (my translation).

[218]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 205.

Lima, Peru.[219] Renata, quoted above, explains the impact of mistrust:

> Mistrust ruins the groups. And it turns out that in very few cases is it justified. What happens is that people think that those who are higher up got where they are by taking advantage of those below them.[220]

Those perceived to be in positions of higher authority through birth are often immune to these suspicions. Several *pobladores* I spoke with stated that they thought the leaders of neighbourhood organizations should be people from outside their *población*, such as young university graduates or members of NGOs.

The problems facing local leaders are complicated by the non-democratic notions of authority. Leaders are generally valued for their ability to obtain material resources for *pobladores*, through special contacts they may have with the state or other institutions, rather than their selection by democratic process or their ability to stimulate neighbourhood organization. Even in the context of an unresponsive state, most *pobladores* did not abandon this conception of the role of leaders. Instead of seeking progress through collective neighbourhood action, many *pobladores* continued to believe that establishing direct individual relations with the leaders of neighbourhood organizations would yield greater personal benefits. A field

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[219]Jo-Marie Burt and César Espejo, "The Struggles of a Self-Built Community," Report on the Americas 28, 4 (1995): 24.

[220]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 205.

worker from a Chilean NGO working with Community Gardens explained that:

> *Caudillismo* is still very strong in Chile. Most people have a very paternalistic attitude. They look to leaders of community organizations, the *Junta de Vecinos* [neighbourhood council], or to NGOs to solve their problems. They participate, but it is a dependent participation."[221]

This promotes a vicious cycle in which local leaders, finding it difficult to encourage people to solve their problems through direct cooperation with neighbours, adopt authoritarian and clientelist leadership styles. A neighbourhood leader explained:

> Because of people's attitudes towards community leaders as people to get things done, they [leaders] become authoritarian in a way. They do not encourage participation because people do not want to participate. Their [the leaders'] attitude becomes very paternalistic.[222]

As a result of this process, *pobladores* also tend to have unrealistically high expectations of local leaders. A difficult tension develops between these expectations and the possibilities for local leaders to meet them. Sabatini found that *pobladores* in *Hirmas II* expected neighbourhood leaders to work continuously for the *población* and believed that leaders should be able to solve their problems, be honest, and project a positive image of the *población* at all times.[223] The inability of local leaders to satisfy the

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[221]Personal interview, April 1995 (my translation).

[222]Personal interview, April 1995 (my translation).

[223]Sabatini, "Community Participation": 222.

demands of local residents is the primary source of tension and mistrust between the leaders and participants in neighbourhood organizations. The previously quoted neighbourhood leader explained the implications of this tension for her leadership:

> People come to me to solve their problems, but I cannot do everything. People have to work for themselves to solve their own problems. For this reason I have enemies in the *población*, because I have not been able to help everyone.[224]

The atmosphere of mistrust is frustrating and exhausting for local leaders, who generally appear to be motivated by a concern for their *población* rather than greed or a quest for personal power. It also works as a disincentive to any local residents who might otherwise take on leadership roles. Furthermore, it makes *pobladores* wary of joining neighbourhood organizations, suspicious that they will be manipulated and taken advantage of by the organization leaders. *Pobladores* who do participate, often view their participation more instrumentally, and seek to extract maximum personal benefits from the organizations rather than invest their energy in long term collective efforts which could produce greater benefits for all participants and perhaps even the whole *población* in the long run.[225] Because mistrust in leaders is based more on a

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[224]Personal interview, April 1995 (my translation).

[225]This is the problem of the "free ride" phenomena, described by Mancur Olson in The Logic of Collective Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), see Hirschman, Shifting Involvements: 78.

general suspicion of politics than the direct experience of *pobladores,* it is very difficult to overcome. Only the persistence and integrity of local leaders and an atmosphere which encourages *pobladores* to rely on genuinely participatory collective efforts rather than the political and institutional connections of local leaders will counterbalance the problems of suspicion and mistrust, which is clearly a barrier to the formation of stronger community relationships.

The obstacles to participation described in this chapter are clearly evident in many *poblaciones.* In many of these neighbourhoods local values for collective action are simply not strong enough to overcome the tensions created by the traditional beliefs within popular culture and the hegemonic cultural messages which stigmatize collective action and promote individualistic behaviour. In the next chapter, I will try to explain how and why residents of *La Victoria* have been able to overcome many of the obstacles to neighbourhood participation experienced in other neighbourhoods.

Chapter Five

Community and Ideology in *La Victoria*

Residents of *La Victoria* have traditionally developed much stronger neighbourhood organizations and community relationships than residents in most other *poblaciones* of Santiago. Although they have experienced similar political and economic circumstances and have been subject to the same cultural messages which stigmatize collective action, residents of *La Victoria* have been able to overcome some of the tensions which block the development of community relationships and participation in neighbourhood organizations in other *poblaciones*. According to Cathy Schneider, *La Victoria* was one of the most organized *poblaciones* in Santiago during the 1980s.[226]

In this chapter, I will argue that the central factor which has promoted community relationships and neighbourhood organization in *La Victoria* is a strong community ideology. Community beliefs grew out of an 'organic' relationship established between residents of the *población* and members of the Chilean Communist Party during the period surrounding

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[226]Cathy Schneider, Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995): 134. Many of the neighbourhood leaders I spoke with in other *poblaciones* also acknowledged this fact.

the 1957 land seizure. An understanding of the role of ideology in the development of community in *La Victoria* will form the basis for an analysis of the current challenges to Community development in the *poblaciones* in the 1990s, the subject of the next chapter.

Community Relationships in *La Victoria*

The most striking evidence of community in *La Victoria* is the powerful identification of residents with their *población*. In contrast to the residents of many other *poblaciones* who often try to hide their status as *pobladores*, residents of *La Victoria* commonly identify themselves as *Victorianos* and *Victorianas*.[227] In several interviews, residents openly declared their personal attachment to the *población*. Pamela, a university student, claimed, "Even if I win the lottery I will stay in *La Victoria*."[228] Claudina Nuñez neighbourhood leader also asserted, "I could move to a nicer neighbourhood, with a nicer house and more green spaces, but I would miss something, because I belong to *La Victoria*, that is where I am part of the community."[229] This collective identity is most vividly manifested every October 30th, when the entire

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[227]Feminine and masculine forms. In all of my interviews, residents voluntarily identified themselves as belonging to *La Victoria*: 'I am from *La Victoria*' or 'I am a *Victoriana/o.*'

[228]Personal interview, *La Victoria*, April 1995.

[229]Personal interview, *La Victoria*, April 1995.

población organizes block by block to celebrate the anniversary of the 1957 land seizure. Pride for the land seizure, and especially for the fact that it was the first in Chile, is the principal source of common identification and neighbourhood unity in the *población*.

Relationships among residents of *La Victoria* have traditionally embodied core elements of community.[230] The most prominent of these have been mutual help and cooperation. As Lina, an original resident of *La Victoria* explained: "Whenever somebody has a problem we all get together to help. We take up a collection and always do what we can to help each other." During the years of dictatorship, residents with telephones formed an alert network throughout the *población* to warn each other and each others neighbours whenever the police were initiating a search of the *población*. Another example of cooperation is a group of neighbours who formed an informal savings group in which each member contributed an equal portion of money on a monthly basis, so that each month one member could make repairs to their house or purchase otherwise inaccessible consumer goods. According to neighbourhood leaders, such informal financial arrangements have been common. Mutual help and cooperation continue to be readily evident in *La Victoria* as neighbours look after one another's children,

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[230]See the working definition of community outlined in Chapter Two.

borrow or lend food, tools and money, and share their physical labour.[231]

Mutual help and cooperation among neighbours in *La Victoria* have been promoted by a belief in the importance of collective action, which also extends to participation in neighbourhood organizations. An important element of the system of beliefs which exists in *La Victoria* is a conviction that local organization is essential for the survival and prosperity of the neighbourhood. There is no stigma connected to participating in *La Victoria*, and in fact there is social pressure to do so. Lina, one of the first residents I interviewed, commented that "it would be difficult to find anyone without experience in neighbourhood organization [in *La Victoria*]." A resident interviewed by Cathy Schneider recounted some of the accomplishments of collective action in the *población*:

> Only after 3 years of struggle did we win water rights in 1963. Later we began to organize and fight for a health care clinic. Then we created a school... We had to organize to get a drug store, and a doctor. We got an NGO in Germany to donate an ambulance. Everything we have, we won through struggle.[232]

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[231]Mutual help and cooperation were visible in *La Victoria* to a much greater degree than was evident or spoken of in any other *población* I visited.

[232]Schneider, Shantytown Protest: 45.

Lina further confirmed the belief in collective action: "We have always believed that we have to organize and fight for anything we want to achieve."[233]

Trust and democracy have been clearly exhibited in relationships among close neighbours, but have at times been absent in larger *población* organizations. A considerable degree of trust is obvious in the informal cooperative arrangements which occur regularly between close neighbours. Decision making in the block committees which make up part of *La Victoria*'s formal organizational structure, as well as in many other small local organizations is generally done by consensus or vote. In larger organizations, such as the Neighbourhood Council, however, partisan politics and the manipulation of power by local leaders, as well as the unreasonable expectations often placed on leaders, have interfered with the functioning of democracy and trust. Many residents I spoke with, criticized recent Neighbourhood Council elections because of a power struggle between members of the Communist and Socialist Parties, which they believed impeded the democratic process. *La Victoria* was, however, one of the first *poblaciones* to replace the members of the Neighbourhood Council appointed by the dictatorship with elected representatives. Juan Lemuñir, a resident of the *población* suggested that the representative of the *población* in the municipality, Claudina Nuñez, had been

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[233]Personal interview, *La Victoria*, March 1995.

unacceptably manipulative in the election for her position.[234] Claudina Nuñez admitted that she did not command the respect of the entire *población*, but claimed that this was because people had unrealistically high expectations of what she should be able to achieve in office and were often disappointed when she would not grant personal favours. It is perhaps unrealistic to expect that trust and democracy will always be fully functional in neighbourhood organizations and politics, especially when the norm in many neighbourhoods is for very little trust between neighbours and for clientelist relationships between residents and local leaders. In spite of the problems which clearly exist in *La Victoria*, the degree of trust and inter-dependence among neighbours and the appearance of democracy in local decision making are considerable when compared to other *poblaciones*.

Equality and respect among neighbours are based on their common identification as *Victorianos*. It became clear during interviews and in watching local residents interact that they felt considerable respect for and a sense of equality with one another based on their common residency in the *población*. From a gender perspective, however, the issues of equality and respect are more problematic. During the 1980s, women emerged as the central participants in local organizations. Women were also able to confront the

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[234]Lemuñir, Crónicas: 81.

police in situations where men could not safely do so, and this role significantly increased their importance in the defence of the *población*. Although women had always been able to participate to a certain extent, their increased participation encountered some resistance from men in the *población*. The belief in collective action which already existed in *La Victoria* facilitated the expansion of women's roles in the neighbourhood. The efforts of André Jarlan and Pierre Dubois, the two Catholic priests in *La Victoria* during the 1980s, were also crucial in convincing residents that women's participation was legitimate and important. The women I interviewed believed that it had been much easier for them to participate in local organizations than for many women in other *poblaciones*, because of *La Victoria*'s tradition of organization.

Women's participation continues to be relatively widespread in the 1990s. The president and vice-president of the neighbourhood council are women, as is the representative of the *población* to the municipality. However, as in many other *poblaciones*, although women play significant community leadership and management roles in *La Victoria*, there have been few corresponding changes in men's roles. Women continue to be entirely responsible for traditional domestic tasks. Women's burden of labour has therefore increased and has made their management of time to participate in neighbourhood organizations difficult. As

Margarita explained, it is only among young couples that the burden of domestic labour has really begun to change.[235]

Common identification as *Victorianos* has enabled solidarity to burgeon in *La Victoria*, especially during times of crisis and serious need. Local residents are strongly aware of their common history and the need to support one another. Juan Lemuñir lamented a lack of unity in *La Victoria*, finding that solidarity only flourished after someone had died.[236] However, his notion of unity was related to the times when literally all of the 32,000 residents of the *población* joined together in a common effort. An overwhelming majority of residents from *La Victoria* took part in a funeral march to downtown Santiago after André Jarlan, the parish priest, was killed by police in his home in 1984.[237] A similar march to the metropolitan cemetery in Lo Espejo took place in 1983 after a young resident, Miguel Zabala, was killed by police during a protest.[238] Despite political battles and at times intense disagreements over the direction of the *población* and its organizations, a common identification has persisted and is

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[235]Personal interview, April 1995, (my translation).

[236]Juan Lemuñir Epuyao, Crónicas de La Victoria: Testimonios de un Poblador (Santiago: Centro de Estudios y Promoción Social, Ediciones Documentos, 1990): 67.

[237]For film footage of the march see: ICTUS Produciones, André de La Victoria (Santiago, 1984).

[238]See map of metropolitan Santiago in Appendix 1.

occasionally manifested in outpourings of support from the entire *población*. Margarita affirmed the presence of solidarity in the *población*: "Solidarity is in our blood. It is part of the historical roots of *La Victoria*. It will never be overcome. We will never close our doors [on each other]."

The leadership of neighbourhood organizations and of the *población* as a whole has been the work of a long series of committed community organizers. As I will explain later in this chapter, the efforts of members of the Chilean Communist Party who organized the land seizure and helped build the *población* were instrumental in developing the strong belief in organization which exists in *La Victoria*. André Jarlan and Pierre Dubois also stand out in the promotion of collective action through their work as Catholic priests. Murals and posters throughout the *población* are a constant reminder of the value of participation. Notices for meetings and events frequently include the phrase "To Organize is to Liberate Yourself."[239]

La Victoria's reputation for organization has drawn considerable interest as well as organizational and financial support from outside the *población*, and this has further bolstered local organizational efforts. Chilean and foreign NGOs, academics, political activists, artists and musicians have all been attracted to the *población*. An NGO

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[239]"Organizarse es Liberarse."

from Spain funded for 3 years a group of youths who produced monthly videos on local events. An NGO from Germany donated an ambulance. Artists from throughout Chile, Latin America and Europe have come to the *población* to paint murals, generally of high artistic quality. The popular Chilean folk group, Inti Illimani performed in *La Victoria* in 1989, and another popular group, Illapu recorded a song titled "*Población La Victoria.*"[240] Documentaries about the *población* have been produced in Chile by *Televisión Nacional* and ICTUS, a small video production company. Many journalists and academics have also visited and studied *La Victoria.* In addition to the obvious value of logistical and financial support to local organizations in *La Victoria*, all of this outside attention has helped to emphasize the value of collective action in the *población* thereby bringing it further legitimacy.

A central element of the belief in community which exists in *La Victoria* is the conviction that in addition to local efforts, changes in national and international economic and social policies are necessary for local development to occur. This conviction becomes evident when speaking with neighbourhood leaders, many of whom demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of international politics and economics. The connection between the need for

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[240]Illapu, "*Población La Victoria*" *Divagaciones*. Produced in Santiago, Chile by Alerce Producciones Fonográficas S.A., 1992.

local action and political and economic changes at the macro level have imbued local organizations with a sense of purpose and struggle which extend beyond the boundaries of the *población*. It has also meant that local leaders are very much aware of the interests of neoliberal policy makers in exploiting neighbourhood organizations as a means of reducing the role of the state while still appearing to support poverty alleviation and social development.

The strong belief in neighbourhood organization in *La Victoria* has often made dissent from this norm difficult for local residents, who, for whatever reason are not seen to make a sufficient contribution to the *población*. In the definition of community outlined in Chapter Two, I explained that an inescapable element of neighbourhood community is the close scrutiny of neighbours over each other's activities and the tendency to enforce conformity to the established norms of the neighbourhood. Through gossip, rumours and other forms of social control, residents of many *poblaciones* have maintained a culture which stigmatizes participation. In *La Victoria,* forms of social control work in the opposite direction, so that non-participation is stigmatized. The neighbourhood leaders and other adult residents I spoke with expressed frustration and even scorn for youth who did not participate in local organizations. Juan Lemuñir referred to non-participants as "the living" (*los vivos*), implying that they did little more than

breathe.[241] There is also a strong pressure for residents to hold left-wing political beliefs. Although political socialization in the *población* tends to reproduce leftist political thinking, there is little room for any major disagreement with the established political current. An example of the difficulties of expressing other views occurred during the late 1980s when a group of visiting artists painted an elaborate mural. A group of residents considered it to be too abstract and without sufficient political content and so painted over it.[242] The element of social control apparently inherent in neighbourhood communities means that the participation of residents in neighbourhood organizations in *La Victoria* is not always the result of freely made decisions. Although participation is generally a desirable activity, the social pressure to participate is troublesome and reveals a negative side of neighbourhood community. The participation that emerges as the result of social pressure is also unlikely to be particularly genuine. As I will explain in Chapter Six, the number of non-participants in *La Victoria* has increased during the 1990s and has created some difficult tensions within the *población.*

Community relationships in *La Victoria* have been supported by a number of factors, which were outlined in

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[241]Lemuñir, Testimonio: 95.

[242]Personal interview, Rodrigo Mino, Valparaíso, October 1995.

Chapter Two,[243] such as the lengthy residence of many extended families in the *población*, a common history, similar standards of living, the physical layout of the *población*, a shared lack of resources, and the sense of struggle against a common enemy which grew from the land seizure and greatly expanded under the dictatorship. However, similar conditions have also existed in other *poblaciones* in which residents do not demonstrate strong community relationships. What most distinguishes *La Victoria* from other *poblaciones* is the ability of residents to recognize what they have in common - to 'imagine' their community, and to overcome the cultural obstacles to participation in neighbourhood organizations and community relationships. That ability is a function of an ideology in *La Victoria* which supports collective action as a legitimate means of progress.

Urban Politics and Community Ideology

In order to understand why strong community beliefs developed in *La Victoria*, but not in many other *poblaciones*, it is necessary to briefly examine the context of Chilean politics between the 1950s and 1973. During this period, urban housing issues and *pobladores* were a central focus of the strategies of Chilean political parties. The expansion

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[243]See also the description of *La Victoria* in Chapter One, pages 15-20.

of Chilean suffrage to women in 1949 and the removal of literacy as a condition for voting in 1970 enormously increased the political importance of low-income urban dwellers.[244] The strategies which political parties developed to confront urban housing issues and to build support among *pobladores* have had a deep and lasting effect on the neighbourhood culture, beliefs and relationships between residents in the *poblaciones*.

By the early 1950s, the shortage of housing available to Santiago's expanding population had become critical. In 1952, over 45% of Santiago's population was considered to be inadequately housed,[245] and by 1959, between 5% and 8% of Santiago's population lived in *callampas*, spontaneous settlements on the margins of the city.[246] Carlos Ibañez, president of Chile from 1952 to 1958, established a housing corporation to confront the desperate housing situation, but his efforts proved inadequate and benefited only those who could afford to pay for new land and houses, a small minority of those lacking sufficient housing.

As a result of Ibañez's failure, the political climate surrounding the lack of housing became increasingly

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[244]Brian Loveman, Chile: The Legacy of Hispanic Capitalism, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 229.

[245]School of Architecture, Universidad de Chile, 1952, cited by Schneider, Shantytown Protest: 41.

[246]Vicente Espinoza, Para una historia de los pobres de la ciudad (Santiago: SUR, 1988): 247.

intense.[247] The *callampas*, *campamentos*[248] and *poblaciones* became political battlegrounds as members of political parties organized residents into Committees of the Homeless to pressure the government for a solution to the housing problem and to generate support for their respective parties.

The Seizure of *La Victoria*

Over the course of 1957 a series of fires destroyed the makeshift houses of several hundred families living in an area of Santiago called *El Zanjón de la Aguada*, in the municipality of *San Miguel*. On October 30, 1957, under the leadership of the Communist Party's Committee of the Homeless, 3,200 families transported their belongings to a piece of vacant land and named the new settlement *Nuestra Señora de La Victoria*. After two months of conflict between residents and the police, the government agreed to sell residents of *La Victoria* legal rights to the land they occupied at a minimal cost. *La Victoria* was the first illegal land seizure in Chile to become a legally recognized *población*.

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[247] Henry Landsberger and Tim McDaniel described Chile in 1968 as "one of the most heavily ideological countries in Latin America." Henry Landsberger and Tim McDaniel, "Do Ideological Differences Have Personal Correlates?" Economic Development and Cultural Change. 16, 2 (1968): 219.

[248] *'Campamento'* refers to a settlement without legal rights to the land it occupies; see also footnote 1, page 1.

Over the next 16 years, Chilean political parties organized hundreds of land seizures. Between 1967 and 1972 alone there were 312 land seizures involving 54,710 families.[249] Between 1957 and 1973, over 40% of Santiago's physical growth was accounted for by illegal land seizures.[250] Each new settlement was closely connected with the political party which had organized the seizure and tended to depend on the party for local leadership and political action to acquire urban services. As Manuel Castells argued: "We must speak of a branch of *pobladores* in every party rather than a 'movement' of *pobladores*."[251]

In an attempt to curb the illegal seizures, Eduardo Frei's Christian Democrat government created *Operación Sitio* in 1965, which granted a piece of land and basic urban services to families who were then responsible for building their own houses. More than 100,000 families, representing over 20% of Santiago's population, gained access to land and housing through this program.[252] By the late 1960s, due to a lack of funding for the program and in order to compete for electoral support, the Christian Democrats also began to organize land seizures.

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[249]Espinoza, Para una historia: 275.

[250]Schneider, Shantytown Protest: 45.

[251]Castells, Manuel, The City and the Grassroots: 282.

[252]Ibid.: 51.

Political Parties and Community Ideology

The strategy pursued by a particular political party determined to a large extent the degree to which residents in a settlement developed strong community relationships. Manuel Castells argued that, "the practice of the squatters [*pobladores*] was entirely determined by the politics of the settlement, and the political direction of the settlement was, in turn, the work of the dominant party in each *campamento*."[253] Robert Putnam also found that political parties have a strong influence on people's attitudes and beliefs towards participation in their local communities.[254]

It is therefore essential to examine the differences in strategy between the principle parties involved in the land seizures: the Communist Party (*PC - Partido Comunista*), the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (*MIR - Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria*) and the Christian Democratic Party (*PDC - Partido Democracia Cristiana*). It is also important to recognize the effect of land seizures themselves on the community attitudes dominant in each *población*, in contrast to *poblaciones* established through the legal and government funded channels of *Operación Sitio*.

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[253]Castells, The City and the Grassroots: 207.

[254]Robert Putnam, Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1993): 184.

Community Relationships in *PC* Organized *Poblaciones*

The strategy of the Communist Party (*PC*) differed fundamentally from that of other political parties involved in the land seizures. Through the process of organizing a land seizure, defending the occupation of a new piece of land, and building a new settlement, the *PC* sought to transform people's basic beliefs and social relationships. Central to the *PC*'s strategy was an emphasis on unjust economic and political structures, rather than on personal failure, as the cause of poverty. While the long term goal of the *PC* was to end the unequal distribution of wealth and power, the focus of its strategy in the land seizures was to promote the collective action of *pobladores* in their own neighbourhoods as legitimate and necessary means of overcoming poverty and improving the quality of life. This strategy formed part of the *PC*'s advocacy of a peaceful road to socialism.[255] As Alejandro Portes observed, the *PC* presented,

> ...the invasion and subsequent confrontations with government and landowners as practical lessons in class struggle. The effective help provided by the party on these occasions was aimed ... at drastically changing the dominant ethic among these groups. Its goal was to effect a transformation of basic needs into a clear understanding of the structural origins of poverty and the necessity of class struggle.[256]

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[255]See: Carmelo Furci, The Chilean Communist Part and the Road to Socialism (London: Zed, 1984).

[256]Portes, Urban Latin America: 105.

Land seizures were preceded and followed by discussions and analysis to reinforce an understanding of, and belief in community relationships and collective action.[257] In *El Zanjón*, the PC began organizing residents in a 'Committee of the Homeless' six months before the seizure of *La Victoria*. In a review of newspaper interviews with residents of *La Victoria* during the land seizure, Vicente Espinoza noted that their language emphasized collective action and a collective identity. Based on the widespread use of 'we' and 'our' rather than 'I' and 'my,' Espinoza argued that the identity expressed in the seizure was not "a manifestation of individualism, but rather an expression of the confidence that the *pobladores* had in their own capacity, as a group, to overcome a negative situation."[258] A 1957 interview with a *poblador* during the land seizure exhibits such a collective identity: "We are not asking for charity, but rather technical assistance and materials for the self-construction of our *población*."[259]

The effective aim of the *PC* was to create 'organic' relationships with *pobladores*, in which the residents of *La Victoria*, and other *poblaciones*, would themselves sustain community relationships and neighbourhood organization

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[257]Daniel Goldrich, "Political Organization and the Politicization of the *Poblador*," Comparative Politics 3,2 (1970): 192, 196-197.

[258]Espinoza, Para una historia: 261 (my translation).

[259]Ibid.: 261 (my translation).

without depending on the leadership of the party.[260] According to Antonio Gramsci, it is the role of 'organic intellectuals' to promote and give shape to pre-existing beliefs and experiences which will lead to the formation of collective identities and a critical consciousness powerful enough to sustain collectively organized counter-hegemonic action.[261] Embodying this role, leaders from the *PC* encouraged residents to continue to organize around their common needs after the land seizure. Daniel Goldrich found that only the *PC* "seems to effect the internalization of this principle [valuing organization and collective action] in its *poblador* adherents."[262] Alejandro Portes described the process of acquiring community beliefs in more critical terms:

> Those among the urban poor that become politically militant or extend their collective demands beyond housing are not necessarily the most educated. Rather, they are the products of direct political socialization.[263]

Through the process of continued organization reinforced with a heightened political awareness, *pobladores* in *La Victoria* developed both the skills and the beliefs required to sustain collective action and community relationships, regardless of whether they actually joined

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[260]Goldrich, "Politicization": 192.

[261]Gramsci, Prison Notebooks.

[262]Goldrich, "Politicization": 192.

[263]Portes, Urban Latin America: 103.

the *PC*. In fact, Juan Lemuñir claimed that less than 10% of adult *pobladores* in *La Victoria* belonged to any political party, and that the Socialist Party and Christian Left also accounted for a significant portion of the political membership.[264]

The success of the *PC* in creating organic relationships with *pobladores* in *La Victoria* had very important implications for the survival of community relationships and collective action after the 1973 coup. I will return to this point below. First, however, it is important to examine the strategies of the other political parties and the impact of the land seizures themselves on the community beliefs of *pobladores*.

The Importance of a Land Seizure for Community Beliefs

The experience of a land seizure emphasized the need for *pobladores* to act collectively. Confronting police, dealing with medical emergencies, constructing shelter and even eating during a land takeover required *pobladores* to work together. Gaining access to water, sewage and electricity also demanded collective efforts. Following the argument of Robert Park, a land seizure can be understood as a "critical moment", a period of time marked by so many radical changes in the lives of *pobladores* that their identities, beliefs and patterns of behaviour could also

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[264]Lemuñir, Testimonio: 79.

rapidly change. Park argued that "major changes in culture occur during periods of population movement, which free the individuals involved, giving rise to both turmoil and creativity."[265] In itself, participation in a land seizure was not enough to bring about such changes. Without outside help to interpret events within a specific ideological framework, and encouragement to continue working together once the basic housing aims of a land seizure had been achieved, most *pobladores* reverted to individual efforts and notions of progress, with no substantial changes in their identity or attitudes towards collective action.[266] This is precisely what occurred in settlements organized by the *PDC* and to a certain extent also in those organized by the *MIR*.

Community Relationships in *MIR* Organized *Poblaciones*

The Movement of the Revolutionary Left (*MIR*) was the most radical of the political parties involved in the land seizures. The *MIR* conceived of the land seizures as an "organizational weapon" for building a revolutionary force among *pobladores*, and saw its own role as that of a vanguard.[267] The strategic interests of the *MIR* tended to override the more immediate concerns of *pobladores*, and the

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[265]Robert Park, "Human Migration": 893.

[266]Burnett, "Grass Root and Political Struggle": 377.

[267]Roel Klaarhamer, "The Chilean Squatter Movement and the State," in Urban Social Movements and the State, ed., Frans Schuurman and Ton van Naerssen (London and New York: Routledge, 1989): 181.

party made few efforts to integrate *pobladores* into its leadership. Relationships between *MIR* leaders and *pobladores* tended to be far more clientelist than organic. In return for *población* leadership and the provision of services achieved by applying political pressure on the state, *pobladores* were expected to support the *MIR* in neighbourhood organizations and in demonstrations and rallies.[268] Although settlements established by the *MIR* were very well organized and demonstrated high levels of resident participation, a fundamental ideological gulf existed between the motives of residents and those of the party.

The ideological gap between *MIR* leaders and *pobladores* was perhaps most striking in *Nueva La Habana*, one of the most organized *campamentos*, and considered to be the model settlement of the *MIR*. Despite the extensive participation of residents in local organizations and in political action, most residents did not share the revolutionary beliefs of the party. For most *pobladores* in *Nueva La Habana*, participation and political action were simply means of securing access to land, houses, and urban services. These motives did not indicate strong community beliefs or a commitment to the revolutionary strategy of the *MIR*. According to Manuel Castells, "the real dream of most *pobladores* was that *Nueva La Habana* would one day cease to be a *campamento* and become an average working class

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[268]Castells, The City and the Grassroots: 202.

población."[269] Collective action, for most *pobladores* was only a means to that end, with no particular value in itself. After the coup in 1973, most of the *MIR*'s leaders were killed or went into exile. The residents of *Nueva La Habana* and many other *MIR* settlements were left without either leadership or a collective identity and value for collective action powerful strong enough to sustain strong community relationships.

Community Relationships in *PDC* Organized *Poblaciones*

As the political party with majority control of the government from 1964 to 1970, the primary response of the Christian Democratic Party (*PDC*) to the housing crisis was *Operación Sitio*. When competition between political parties for the support of *pobladores* accelerated and funds for the program ran dry in the late 1960s, the *PDC* also began to organize land seizures. For the *PDC*, both *Operación Sitio* and the land seizures were purely instrumental means of securing access to land and housing for *pobladores* and of generating electoral support.[270]

Although while in government, the *PDC* developed an extensive network of territorially based organizations to

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[269]Ibid.: 203.

[270]Anthony Leeds and Elizabeth Leeds, "Behavioral Differences": 225.

promote neighbourhood participation,[271] it made little attempt to use the provision of housing and urban services to encourage community values or collective identities among *pobladores.* The relationships between *pobladores* and *PDC* leaders tended to be clientelist. According to Roel Klaarhamer, the leaders of *PDC*-organized *poblaciones* "set themselves the task of negotiating with the authorities, which they perceived as suppliers of goods and services."[272] Individual connections with leaders, rather than collective organization, were implicitly presented as the most effective means of personal progress and of improving the *población.* As Robert Putnam argued, such patron-client relations tend to undermine horizontal group organization and solidarity.[273]

Pobladores in settlements established through *Operación Sitio* and *PDC*-organized land seizures did not tend to develop strong community relationships or beliefs in collective action. According to Cathy Schneider, *poblaciones* established by the *PDC* were,

> individualistic and lacked strong grassroots networks. They were dependent on state resources, and even those

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[271]Between 1964 and 1970 the *PDC* created 21,917 neighbourhood based organizations, including Neighbourhood Councils, Mothers Centres, Youth Centres and Sports Clubs, with over 660,000 participants. See: Oxhorn, "The Popular Sector Response": 76.

[272]Klaarhamer, "Squatter Movement": 180.

[273]Putnam, Making Democracy Work: 184.

> formed by illegal land occupations abandoned political activity once their housing needs were satisfied.[274]

Community Relationships and Collective Action After the 1973 Coup

Following the military coup on September 11, 1973, the majority of political leaders in the *poblaciones* were killed, imprisoned, went into exile or simply stopped organizing in order to protect themselves. Political activity and neighbourhood organizations were severely repressed by the dictatorship, which bolstered its efforts with an ideological campaign to discredit collective action as legitimate social behaviour. Soledad, a neighbourhood leader in *La Victoria* recalled that, "all of the neighbourhood organizations created before the coup were destroyed: We returned almost to the starting point in terms of collective organization."[275] Only very basic informal community relationships continued to function.[276] For almost 10 years, the Catholic Church was the only institution able to publicly challenge the abuses of the dictatorship. As Alfred Stepan noted:

> In Chile, eight years of authoritarian rule passed without significant movement from the original

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[274]Ibid.: 57.

[275]Personal interview, *La Victoria*, February 1995.

[276]Interviews, *La Victoria*. Unfortunately little research exists documenting informal community relationships and grassroots networks in the *poblaciones* during this period. This is perhaps due to the repression and self-censorship of many leftward leaning intellectuals during the early years of the dictatorship.

> authoritarian situation: civil society remained debilitated in the face of state strength.[277]

It was not until the economic crisis of the early 1980s weakened the political legitimacy of the dictatorship that significant neighbourhood organization again became possible. Much middle class and even right wing support for the dictatorship crumbled in the wake of mass bankruptcies, high rates of inflation, rising prices, unavailable consumer products and growing unemployment.[278] The economic crisis thus forced a political opening which allowed political parties on the centre and right, labour unions and NGOs to operate publicly.[279] The resurfacing of these organizations brought new resources to the *poblaciones*, where increased neighbourhood organization was also made possible. The number of neighbourhood organizations and of *pobladores* participating in them began to grow.

However, the dynamics of neighbourhood organization in the 1980s were not the same in all *poblaciones*. The simple presence of even a large number of local organizations was not necessarily an indication of burgeoning community values and relationships. In many cases, as the *institucionalistas*

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[277]Alfred Stepan, "State Power and the Strength of Civil Society in the Southern Cone of Latin America," in Bringing the State Back In, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 322.

[278]See: Foxley, Latin American Experiments: 61.

[279]Political parties on the left, including the *PC*, the *MIR* and the Socialist Party remained illegal until 1988.

(see Chapter Two) posited, the operation of neighbourhood organizations was more a result of work by NGOs and the Catholic Church than a manifestation of local grassroots networks and community values. Observers often overlooked the continued cultural implications of political party organization in the *poblaciones* before 1973.[280] In *poblaciones* established through government housing programs and land seizures led by the *PDC*, residents were reluctant to participate in neighbourhood organizations, which tended to function only as survival mechanisms during periods of acute crisis. In *poblaciones* originally formed by the *MIR*, participation in neighbourhood organizations was more common, but still tended to be sporadic and linked primarily to subsistence during times of critical need.

The community ideology created through the organic relationship between the *PC* and residents of *poblaciones* such as *La Victoria* was able to survive 10 years of state repression.[281] Although the dictatorship had killed local leaders and repressed collective action, the belief in

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[280]Cathy Schneider's analysis of the relationship between the protests and pre-1973 party organization in the *poblaciones* has been a very valuable tool for understanding the development of community as well. The *poblaciones* with the strongest organizational networks and neighbourhood solidarity also tended to be those which responded most vehemently to the calls for protest between 1983 and 1988.

[281]Other *poblaciones* originally organized by the *PC* which sustained strong community values include *Pablo Neruda* in *La Pincoya*, *Herminda de la Victoria* in *Cerro Navia*, *Yungay*, *La Bandera*, *João Goulart* and *San Gregorio* in *La Granja*, and *La Legua*, *El Pinar*, *Guanaco* and *German Riesco* in *San Miguel*, see map in Appendix 1. Schneider, "Mobilization at the Grassroots": 93.

neighbourhood organization and community relationships endured. Thus, the formation of neighbourhood organizations in *La Victoria* in the 1980s was not so much an indication of *new* values for community as a manifestation of community relationships and values which *already existed*. Renewed participation in neighbourhood organizations did, however, reinforce and in many cases further develop pre-existing community relationships and neighbourhood solidarity. Most important was the increased participation of women.

That it was the *PC* in particular which guided the development of a community ideology in *La Victoria* is not of central importance. Other institutions could have played a similar role. Indeed, Catholic priests in *La Victoria* have also actively supported strong community relationships and neighbourhood organization. [282] However, the specifics of the *PC*'s strategy have contributed to the anti-capitalist, Marxist character of the community beliefs in *La Victoria*, and mean that neighbourhood organization and community relationships in the *población* will not easily be co-opted by the neoliberal agenda of the current Chilean government. The connection between community beliefs and left wing political ideology has raised serious problems in the context of the current crisis of the left in Latin America.

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[282] In other Latin American countries, such as Nicaragua, the Catholic Church has played a central role in community development through the formation of 'Christian Base Communities' in which the Bible becomes a focus for progressive analyses of the structural causes of poverty and the value of strong community relationships.

I will explore this problem in greater depth in the next chapter.

The process of democratization and the rapid macro-economic growth which Chile has experienced since the late 1980s have created new challenges for community relationships, ideology and neighbourhood organizations in the *poblaciones*. In the next chapter, I will examine the most important of these challenges and their implications for community development in *La Victoria*. By understanding the effects of recent political and economic and cultural changes on a *población* such as *La Victoria*, where community relationships have been traditionally strong, it will be possible to appreciate the challenges to community relationships in other *poblaciones*.

Chapter Six

New challenges to Neighbourhood Community in the 1990s

Since the election of the *Concertación* Government in 1990, participation in neighbourhood organizations in *La Victoria* has decreased substantially.[283] Some organizations, such as the Community Kitchen no longer function at all, while others such as the Food Buying Cooperative have lost members. The Neighbourhood Council and Block Committees are encountering increasing difficulties in attracting residents to meetings, and the leaders of some local organizations have given up their leadership roles. Reduced participation is evident among both women and men, but is most dramatic among youth. Neighbourhood leaders stated that solidarity and informal relationships of cooperation and mutual help continue to be strong among residents.[284] However, the diminished participation also indicates a reduced willingness of residents to work for the collective benefit of their neighbourhood and to work collectively with their neighbours for their personal benefit. A similar pattern of

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[283]No statistics exist to support this statement; however, all interviews in *La Victoria* agreed that this was the case.

[284]Interviews, *La Victoria*, February - April, October - November, 1995.

reduced participation has been observed in many other *poblaciones*.[285]

Several possible reasons, associated with the process of redemocratization and the rapid economic growth which Chile has experienced in recent years may help to explain why participation in neighbourhood organizations in *La Victoria* has declined. This chapter will examine the effects of these recent changes and also consider the shift of cultural hegemony to the military-business elite during the Pinochet dictatorship, and the current crisis of 'political imagination' in the Latin American Left as possible causes of diminishing participation. The chapter will also make some tentative predictions about the future of neighbourhood organizations in *La Victoria*. First, it is important to consider some of the ways that habitus changed through neighbourhood organization during the 1980s.

Participation in Neighbourhood Organizations and Habitus Change

Hindsight reveals that changes in the habitus of neighbourhoods related to the growth of neighbourhood organizations in the 1980s were neither as widespread nor as deep as many observers anticipated. The most important of the changes which did develop have been the expanded public involvement of women in their neighbourhoods, the greater

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[285]Interview, Francisco Sabatini, November 1995.

self-reliance of *pobladores*, and an increasing disinterest in partisan politics. New values of community may have been nascent in the organizations which emerged in many *poblaciones* during the 1980s, but these values have not been sustained or developed in a significant way in the 1990s.

Francisco Sabatini posited that the experiences of the 1980s led pobladores to become more self-sufficient but not any less individualistic or more communitarian. Sabatini suggested that the most important changes towards greater self-sufficiency occurred primarily within the structure of the family, rather than the neighbourhood.[286]

Specifically examining changes identities and attitudes towards neighbourhood organization, Ton Salman argued that the experiences of the 1980s have led *pobladores* to "rely more on their own resources" and to lower their expectations of and confidence in established institutions such as the state and political parties.[287]

Salman also asserted that the greater self-reliance of *pobladores* encourages them to take part in more collective efforts.[288] This logic is problematic. It has been widely observed that self-reliance among *pobladores* is more an indication of individualism than of a propensity to cooperate with neighbours. Assuming a natural progression

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[286]Personal Interview, Francisco Sabatini, March 1995.

[287]Salman, "Chilean Shantytown Organizations": 24.

[288]Ibid.: 24.

from self-reliance to cooperation, Salman argued that a process of habitus change leading to stronger community relationships and more organized neighbourhoods has "only begun."[289] However, the political and economic conditions which led to neighbourhood organization and the beginning of habitus change during the 1980s have changed considerably in the 1990s. This is especially the case in *poblaciones* like *La Victoria*, where neighbourhood organization was connected with a sense of struggle against the dictatorship. Rather than a process which has 'only begun', the transformation of habitus towards increased collective action seems to be a process which *barely began.* Dispositions towards collective action are subject to the gradual and progressive process of habitus change, but in certain circumstances are also prone to more rapid ups and downs, accounted for by Albert Hirschman as the "rebound effect." Furthermore, the distancing of *pobladores* from political parties and the state does not necessarily mean that they will develop other forums for action. A turn away from public involvement altogether is another distinct possibility.

The most progressive transformations in habits are related to the increased participation of female *pobladoras* in activities outside of the private sphere of the household. The greater involvement of women in the public sphere of neighbourhood organization and paid work has

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[289]Ibid.: 21.

brought about an increase of women's self-confidence and a subsequent challenge to traditional gender roles, as well as a gradual acceptance by men of changing gender roles. These changes, however slow, mark important progress toward more equitable community relationships as they indicate that women are increasingly able to participate in their neighbourhoods on an equal basis with men.

Because changes in habitus occur primarily over generations, they are most apparent in the actions of young adults. In *La Victoria*, relationships among young women and men are clearly more equal than those among their parents generation. Young women in the *población* enjoy greater freedom to work and participate than their mothers do. The sharing of domestic tasks by young men is also slowly increasing; it is most evident in the time they spend looking after their children.

Despite greater gender equality among youth, their interest in politics and in neighbourhood organization is generally very low. As I explained in Chapter Four, this disinterest grows from several factors. The shortage of housing often prevents youth from enjoying the privileges and responsibilities of neighbourhood citizenship. Disinterest also partly results from the often accurate perception of youth that existing neighbourhood organizations are dominated by the interests of 'old people' (*los viejos*). Young *pobladores* have been much more

susceptible to the ideology of individualism and consumption promoted by the dictatorship and the mass media than have their parents' generation. Indeed, the participation of youth in youth organizations, even very informal ones, is also remarkably low. Furthermore, because of their lack of experience with democracy, youth tended to have the highest expectations for redemocratization and have subsequently been the most frustrated and disappointed by its actual evolution, thereby speeding up their aversion to public involvement. Of course, not all young people in *La Victoria* feel frustrated and alienated. I spoke with several young women and men who were very active in local organizations, and demonstrated a strong belief in neighbourhood organization and identification with *La Victoria.* However, they also saw themselves as representing only a small minority of youth in the *población.*

Redemocratization and Declining Neighbourhood Participation

The process of redemocratization in Chile and in many other Latin American countries has been associated with a reduced participation in neighbourhood organizations and other forms of public action.[290] A number of factors help to

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[290]Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, "Tentative conclusions About Uncertain Democracies," Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Prospects For Democracy. Part IV. ed. Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986): 56.

For Uruguay see: Eduardo Canel, "Democratization and the Decline of Urban Social Movements in Uruguay: A Political Institutional

explain the connections between these two phenomena in *La Victoria*. These include: the loss of a sense of common struggle once the military was removed from political power, the displacement of popular organizations by political parties, the alienation caused by the elite nature of the redemocratization process, and the high expectations which many young people had for democracy.

The concentration of authoritarian power in the figure of Augusto Pinochet created an unequivocal enemy against who much anger, frustration and local organizational activity was concentrated. In *La Victoria*, residents tended to blame Pinochet for almost everything they perceived as unjust in politics, the economy and Chilean society. As Julia Paley observed, the military regime itself, through its deliberate hegemonizing efforts contributed significantly to the atmosphere of resistance in the *poblaciones*:

> By constituting poor people as subversives, by defining social relations as a war, and by establishing an atmosphere of patriots vs. enemies, the dictator created an antagonistic environment conducive to rebellion ... the construction of Pinochet as the symbolic cause of misery facilitated vast mobilizations in the shantytowns.[29]

Account," ed. Escobar and Alvarez, The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: 276-290.

For Argentina see: Juan Silva and Frans Shurman, "Neighbourhood Associations in Buenos Aires: Contradictions within Contradictions." ed. Shurman and Van Naerssen, Urban Social Movements in the third World: 45-59.

[29] Julia Paley, "Knowledge and Urban Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile," PhD. dissertation, Harvard University, 1994, 169-70. Cited in Schneider, Shantytown Protest: 200.

the removal of Pinochet and the military from political power has diminished the symbolic power which neighbourhood organizations possessed during the 1980s. Although most neighbourhood organizations in *la Victoria* were not overtly political, participants were generally motivated by a strong critical consciousness and a sense of struggle against what they perceived as injustice and abuse of power. Soledad, President of the Neighbourhood Council, stated:

> People fought hard against the dictatorship. There was one common enemy: Pinochet. Now Pinochet is gone and there is supposed democracy, but the system has not changed. The same people are in power, the economic system is the same and participation, organization just seems to meet a wall.

The loss of Pinochet as an unambiguous enemy has also resulted in the fragmentation of many interests and perspectives previously held in common. Consequently, it has become more difficult to stimulate participation in neighbourhood organization. According to Lina,

> It was easier to organize under the dictatorship because there was a common enemy. Participation and organization were part of the fight against the dictatorship. Now, although democracy has not really changed our lives, it is much more difficult to organize because it is more difficult to understand what the problems are.

Without something clear to struggle against, residents of *La Victoria* have been much less able to work collectively. They now face the difficult challenge of transforming the motivation for participation from a logic of resistance to one of initiating proactive change. At present there is little evidence of this process occurring.

From 1983 to 1986, the protests in the *poblaciones* formed the backbone of the opposition parties' strategy for democratic change. The protests and neighbourhood organizations in the *poblaciones*, what O'Donnell and Whitehead referred to as the "resurrection of civil society", pushed the democratic transition "further than it would otherwise have gone."[292] However, the transition itself was an elite process of negotiation between the leadership of Chile's principal centre-left political parties[293] and the military government. When the negotiations began in 1986, the political parties quietly put an end to the protests. In 1988, the same parties effectively dismantled the Unitary Pobladores Command (*Comando Unitario de Pobladores - CUP*), a burgeoning movement of *población* leaders, by removing all of the partisan members.[294] Many analysts of the democratization process in Latin America have argued that popular organizations and protests must be marginalized from the transition process if a stable democracy is to be achieved. Otherwise, it is argued, there would be a considerable risk of backlash and increased repression from military governments.[295] As Kenneth Roberts argued, the actors and

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[292] O'Donnell and Whitehead, Transitions: 56.

[293] Including the Christian Democrat Party and the Party for Democracy-Socialist Party, but excluding the Communist Party.

[294] Oxhorn, "Where did all the Protesters Go?": 60.

[295] See: Ibid.: 49-50.

political parties most involved in the struggle for democracy are not those best equipped to take advantage of the democratic system once it is established.[296]

The central role of *pobladores* in the initial push for democracy raised many of their expectations for the future democratic government. In *La Victoria*, where participation in local organizations was partly motivated by a sense of belonging to a larger struggle, the end of the protests and dismantling of the *CUP* were seen as a direct affront to *pobladores*. Furthermore, many opponents of the military regime had struggled for democracy more as an end in itself than as a means or process for change. When the form of democracy that emerged in 1990 did not match the much more idealistic visions of many *pobladores*, many of them felt the fight for democracy had been a failure.[297] Having had their hopes raised, many residents of *La Victoria* have felt marginalized by the redemocratization process. This has created significant feelings of frustration.

The Communist Party continued to support protests in the *poblaciones* until 1988, when it suddenly changed its strategy and decided to take part in the campaign for the 1988 plebiscite and to support the negotiated transition

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[296]Kenneth Roberts, "From the Barricades to the Ballot Box: Redemocratization and Political Realignment in the Chilean Left," Politics and Society 23, 4 (1995): 495-519.

[297]Interview, Rodrigo Mino - former youth leader in Chilean Communist Party, Valparaíso, Chile, October 1995.

process. This last minute change in strategy confused and alienated many traditional supporters of the party. The *PC* received no seats in Congress or the Senate in either the 1989 or 1993 elections.

The participation of Chile's political parties in the 1988 plebiscite and 1989 elections required their acceptance of the 1980 Constitution, put in place by the military government. The Constitution contains many authoritarian elements, including provisions which make its reformation very difficult.[298] This has resulted in a lengthy process of negotiation and compromise between the *Concertación* Government and the right-wing opposition. Many *pobladores* in *La Victoria* see the compromises that have been made, especially those related to human rights and social spending as a sell-out by the governing parties. The democratization process also left Chile's neoliberal economic system untouched, thereby creating more feelings of disappointment for opponents of the military regime who had expected that

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[298]Amongst other things, the 1980 Constitution enabled Pinochet to appoint Senators and Judges, and established a Constitutional Tribunal - controlled by the military - which has final say on all constitutional matters. To be amended, the Constitution requires a 66% vote from the Congress and Senate, a proportion almost impossible for any party or even coalition to achieve because of a complex electoral system also set in place by the 1980 Constitution.

See: Anthony O'Malley, "Chile's Constitution, Chile's Congress: Prospects for Judicial, Legal and Constitutional Reform," Canadian Journal of Latin American Studies 15, 30 (1990): 85-112.

democratization would lead to greater economic redistribution.[299]

Many neighbourhood leaders feel that organizational efforts are now futile. After the intense involvement in local organizations and the struggle for democracy, Margarita explained, "many leaders are tired." Soledad, the President of the Neighbourhood Council in *La Victoria*, explained the current frustrations of being a neighbourhood leader:

> It is very difficult to be a leader these days, because organization does not seem to accomplish anything... Participation appears useless to many people.

She went on to explain that "there are many opportunists [in *la Victoria*] now, [who] are interested only in [themselves]." Soledad also linked the recent growth of Evangelical churches in the *población* to widespread frustration with Chile's democracy and a need to believe in and belong to something secure. She saw the decline in neighbourhood organization in recent years as a "return almost to point zero, like after the coup, in terms of neighbourhood participation."

Young residents of *La Victoria* have been the most frustrated by the redemocratization process. Estimates of unemployment among low-income youth in Santiago are 30% to 40%, a statistic which led Verónica Schild to refer to this

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[299]Social spending by the *Concertación* Government has only been 30% higher than by the military regime.

group as "the segment of society for which (supposed) democratization remains rather meaningless."[300] Frustration and alienation are particularly evident among the large numbers of young men in the *población*, perhaps as many as 30%, who have become addicted to *pasta base*, a highly addictive and inexpensive derivative of cocaine, similar to 'crack'. *Pasta base* was unheard of in *La Victoria* before 1992. Neighbourhood leaders attributed the growing numbers of addicts to feelings of frustration related to the lack of opportunities for work or recreation. The consumption of *pasta base* by young men in *La Victoria* is considered by neighbourhood leaders to be the greatest problem facing the *población*. Not only does the neighbourhood lack the resources for the rehabilitation of addicts, but neighbourhood leaders do not even know how to begin to face the problem. According to Lina, "the problem of drugs is even more difficult than the dictatorship was ... because it is inside the *población*, whereas the dictatorship was something external." Martín Hopenhayen explained the rapidly growing consumption of *pasta base* as a result of Chile's "hyperkinetic modernization", identifying the use of cocaine and its derivatives with the extreme levels of stress

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[300]Verónica Schild, "Recasting 'Popular' Movements: Gender and Political Learning in Neighbourhood Organizations in Chile," Latin American Perspectives 21, 2 (1994): 75.

created by Chile's free market economy.[301] Lina lamented that many of the addicts in *La Victoria* are the same young men who took part in the protests and were politically active during the 1980s. As Kenneth Roberts similarly observed in the case of the Communist Party: "many of the radicalized youth quietly withdrew from the party and from politics altogether, profoundly alienated by the compromises made in the transition process."[302]

Albert Hirschman explained apparently rapid shifts from public involvement to the pursuit of private interests as the result of "disappointment" with public action.[303] He offers two possible sources of disappointment which are closely related to the experiences of residents of *La Victoria* with the transition to democracy in Chile:

1. Prolonged but largely unsuccessful advocacy of a cause will often bring discouragement and eventual abandonment of a struggle sensed as futile.

2. Nominal success is achieved, but in triumph the cause turns out to be far less attractive than had been anticipated.[304]

Eduardo Canel observed a similar process of decreased participation in neighbourhood organizations in Montevideo following the transition to democracy in Uruguay. Canel

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[301]Martín Hopenhayen, "Cocaína y pasta base: Drogas de una modernización hyperkinética" El Canelo 62 (1995): 20-23.

[302]Roberts, "the Chilean Left": 511.

[303]Hirschman, Shifting Involvements, Chapter One: "On Disappointment": 9-24.

[304]Ibid.: 93.

explained this phenomenon in terms of "aspirational deprivation":

> 'Aspirational deprivation' occurs when expectation increase, but the capacity of society to meet these expectations remains unchanged. Rather than leading to violence ... 'aspirational deprivation' ultimately brought on an overall process of demobilization based on a generalized belief that collective action was ineffective. This demobilization affected the whole of Uruguayan society.[305]

Hirschman argues that the human imagination has a natural propensity to "conjure up radical change" and an "inability to visualize intermediate outcomes."[306] This inability means that the results of public action almost always fall short of expectations and lead to disappointment. Once significant disappointment has been experienced, Hirschman continues, the shift to private interests can be rapid.[307] The shift is often most dramatic for those who have worked the hardest in the struggle for change. A shift is also more likely during periods of rapid economic growth.[308]

Macroeconomic Growth and Declining Neighbourhood Participation

Redemocratization in Chile has been accompanied by a process of economic growth averaging over 6% a year since

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[305]Canel, "Democratization": 281.

[306]Hirschman, Shifting Involvements: 95.

[307]Ibid.: 128.

[308]Ibid.: 15.

1987.[309] Although the wealthiest sectors of the population have been the prime beneficiaries of this growth, the number of Chileans considered to be poor has fallen considerably since the 1980s.[310] While in 1987, 45% of the population was considered to be poor, this figure had dropped to 28% by 1994 and is projected to be 17% by the year 2000.[311] Among those considered to be poor, the number of extremely poor dropped from 17% of the total population in 1987 to 9% in 1994.[312] Unemployment, as high as 31% in 1982, now hovers around 5%.[313] In Pedro Aguirre Cerda, the municipality in which *La Victoria* is located, unemployment was 25% in 1992 and extreme poverty was 23%, still high relative to national levels but also much lower than in the early 1980s.[314]

The reduction of poverty in *La Victoria* renders subsistence organizations such as the Community Kitchen less

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[309]This growth has been all the more significant because of two years of 13% annual decline in 1982 and 1983.

[310]The poorest 2)% of the population receives 4.6% of national income, the wealthiest 20% receives 56.1% These figures have changed very little since the early 1980s. Alan Angell and Benny Pollack, "The Chilean Elections of 1993: from Polarization to Consensus" Bulletin of Latin American Research (1995): 105.

[311]Marta Sanchez, "Aninat: pobreza bajaría a 17% el 2000" La Epoca (26 October, 1995): B2.

[312]Angell and Pollack, "Elections of 1993": 105.

[313]Chile's unemployment statistics are somewhat misleading because eight hours of work per week is considered full-time employment. The statistics do not account for informal or under employment.

[314]Hanna, State, and Saldivia, "La comuna de Pedro Aguirre Cerda": 260.

important to the fulfilment of residents' basic needs. As the economic well-being of residents improves they will devote less time and energy to subsistence oriented activities. Indeed, surveys published by PET indicate a relative shift in neighbourhood organization in Santiago between 1982 and 1989 away from collective consumption organizations towards revenue generating productive workshops.[315] Participation in productive workshops often embodies many aspects of community and also responds to the financial needs of participants.[316] However, in the eyes of many neighbourhood leaders, the shift towards productive workshops represents a weakening of neighbourhood organization.[317] The smaller number of participants in a typical workshop and the 'for-profit' logic which guides them, particularly when they obtain credit,[318] has not enabled the workshops to reproduce the sense of local identity which neighbourhood leaders in *La Victoria* believe emerged from neighbourhood organizations in the 1980s.

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[315]See Appendix 2.

[316]Interviews with Soledad and Margarita, *La Victoria*, March and April 1995, personal observation of two productive workshops in *La Victoria*. See also: Luis Razeto, "Sobre el futuro de los talleres y microempresas" Revista de Economía & Trabajo 2, 3 (1994): 49-76.

[317]Interviews, Soledad, Claudina Nuñez, March and April 1995.

[318]Credit for 'micro-enterprises', including productive workshops, is becoming increasingly available through Chilean banks and through government funding agencies like FOSIS (Fondo de Solidaridad e Inversión Social - fund for Solidarity and Social Investment).

The massive influx of credit cards into the Chilean economy has also diminished the apparent need for neighbourhood organizations. Since 1993, large department stores and grocery stores have mailed millions of unsolicited credit cards to Chilean homes.[319] Such easy access to personal credit has undermined the perceived value of local savings groups and other organizations which pool local resources. It has also led to the high indebtedness of large numbers of low-income Chileans.

The connection between economic growth and declining participation in non-subsistence organizations like the Neighbourhood Council is not as clear as it is with economic organizations. Helping to clarify the relationship, Albert Hirschman has observed that periods of rapid economic growth often induce people to concentrate on private interests.[320] The 'push' of frustration and disappointment with public action combined with the 'pull' of economic growth has drawn many residents in *La Victoria* away from participation in neighbourhood organizations toward self-interested individual pursuits.

It is important to avoid the impression that democracy and economic growth are inherently opposed to neighbourhood participation and strong community relationships. First of

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[319]Estimates of the number of new credit cards are as high as 6 million, in a country of 14 million.

[320]Ibid.: 15.

all, it is not democracy itself but rather the process of democratization as it has recently been experienced in Chile which has alienated many people and led to decreased participation. Secondly, it is unreasonable to expect that critical economic circumstances persist for participation in neighbourhood organizations to be sustained. As Burt and Espejo found in Lima, Peru, dire economic conditions eventually exhausted people's enthusiasm for collective action and pushed them towards individualistic strategies.[321]

The challenge for neighbourhood organizers in *La Victoria* is to develop a new proactive rational for participation. *Pobladores* need to rethink the meaning of their citizenship and learn to cooperate with the state instead of seeing it as an enemy. This is particularly important because much of the financial (and moral) support for neighbourhood organizations which came from foreign governments, NGOs and the Catholic Church under the dictatorship is no longer available.[322] Through state agencies such as FOSIS (Fund for Solidarity and Social Investment), the government is now the most important source of funding. The process of adaptation to this new reality is

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[321]Burt and Espejo, "The Struggles of a Self-Built Community": 25.

[322]In 1990, the Chilean Catholic Church closed the Vicariate of Solidarity. In the same year many foreign governments and philanthropic organizations stopped funding local NGOs, believing that the newly elected government should play this role. See: Brian Loveman, "NGOs and the transition to Democracy in Chile" Grassroots Development 15, 2 (1991): 8-19.

not be easy. It is much more difficult to maintain the enthusiasm for neighbourhood organization in *La Victoria* without the symbolic power of resistance which local organizations held under the dictatorship. Ironically, it may be more difficult for residents of *La Victoria* to meet these new challenges for neighbourhood organization than for residents of *poblaciones* that were less organized under the dictatorship, precisely because so much of the logic of organizing in *La Victoria* was related to a sense of collective resistance.

Expectations of neighbourhood organizations must also adapt to the new circumstance of the 1990s. As Aristide Zoldberg argued, it was inevitable that the excitement of neighbourhood organization and political struggle which characterized *La Victoria* during the 1980s would be followed by the "restoration of boredom."[323] Oscillations of enthusiasm for local organization are a natural part of the evolution of urban neighbourhoods. Alessandro Pizzorno warns that if the cyclical pattern of collective action is forgotten, "at every upstart of a wave we shall be induced to think that we are at the verge of a revolution: and when the downswing appears we shall predict the end of class conflict."[324]

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[323]Aristide Zoldberg, "Moments of Madness," Politics and Society 2 (1972): 205.

[324]Alessandro Pizzorno, "Political Exchange and Collective Identity in Industrial Conflict," in The Resurgence of Class Conflict in

However, despite the observed pattern of ups and downs of collective action, neighbourhood organization and strong community relationships remain vital to the social and economic development of urban neighbourhoods. An important challenge in *La Victoria* is to find ways of preserving in the current period some of the elements of neighbourhood organization and collective identity which existed during the 1980s. Many Chilean researchers and government officials are now focussed on the development of locally based micro-enterprises[325] and the strengthening of the Neighbourhood Councils and Mother's Centres as viable ways of encouraging community relationships during a period clearly marked by decreased public interest.[326] Although micro-enterprises and the somewhat institutional Neighbourhood Councils may be less exciting in terms of their communitarian appeal than the more informal organizations which flourished during the 1980s, they may also represent more sustainable means of fostering community development which are not dependent on critical economic circumstances or a logic of resistance in order to function.

Western Europe Since 1968 ed. Colin Crouch and Alessandro Pizzorno, vol 2. (London: Macmillan, 1978), 291; as cited in Schneider, Shantytown Protest: 211.

[325]A micro-enterprise is any business employing less than five people.

[326]Interview, Luis Razeto, February 1995.

Any preservation or rebuilding of neighbourhood organizations in *La Victoria* will be dependent on the rekindling of a community ideology. This is highly problematic for two closely related reasons. First, the ideological basis for neighbourhood organizations and strong community relationships in *La Victoria* has traditionally been very closely connected with the Chilean Left, now, like the Left almost everywhere else, in a deep crisis. Second, the values associated with neoliberalism have become hegemonic to the extent that other ideologies no longer attract much interest among Chileans.

The Crisis of the Chilean Left and Community Ideology

The most outward sign of crisis in the Chilean Left is its lack of electoral support. The Communist Party, which continues to adhere to its Marxist-Leninist roots has no representation in the Congress or Senate. The Socialist Party, which does enjoy government representation has largely abandoned its traditional roots and taken a large step toward the centre of the Chilean political spectrum. The CUP[327], which represented the emergence of a somewhat less partisan articulation of leftist *pobladores* in the late 1980s, was quickly dismantled by the political parties and never allowed to develop. More profoundly, however, the

[327] ***Comando Unitario de Pobladores***

'socialist utopia' of the Chilean Left has come unravelled[328] and has lost the ability to inspire enthusiasm for neighbourhood organization among *pobladores*. In this way, the ideological basis for neighbourhood organization in *La Victoria* is disintegrating. Although many older residents of *La Victoria* continue to cling to political beliefs which do support collective action, these beliefs have not motivated younger residents of the *población*. The ascendency of neoliberal values is so great that there is little space left for alternative ideologies to compete. Indeed, on the basis of surveys conducted in Chile in 1990, Michael Waugh concluded that "ideology [is no longer] a useful cognitive tool".[329] Thus, at a time when neighbourhood organization in *La Victoria* requires a revitalized ideological foundation, not only is the traditional source of that foundation in a crisis, but the possibility of any ideology emerging to support neighbourhood organization is also unlikely. Moreover, the values associated with neoliberalism are antithetical to neighbourhood organization and strong community relationships.

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[328]See: Castañeda, Utopia Unarmed.

[329]Michael Waugh, "Depoliticization in Post-Pinochet Chile: Evidence and Implications for Democratic Consolidation" Paper presented at Latin American Studies Association Conference, Los Angeles, September 24-27, 1992; as cited in Schneider, Shantytown Protest: 207.

Angell and Pollack observed that the 1993 elections were "almost totally devoid of heated ideological debates." Angell and Pollack, "Elections of 1993": 105.

The Impact of Neoliberalism on Neighbourhood Participation

Almost 20 years of neoliberal economic policies have changed the way Chileans interact with one another and think about social relationships. As Cecilia Dockendorff has argued, "the economic model ... is also a cultural model."[330] "Neoliberalism," Dockendorff asserts, "exacerbates individualistic values which are in contradiction with solidarity."[331] A recent article in El Mercurio reported on a "growth of urban problems due to a lack of citizen consciousness."[332] An article in La Epoca stated:

> The problem [in Chile] today is the growing indifference of individuals and groups. This phenomenon is in direct relation with the process of chaotic modernization the country has experienced over the last 20 years and the prolonged neoliberal ideological campaign.[333]

The value system which now guides Chilean society is based on "individualism and self-achievement instead of cooperation and solidarity."[334]

Increasing individualism and apathy towards collective action are evident throughout Chilean society, from student politics to art. Young people, often referred to as the

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[330]Dockendorff, Solidaridad: 123.

[331]Ibid.: 69.

[332]"Problemas de ciudad surgen por escasa conciencia ciudadana," El Mercurio (October 11, 1995): C7 (my translation).

[333]Antonia Cortés, "Molestia social", La Epoca (October 26, 1995): 1,9 (my translation).

[334]Angell and Pollack, "Elections of 1993": 114.

'children of Pinochet' because of their passive acceptance of the values promoted by the dictatorship, have been the most influenced by the new value system.[335] Participation in neighbourhood organizations is said to be lowest in the recently built *poblaciones* where almost all of the residents are young families.[336]

These new values have also permeated beliefs and attitudes towards collective action in *La Victoria*. While the struggle against the dictatorship worked as a 'social glue' in the *población*, redemocratization has allowed collective bonds to come unstuck. Access to credit cards has made it easier to be individualistic, and as Lina explained, advertising often makes it difficult to resist the attractions of purchasing consumer products rather than investing the time and energy demanded by neighbourhood organization:

> Advertising is very strong and tells people to be individualistic and to be consumers, it is hard to resist this pressure. People have their own beliefs, especially related to class and politics to support themselves against advertising, but it is hard.

One of the clearest signs of growing individualism and the decreasing willingness to work collectively in *La Victoria*

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[335]Individualism and apathy resulting from neoliberal economic policies are global phenomena not limited to Chile. In New Zealand, young people are often referred to as 'the Children of the market' because of their embodiment of neoliberal values. See: Michael Valpy, "The New Zealand Experiment" The Globe and Mail, January 31, 1996: A23.

[336]Interview, Luis Carreño, Secretary of the Neighbourhood Council, *población Libertad*, Viña del Mar, October 1995.

is the drop in participation in the Food Buying Cooperative. According to Lina and Margarita, both long-time members of the Cooperative, many people are becoming tired of having to wait until Saturday (the day the Cooperative operates) to buy their food, and would rather buy their groceries at the supermarket to have brand name products and the plastic bags with the name of the supermarket on them, now perceived by many in the *población* as status symbols.[337] This shift in behaviour is clear evidence of a transformation of habitus in the *población* resulting from the hegemonic influence of the individualistic ideology associated with the dictatorship and neoliberal economic policies.

The Future of Neighbourhood Organization and Community Development in *La Victoria*

It is difficult to make any predictions about the future of neighbourhood organization and community relationships in *La Victoria*. On the basis of observations made during 1995 it is hard to imagine a resurgence of neighbourhood organization in the near future. Many local leaders have become frustrated and disillusioned with neighbourhood organization. The behaviour of large numbers of youth in *La Victoria* seems to be uninspired by either the ideology or tradition of collective action in the *población*. The organic relationships between local residents and

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[337]Interviews with Lina and Margarita, *La Victoria*, April 1995.

members of the Communist Party which formed during the 1950s and 1960s are not being reestablished among the majority of younger residents. *Victorianos* and Chileans in general appear to becoming increasingly private and individualistic.

The revival of a community ideology capable of motivating young residents is the key element needed to resuscitate neighbourhood organization and strong community relationships in *La Victoria*. However, there appear to be no institutions in Chile capable or willing to promote such beliefs. The Catholic Church closed the Vicariate of Solidarity in 1990 and has shifted its focus almost exclusively to spiritual matters. In *La Victoria*, even Pierre Dubois, who actively supported neighbourhood organization has been replaced by a more conservative priest. The political parties on the Left either lack the mass base necessary to actively encourage neighbourhood organization or have adopted a more conservative approach to popular promotion. The parties on the right continue to advocate individual hard work as the best means of overcoming poverty. Many Chilean NGOs strongly promote neighbourhood cooperation, but they do not have the resources to influence the cultural values at the base of community relationships. The Government, probably the only institution with sufficient resources to effectively promote neighbourhood organization, has made some promising statements and has launched some positive initiatives, such

as the Participatory Paving Program, described in Chapter One. However, the efforts of the Government to date have been too scattered and cautionary to have had a significant impact on attitudes towards neighbourhood organization. Government reports, such as the one published by the Ministry of Planning[338] and statements by government officials also suggest that its vision of neighbourhood organization is one that would fit into the current neoliberal economic system and the belief in a limited role for the state in social welfare concerns. Without a connection between neighbourhood organization and broader social changes, it is unlikely that such a vision could inspire many residents of *La Victoria*, or any other *población*. Furthermore, the absence of an element of resistance or struggle in the Government's tentative discourse on neighbourhood organization make the promotion of its vision more problematic.

The Neighbourhood Council in *La Victoria* will likely continue to function and local residents will probably continue to develop locally-based micro-enterprises. The presence of new murals denouncing the economic and social policies of the current government suggest that a sense of resistance in the neighbourhood continues and that *La Victoria* remains a symbol of struggle to artists and political activists outside the *población*. A number of

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[338]Dockendorff, Solidaridad.

committed neighbourhood leaders, including some young residents, continue to promote a strong collective identity and an active network of local organizations in the *población*. The posters announcing the 38th anniversary celebrations for *La Victoria* in October 1995 called for residents to "rescue" and "recuperate" the "combativeness, unity and pride of being a *Victoriano*." The celebrations themselves were a sign that the collective identity of residents does continue to be a significant force in the *población*.[339]

The observations over long periods of time of Albert Hirschman, Alessandro Pizzorno, Alejandro Portes, and Aristide Zoldberg indicate the neighbourhood organization and community relationships are never constant. Indeed, the enthusiasm for neighbourhood organization during one period may contain the roots of disillusionment with collective action and a turn to individualism in the next. Similarly, the individualism which currently seems to dominate Chilean society may eventually lead to dissatisfaction with the intense concentration on private interests and provoke a return to collective action. In *La Victoria*, the strong history of collective action and the continued belief of some residents in neighbourhood organization may form the

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[339] I attended the anniversary celebrations over the week of October 23-30, 1995. Events included soccer games, music, dancing, street theatre, food, and the decoration of all the streets in the *población*.

necessary basis for a revival of neighbourhood organizations and strong community relationships once the current phase of individualism and private life, connected with the ideology of neoliberalism, have been exhausted.

Conclusion

I have used the term community in this thesis to refer to the relationships between people in a specific territorial space - a neighbourhood or *población*. Community relationships must reflect equality, trust, democracy, cooperation, mutual help and holistic conceptions of neighbours. Of course, community can only be conceived as an 'ideal type' at one end of a continuum, for no real neighbourhood will ever completely embody all of these qualifications, although they will be much more evident in some neighbourhoods than others.

I argued that community operates at the level of habitus - the internalised system of social patterns which define the culture of a group, or in this case a *población*. I also argued that in order to develop, community relationships must be supported by an ideology, or system of beliefs which values and legitimizes cooperation between neighbours and participation in neighbourhood organizations.

Following Antonio Gramsci's conception of popular culture as a collection of diverse and often contradictory beliefs, it is clear that values for community in the *poblaciones* compete with values for individualism and self-

effort. Indeed, in many *poblaciones* individualistic values and patterns of behaviour have been much stronger than cooperative ones. Even when individualistic behaviour has not enabled *pobladores* to subsist at even very basic levels, in many cases they have not turned to cooperative action. In *población La Victoria*, a strong value for neighbourhood organization and habits of collective action emerged from an organic relationship established with the Chilean Communist Party during and after the 1957 land seizure which gave birth to the *población*.

Strong values for community relationships and a culture of neighbourhood organization were reproduced in the second generation of *Victorianos* which reached adulthood during the 1960s and early 1970s, but has not been reproduced in a significant manner among the third generation, which grew up under the military dictatorship. This generation has been much more susceptible to the ideological influence of the neoliberal economic system put in place by the military government. The individualistic behaviour of this generation is evidence of a gradual transformation of habitus in *La Victoria* away from community oriented social patterns toward a much more individualistic system of beliefs and behaviour.

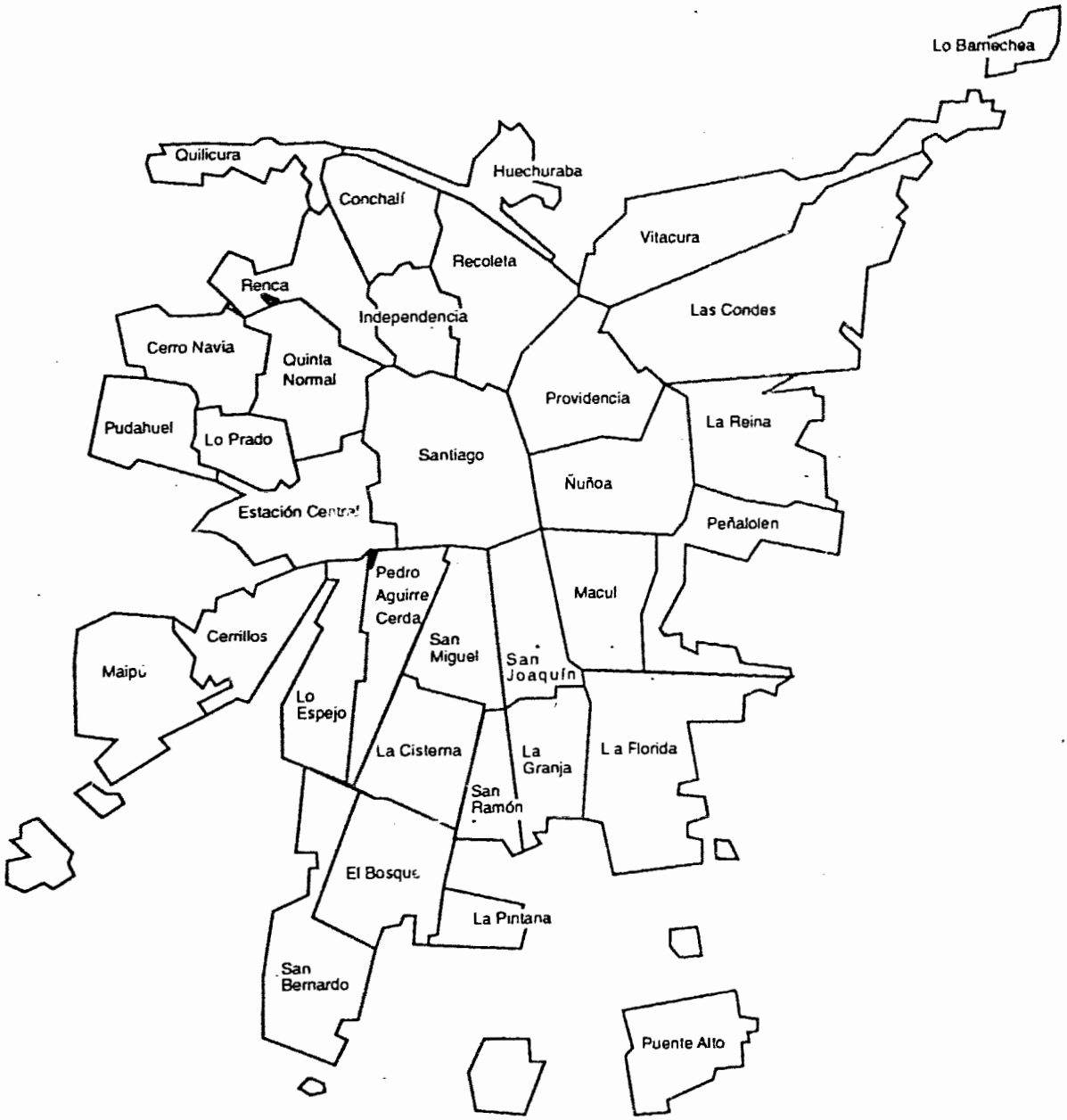
The failure of the community ideology in *La Victoria* to reproduce itself was partly masked by the growth of neighbourhood organizations and the increase in neighbourhood participation stimulated by the economic

crisis of the early 1980s. Encouraged by the re-birth of civil society after 10 years of military rule, many observers asserted that new social patterns and beliefs emphasizing stronger community relationships were developing in the *poblaciones*. Although it may have appeared that young residents were an important part of this change in social patterns, hindsight makes it easier to understand that this generation was motivated more by frustration and anger than a positive value for community.

The gradual transformation of habitus in *La Victoria* away from a cooperative system of social patterns and beliefs towards a more individualistic one has been accelerated by the process of redemocratization in Chile. The removal of the military from political power in 1990 signified the loss of an unequivocal enemy against whom much organizational activity in *La Victoria* was directed and diminished the sense of common struggle which had been an important source of unity in the *población*. Frustration and disappointment with the form of democracy that has emerged in Chile have led many residents in *La Victoria* to the conclusion that neighbourhood organization is no longer an effective means for progress. Albert Hirschman's theory of a "rebound effect" in which intense involvement in public activity leads to frustration and an eventual shift of involvement to the pursuit of private interests helps to explain the transformation of habitus in *La Victoria*. This

oscillating pattern of public and private involvement also suggests the possibility of an eventual renewal of public action in *La Victoria*.

Appendix 1



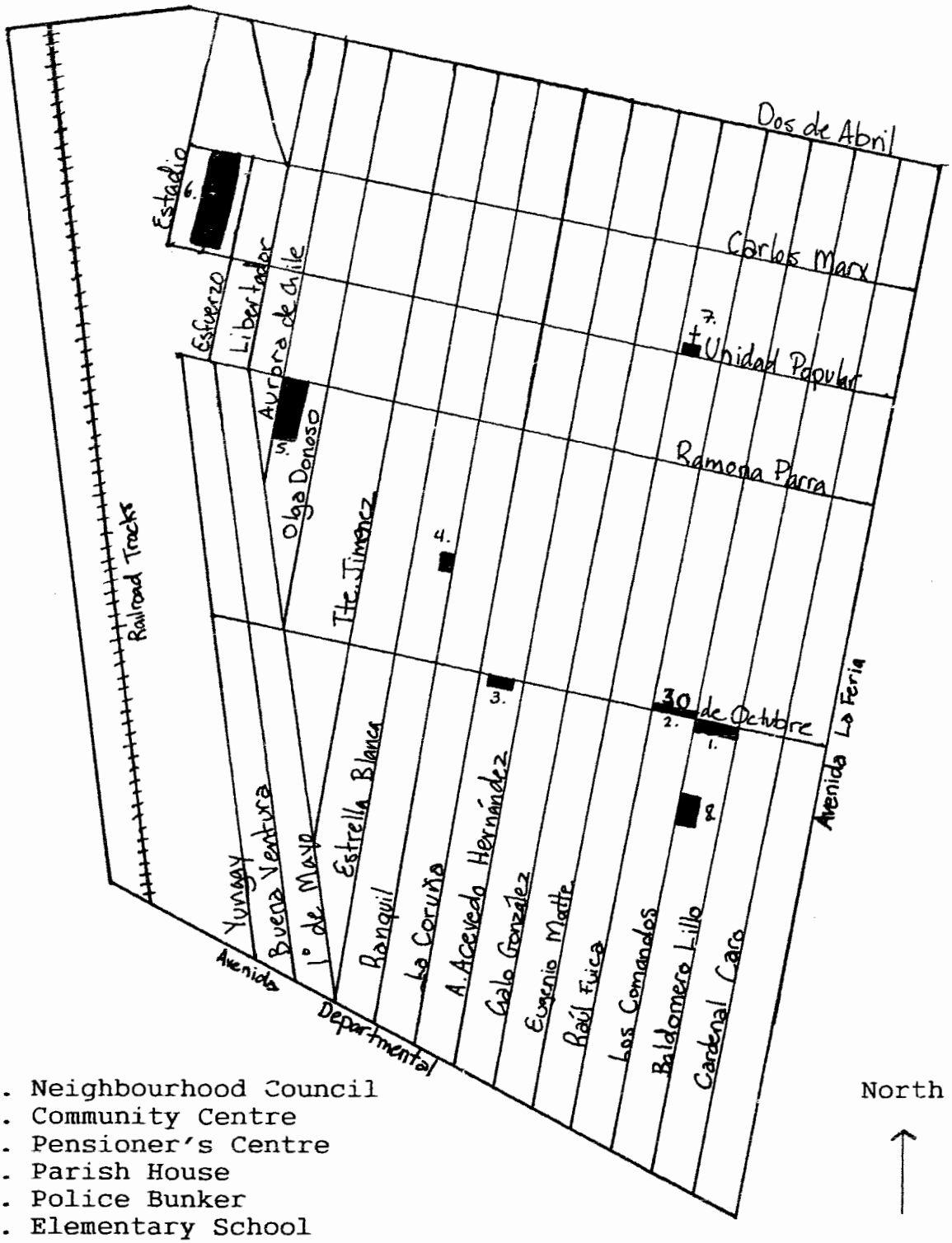
Población La Victoria

Población Hirmas II

Map of Metropolitan Santiago and *Poblaciones La Victoria* and *Hirmas II*

Appendix 2

Población La Victoria



1. Neighbourhood Council
2. Community Centre
3. Pensioner's Centre
4. Parish House
5. Police Bunker
6. Elementary School
7. Catholic Church
8. Medical Clinic

North

100m

Appendix 3

NEIGHBOURHOOD ORGANIZATIONS IN SANTIAGO: 1982-1989[340]

Type of Organizations	Number in 1982	Number in 1986	Number in 1989
Popular Dining Rooms	121	20	16
Community Kitchens	34	201	310
Food Buying Cooperatives	57	223	122
Community Vegetable Gardens	n/d	67	152
Productive Workshops	151	411	1415
Savings Cooperatives	27	22	63
Debtors Committees	12	4	1
Housing and Construction Committees	5	79	49
Health Groups	22	137	105
Other Groups	58	95	30
Total	487	1259	2305

PARTICIPANTS AND BENEFICIARIES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD ORGANIZATIONS[341]

	1982	1986	1989
Total Participants:	20,128	66,357	79,738
Direct Beneficiaries:	50,802	115,725	177,458

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[340]Razeto, Luis, Arno Klenner, Apolonia Ramírez and Roberto Urmeneta, Las organizaciones económicas populares 1973-1990, 3rd ed. (Santiago: PET, 1990): 223-224. Note that PET estimates that its statistics probably represent only about seventy percent of the organizations in existence in a given year.

[341]Ibid.: 224.

Appendix 4

Interviews in *La Victoria*:

All interviews were conducted between February and April 1995. Because the interviews were conducted on the understanding that the identities of interviewees not be revealed, I give only first names and a brief description of each interviewee.

Claudina: neighbourhood leader since early 1980s.

Margarita: leader of a Women's Production Workshop since 1991.

Lina: prominent resident of *La Victoria* extensive experience in neighbourhood organizations, past coordinator of food buying cooperative, leadership in organizations affiliated with the Catholic Church.

Soledad: prominent neighbourhood leader.

Nilda: participant in various neighbourhood organizations.

Juanito: prominent neighbourhood leader.

Lina: student in work training program, leader of neighbourhood youth organization.

Pamela: university student, participant in neighbourhood organization working with drug addicts.

Appendix 5

Interview Questions:

The following questions served as a guide for unstructured interviews with the residents of *La Victoria* listed in Appendix 4. In many cases additional questions were asked to clarify responses, and to elicit more information when the interview proceeded in an unanticipated but fruitful direction. Interviews lasted between 1 1/2 and 3 hours, and some took place over more than one day.

1. How has the experience of participating in neighbourhood organizations in *La Victoria* affected people's attitudes?

2. How has participation in neighbourhood organizations in *La Victoria* changed since the 1980s?

3. Why do you think participation in neighbourhood organizations has changed?

4. Have feelings of solidarity in *La Victoria* changed since the 1980s?
   a) How have feelings of solidarity changed?
   b) Why do you think feelings of solidarity have changed?

5. Has mutual help between neighbours changed since the 1980s?
   a) How has mutual help changed?
   b) Why do you think mutual help has changed?

6. How do you think participation in neighbourhood organizations could increase?

7. What are the obstacles to participation?

8. Is it more difficult to organize in *La Victoria* now than in the 1980s?
   a) Why do you think it is more difficult?

9. Is *machismo* an obstacle to the participation of women in neighbourhood organizations?
   a) How is *machismo* an obstacle?
   b) Is *machismo* changing?

10. What is your greatest concern for the future of the *población*?

Appendix 5 (Continued)

I conducted a second round of interviews in October and November 1995. Interviews focussed on the relationship of community relationships and neighbourhood participation in *La Victoria* with the Left wing political parties and ideologies, and on changes in the *población* since April 1995. As in the first round of interviews, additional questions were asked to clarify information and to pursue unanticipated information.

1. What is the relationship between solidarity among residents of *La Victoria* and the political parties of the Left?

2. What is the relationship between participation in neighbourhood organizations in *La Victoria* and the political parties of the Left?

3. It is often said these days that the Left in Chile is in crisis. Do you think the crisis has affected solidarity among neighbours in *La Victoria*? Participation in neighbourhood organizations?

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