

Representations of women parliamentary candidates in new media¹

Representaciones de candidatas parlamentarias en nuevos medios de comunicación

Representações de candidatas parlamentárias nos novos meios de comunicação

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the social representations built by parliamentary female candidates during the 2013 electoral campaign in Chile. Considering the low female political representation and the role of new media for mediated politics, we revised the Twitter accounts of women aspiring to the National Congress for the period 2014-2018. Applying a critical discourse analysis, we detected progressive or traditional representations in terms of politics, but indifference regarding gender issues or their reduction to family topics. This poses challenges to the media representation of the women's needs for their political autonomy.

Keywords: new media, gender, parliamentary electoral campaigns, critical discourse analysis (CDA).

RESUMEN

Este artículo indaga en las representaciones sociales construidas por candidatas parlamentarias durante su campaña electoral de 2013 en Chile. Considerando la baja representación política femenina y el rol de los nuevos medios en la política mediatizada, se revisaron las cuentas de Twitter de mujeres aspirantes al Congreso Nacional para el periodo 2014-2018. Aplicando un análisis crítico de discurso, se detectaron representaciones progresistas o tradicionales en términos de política, pero indiferencia respecto de problemáticas de género, o su reducción a asuntos de familia. Ello supone desafíos a la representación mediática de las necesidades de las mujeres para su autonomía política.

Palabras clave: nuevos medios de comunicación, género, campañas parlamentarias, análisis crítico del discurso (ACD).

RESUMO

Este artigo pesquisa nas representações sociais construídas por candidatas à Câmara e ao Senado durante a campanha eleitoral de 2013, no Chile. Considerando a baixa representação política feminina e o papel dos novos meios na política midiática, foram analisadas as contas de Twitter das mulheres candidatas ao Congresso Nacional para o período de 2014 a 2018 e, aplicando uma análise crítica do discurso, foram detectadas representações progressistas ou tradicionais em termos de política, mas indiferença no que diz respeito a questões de gênero, ou sua redução a assuntos de família. Isto implica a existência de desafios para a representação midiática das necessidades das mulheres relacionadas à sua autonomia política.

Palavras-chave: novos meios de comunicação, gênero, campanhas parlamentares, análise crítica do discurso (ACD).

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INTRODUCTION

Chile is affected by problems of political representation and representativeness. The numbers of women in parliamentary seats remain low compared to the region's average, and even more distant from those of European countries, so some female authors talk about underrepresentation in politics (Provoste, 2011; Valdés, 2011; Zúñiga, 2013).

From the classical period, politics has been elaborated from the masculine perspective, and has been based on the traditional public/private dichotomy, in which women appear linked to the world of affections and not to reason and deliberation. From this, one can understand their subsequent banishment from politics and the belated concreteness of, for example, one of the fundamental political rights of public life such as universal suffrage (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional [BCN], 2005; Lamadrid, 2010).

From the beginnings of the western republican life and for a long time, politics and women were considered antitheses of each other (Castellanos, 1996). The rigidity of feminine representations and roles "not only restrict, from the private sphere, the participation of women on equal terms with men", but also extend to "all spaces of extra-domestic social life", such as politics (Provoste, 2011, p. 148). In this sense, it is a social configuration that legitimizes the secondary role of women, influencing in their participation in this area.

It is in the leadership "where women seldom penetrate. Everything proclaims that in this place there are only men and that nothing can be further from the feminine" (Castellanos, 1996, pp. 38-39). It is precisely in the Western world that "social differences between genders have been used to symbolically represent power relations" (*ibid.*, p. 40) and have collaborated in justifying that "women do not need social or political representation outside the private sphere" (Facio & Fries 1999, p.51). Faced with such a discourse, their concrete and symbolic presence in the spaces of public representation becomes extremely relevant.

Considering the last parliamentary elections of 2013 in Chile, this paper focuses on the symbolic dimension of the political arena, which can be analyzed through the social representations built by candidates for the National Congress in new media. Nowadays, the

media are "the new forum for public discussion and a privileged space where issues that affect the general public are elucidated", forming part of our perception of reality: how we see ourselves and the others (Bach, Altés, Gallego, Plujá & Puig, 2000, p.4).

Based on the above, this research investigates, from a gender perspective, the topics on which the female candidates articulate fields of feminine representation, to characterize them in terms of traditionalism or political and gender progressivism.

BACKGROUND ON WOMEN IN POLITICS

The number of women parliamentarians in 1990 was around 6% (both chambers), a figure that has risen 2.6 times over a period of more than twenty years (figure 1). However, this increase is still insufficient to be able to speak of a real representation of women, when compared to the panorama within the continent and at the international level.

Latin America has an average of 25.93% of women in legislative institutions, more than six percentage points above the world average (19.25%). In this ranking the top three places are for Rwanda (63.8%), Bolivia (53.1%) and Cuba (48.3%). Chile is ranked 87, with only 15.8% (Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo-Unión Interparlamentaria [PNUD-UIP], 2012).

Differences in women's participation in parliaments worldwide have found argument in the structural barriers derived from the level of socioeconomic development of nations, where the countries with the highest growth and social progress would have to show better gender equality indices. There would also be institutional barriers that persist in democratization, electoral representation systems and the operations of political parties. Processes that oppose these obstacles would be affirmative action measures, such as gender quotas. However, progress in the above factors does not necessarily translate into benefits for women's lives. Thus, countries with the same characteristics may show different degrees of female participation in elected positions (Inglehart & Norris, 2003).

Human development is a complex, multifaceted process of social transformation, where "not all of these developments necessarily go hand in hand in advancing the position of women in every society" (Inglehart

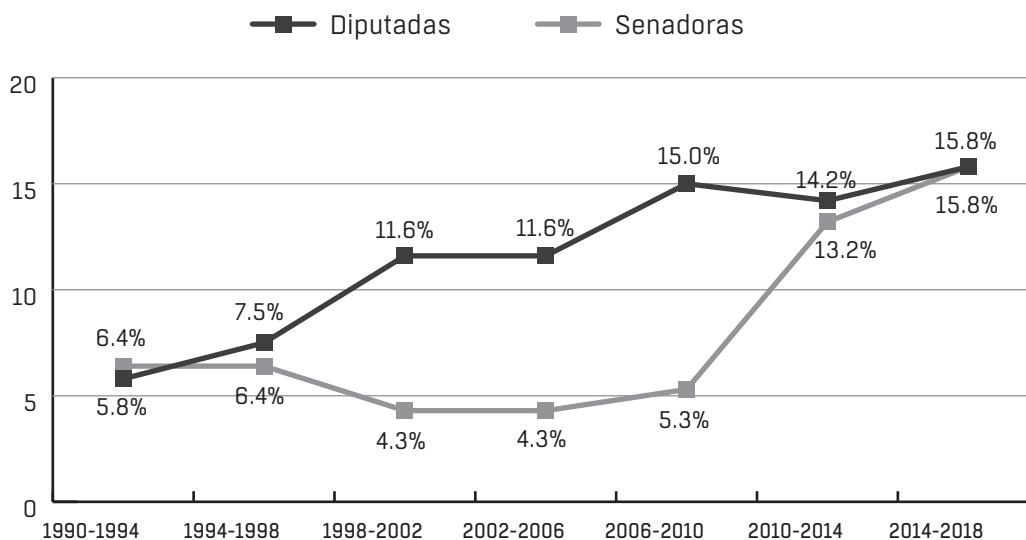


Figure 1: Percentage distribution of women in the National Congress of Chile

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Chamber of Deputies (2013, 2014) and BCN (2012).

& Norris, 2003, pp. 20-21). From this emerges the importance of observing the cultural barriers to politics and the establishment of women's leadership, with an emphasis on comparing favorable attitudes towards the participation of women in the public sphere in different societies. The studies by Inglehart and Norris (2003) show a strong and significant relationship between these attitudes and the increase in the proportion of women in parliaments worldwide. As these authors maintain, "it seems likely that the causal direction flows primarily from political culture toward the success of women in elected office" (p.139).

Chile has a high score on the Gender Equality Scale but maintains its female underrepresentation in Parliament, despite the fact that its human development index has increased in recent times (PNUD, 2015). That is why, beyond the structural and institutional constraints of Chilean politics, it is the cultural point of view which we are interested in studying, particularly that related to the media and the promotion or limitation of advances in gender.

BACKGROUND ON GENDER AND MEDIA

Gender and media studies in the Western world show how the representation of women in the media is biased and disproportionately inferior to their presence and contribution to social development. Although the

development of communications and technologies since the twentieth century has influenced the incorporation of women in journalistic work, the androcentric view continues to affect the production of media content (Gallego, 2013).

In the late 1970s, Gaye Tuchman (1978) coined the term "symbolic annihilation" to refer to the unequal representation in the media that affects women, i.e., their absence as protagonists where "neither their history nor their present activity are the central object of the news" (p.24). A couple of years later, Mattelart (1982) analyzed how the media, within cultural industries, reinforced a traditional mentality in women, reproducing the ideals of purity and virginity, "sacrifice, courage, mothers and wives' selflessness" (p.36).

It should be noted that since the second half of the twentieth century, academic production on this subject is vast and diverse. We will now mention just a few of these contributions.

Aurora Marco (1996) points out that biases in female representation in Spanish media fall into "marital status" and "personal physical appearance, aspects that are not usually highlighted when the protagonists are male." They are also linked to "domestic and non-professional contexts (...) they are not represented by holding positions of directors or presidents of boards of directors or linked to new technologies (...), but they

are portrayed as objects, with their sexual attributes well remarked "(pp. 84-85). In that sense, they are often eminently absent in the sections devoted to political information. In line with the above, N ria Simelio (2006) studied the social representations of women and men in Spanish newspapers at the end of the 20th century, revealing the scarce attention they receive in the press, "as if public activity continued to be a purely manly bastion" (Rovetto & Simelio, 2012, 37).

Florence Rovetto (2012), has analyzed the Spanish press in perspective compared to the Argentinean press, stating that despite the increase in communication careers in both countries, feminist studies have not been incorporated in all universities. In addition, together with critical perspectives "on the representation and participation of women in the construction of the information discourse," coexists an androcentric view that trivializes and hides the active and protagonist role of women in the social transformations of the last time.

Mar a Soledad Rojas (2014) analyzed and classified the news treatment of gender violence by the written press, television and radio in Mexico. She points out that despite the fact that "violence against women crosses different spaces of social practices" (p. 56), her results confirm the predominance of coverage of individual cases instead of addressing violence as a social and structural problem of this society.

In Chile, Corporaci n Humanas (2011) studied women's social representations in the same three media, but with focusing into their political positioning. The results confirm how the media "reflect the weak position of women in political activity, reproducing the secondary role they have within the party structure and parliamentary lists" (p.55). The study by Paulina Salinas and Claudia Lagos (2014) on political discourses in the Chilean press during 2006 and 2011 is important. The researchers argue that the sociocultural values that were exchanged in these communication spaces during the government of the first woman president in Chile express little progress regarding the decline of sexist stereotypes. The inequality present in communicational practices during the first term of Michelle Bachelet rather distances us from the possible advances in matters of equity in daily life.

On the other hand, Lorena Antezana (2011) has investigated the formation and transmission of cultural models and the legitimization of stereotypes in the most

watched programs of Chilean broadcast television, clearly identifying stereotypes about the feminine and masculine between fiction and reality programs, and the low presence of women as an enunciative voice, with a tendency to appear as a decorative and secondary object.

Considering this background, the following section presents a theoretical section on the relationship between media and politics and the relevance it implies for the research with a gender perspective.

SOCIAL AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS IN POLITICS

Social representations (SR) are "a particular modality of knowledge, whose function is the elaboration of behaviors and communication between individuals" (Moscovici, 1979, pp. 17-18). They are composed of hierarchical information (fields of representation) and attitudes, whose dynamism is that subjects articulate and transform formal knowledge into common sense, intervening "the organization of images that order the world" with orientation towards action (Sandoval, 2004, p 71).

As a corpus of knowledge, the importance of SR, whose expression is always public, lies in its mediation between social and individual life in order to systematize communication between individuals and facilitate the apprehension of the environment. In the *objectification and anchoring* of SR (Moscovici, 1979) lies the modification of explanatory models to interpellate experiences from oneself and the others. In interpersonal interactions, their function is to make the strange familiar, basic guarantee in which tradition, education and social communication participate, to reduce the uncertainty of social life.

As for the media and the importance for political activity, these sets of meanings and systems of interpretive references that constitute SR "form a regime of politics", according to "practices of inclusion and exclusion, visibility and invisibility, "irruption and prescription" and legitimation and delegitimation of certain subjects and social relations in the context of contemporary political communication (Arancibia, 2006, pp. 31-33). Different from its classical form, mediated politics in today's society is shaped by "the expansion and institutionalization of social media as organizational agents and articulators of a symbolic social space" (ibid., p.71). This has had an effect on

the way politics develops, which previously developed around the word—the empire of *logos*—and now gives way to other forms of language, such as visual and iconographic elements.

Regarding a period of renewal of representatives, “it is difficult to find a political campaign that only (...) informs and persuades through the written language” (Araya, 2010, p.38), as well as another one that is only based on the image for its purposes. The word and the image obey different logics² and a “proper structure”, which are mutually conjugated in the interpretation of the world, but “with the same importance in social discourse” (Ortega, 2009, p.167).

Illustrations, as words, are never neutral or an arbitrary exhibition. The media are social actors who, beyond giving information, interpret social reality, actively intervening it. And “this specific form of intervention (...) in the social and political reality of the country occurs through discourse” (Sunkel, 1983, p.15). These cultural apparatuses of production and reproduction of ideological discourses by the positioning of a certain world-view are a powerful agglutinative factor for the members of a community in the creation of consensus (Lochard & Boyer, 2004).

The media are “a constitutive and constituent part of the litigation for the interpretive hegemony of society” (Arancibia, 2006, p. 92) in the processes of diffusion, propaganda and propagation within media representations. Paraphrasing Moscovici (1961/1979), they are intermediaries in the broad transmission of various contents of general interest, which reinforce or modify certain practices in individuals and that, with more specialized knowledge, also “target a specific group with the intention of adjusting its ideas to the realities that media representation analyzes or comments on” (Calonge, 2006, 79).

The above shows us the political component of communication media as they have the capacity to influence public debates, and those can also favor or influence the construction of media objects (agenda-setting). This entails a mutual relationship between the media and society, a complex process of cultural and symbolic circulation between the subjects—the media and public social discussion— not exempt of negotiations and resistance as to the mobilization of the collective imagination (Amigo, Bravo & Osorio, 2014; Lochard & Boyer, 2004), for example, for the

study of social representations of gender within the political arena.

With the rise of virtual social networks, the traditional Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are also adapting to the new media and formats of the Internet era. Considering “the remarkable increase in access and consumption of the Internet, media diversification and technological convergence” (Amigo et al., 2014, p. 136), it is possible to appreciate a shift, or if not, an opening towards the New Technologies of Information and Communications (NICTs), characterized by an electronic base and digital processing.

The importance of these changes lies in the fact that the “information consumption by citizens is considered as a source of citizen participation” and “to be able to exercise the role of citizen in any of their modes of participation –and especially in the political– it is necessary to be informed about the issues that affect a society as a whole” (Arriagada & Schuster, 2008, pp. 36-38). In this sense, the appropriation of the online platforms made by the subjects –and, along it, the rise of the new media as a tool for deepening democracy– would substantially facilitate the daily exercise of citizenship (Elizalde, 2003). In other words, this would theoretically imply that each citizen can participate much more actively in the debate than it was possible in the past, based on this type of democratization inherent in the “information society” (Castells, 1999).

METHODOLOGY

The research had a qualitative approach based on words and images “to understand social life through meanings and from a holistic perspective, because it is a question of understanding the set of interrelated qualities” (Mejía 2004, p. 278) when the media are of use and appropriation of women who, at the same time, are their media objects.

The candidates for the National Congress for the period 2014-2018 gained a central role because of the importance of this institution in the consolidation of democracy, the possibility of expanding citizen participation through legislation with a gender perspective, and because it is not alien to patriarchal socio-historical practices which put in jeopardy the political autonomy³ of women (Baeza, 2014; 2015).

The research was descriptive-exploratory in nature, non-experimental and transverse in scope (Hernández, Fernández & Sampieri, 2010; Taylor & Bogdan, 1994); the information was collected in a single moment, corresponding to the last month of legal political campaign prior to the elections of November 17, 2013. The period was established between Friday, October 18 and Thursday, November 14, 2013, both days included, according to the legal regulation⁴ of Propaganda and Advertising of the press, at which time there is a greater concentration of media resources that give visibility and position the candidacies against the increasingly uncertain electorate in Chile.

We conducted a documentary review, considering the Twitter accounts of some female parliamentary candidates, considering the emergence of the Internet in the last time and, with this, the primacy of the

digital format for a significant part of the population, which has reduced the entrance barriers to crucial information for those who vote (Araya, 2010). The interest was in the speeches made by women candidates and shared through virtual platforms such as Twitter accounts to position and strengthen themselves in the political electoral field. Because of the complementarity between verbal and non-verbal discourses in these types of media, the writings and images published by the candidates were recorded for its analysis.

Of the one hundred female parliamentary candidates who presented themselves to the last parliamentary elections (88 to the Chamber of Deputies, 12 to the Senate⁵), we opted for a non-probabilistic sampling of intentional type, to elect typical cases from which information that is representative of the political and ideological diversity can be extracted (Stake, 1999).

	Camila Vallejo	Maya Fernández	Mónica Zalaquett	Marcela Sabat
Twitter account	@camila_vallejo	@Mayafernandez	@monicazalaquett	@MarceSabat
Profession	Geographer	Biologist and Veterinarian.	Social Communicator and Businesswoman	Degree in Legal Sciences
Birth date	April 28, 1988	September 27, 1971	May 4, 1962	April 4, 1981
Political party	Partido Comunista (PC)	Partido Socialista (PS)	Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI)	Renovación Nacional (RN)
Political alliance	Nueva Mayoría	Nueva Mayoría	Alianza por Chile	Alianza por Chile
Reelection	No	No	No (with the same previous district)	Yes
N ° District (communes) representing:	26 (La Florida)	21 (Providencia and Ñuñoa)	22 (Santiago Centro)	21 (Providencia and Ñuñoa)
Political positions held in recent years	Counselor of the Federation of Students of the University of Chile (FECh) in 2008; Militant of the Communist Youth since 2011; President of FECh in 2010-2011; Vice-president of FECh in 2011-2012. Leader of the student movement for education in 2011.	Councilor of the commune of Ñuñoa since 2008	Deputy of the communes of Cerrillos, Maipú and Estación Central (20th district), between 2010 and 2014.	Militant of RN. She worked in the presidential campaign of Sebastián Piñera in 2005 and 2009. She was his spokesperson in 2009, the same year that she presented as a deputy in the 21st district. Member of Parliament between 2010 and 2014.

Table 1: women who entered the sample

Source: Own elaboration.

First, we selected the Metropolitan Region, which concentrates the largest number of electoral zones (16 districts). Secondly, we selected those women who were running for a seat into the Lower House of the National Congress. They had to meet the following criteria:

- **Accessibility:** legally registered in the offices of the Electoral Service (Servel), and that had created an account in the social network at least 30 days before the parliamentary elections.
- **Heterogeneity:** belonging to different political parties to analyze the variety of discourses, privileging the political alliances “Alianza por Chile”⁶ and “Nueva Mayoría”⁷, since the binominal electoral system offers them greater guarantees of being elected: 15 of the 17 female deputies from the period 2010-2014 ascribed to one of the two coalitions (Chamber of Deputies, 2013).
- **Real chance of being elected:** high probabilities of being elected deputies, considering the following subcriteria that gave them media visibility and political trajectory, both forms of legitimacy for voters, men and women:
 - › Parliamentary re-election in the same district they represented at that time.
 - › Having occupied some other political office of communal impact by popular election, for at least the last four years.
 - › Public figures known to the citizenship and, therefore, able to position themselves as strong rivals to other candidates.

Based on the above, four women were included in this study: Marcela Sabat (UDI), Maya Fernández (PS), Camila Vallejo (PC) and Mónica Zalaquett (UDI). Below are some elements of identification and characterization (table 1).

We conducted a critical discourse analysis (CDA), whose methodological strength is that it is oriented to “the way in which abuse of social power, domination and inequality are practiced, reproduced, and occasionally combated, by texts and speech in the social and political

context” (Van Dijk 1999, p.23). It implies “studying multiple discursive varieties” (Wodak, 2003, p.109), which, although they are not representative in statistical terms of the population, are interesting and significant in order to reconstruct the coherences, contradictions and tensions generated by social representations of gender and the attitudes promoted around electoral politics.

Following the logic of the CDA, where “information is not previously expressed, but presupposed” (Van Dijk, 1980, p.48), it is from the semantic surface structures that we come to know the underlying pragmatic structures of the discourse. The approach of the discourse is not immediate, nor its meaning is evident as explicitly stated by a text; rather, it is possible to elucidate it by establishing discursive levels in amplitude: direct and indirect local meanings (meaning/text); subtle formal structures and context (formal sphere/text-context).

From this approach, the candidates selected were classified according to whether they are progressive or traditionalist in politics and gender.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

CAMILA VALLEJO

Direct or explicit local meanings

The comments in the social network of the PC candidate are concentrated in the areas of politics, paid work, health and education.

Throughout her candidacy, Vallejo emphasized the possible creation of a New Constitution through the initiative *Marca tu voto* with the acronym AC (*Asamblea Constituyente* [Constituent Assembly]) and the importance that this practice would have for the day of the electoral elections. As she pointed out, marking the vote is not a binding act, it is a political fact that will generate force for the new Constitution to be written by a Constituent Assembly (Vallejo, 2013a).

Vallejo was explicit in defending workers' struggles, denouncing the excessive concentration of wealth and the low salaries of employees in the public and private sectors (Vallejo, 2013b). In addition, she supported social demands in the area of health, sympathizing with the struggle of the National Federation of University Professionals of Health Services (Fenpruss), expressing her commitment to a dignified public health, rejecting its privatization and precarization.



Image 1. Electora campaign of Camila Vallejo.

Source: Vallejo (2013e).

Regarding education, she argued that “educational segregation exists” (Vallejo, 2013c) and promoted the follow-up of the broadcast television series *El reemplazante*, which thematizes the difficulties of schoolchildren in a public establishment in a context of social risk.

Indirect or implicit local meanings

Vallejo rescata el rol de los actores sociales en materia política y económica, y de los servicios de salud y educación. Desde la óptica de la justicia social, apela a una ciudadanía empoderada sobre las decisiones relativas al país, y a los trabajadores en materia de remuneración, con la consigna de democratizar los recursos para la población. Ello sugiere trabajar por superar la desigualdad social en su dimensión macro.

Subtle formal structures

For the former leader of the student movement and communist candidate, policies necessarily acquire a

social rights approach, where no social subject can be left out. This would imply, for example, recognizing older adults in public policies and not omitting them or take for granted their needs and demands.

Context

In the candidate’s tweets, her ideological position is clearly evident in phrases that deal with structural changes in politics and public policy. However, it is striking that in Camila Vallejo’s proposal there is no positioning around the problems of gender inequality in Chile, nor even a call for greater participation by women in politics. The only major inequality to address would be class, and some images of conversation with people of disadvantaged socioeconomic status support it (image 1). Relations between men and women do not appear as a sphere of conflict in our society, not even when one of her followers in this social network wrote to her “Is her party prepared to give bottles and change diapers?” (Vallejo, 2013d).

Gran Remate de Arte

Además de los votos, necesitamos recaudar algo de dinero. Te invitamos a compartir un nuevo atardecer de arte y buen vino en el cual se rematarán obras de connotados artistas nacionales.

Martes 29 de Octubre a partir de las 20:00 hr
Lugar: Club Providencia, av Pocuro #2878
Valor adhesión: \$10.000, Pre venta: \$8.000

Síguenos:  /diputadamaya  @mayafernandez



Image 2. Electoral Campaign of Maya Fernández.

Source: Fernández (2013c).

MAYA FERNÁNDEZ

Direct or explicit local meanings

The PS candidate privileged the categories of politics, culture, education and, to a certain extent, those of sexuality-reproduction and environment.

In the first place, she was inclined towards the development and strengthening of neighborhood life, criticizing the excessive intervention of real estate and its repercussions on the quality of life of the residents of Providencia and Ñuñoa. In that sense, she wrote about the importance of developing a friendly, human-scale city for women and men, promoting the *Muévete Santiago* initiative to promote the use of bicycle as a clean transport and a new paradigm of urban culture.

Fernández supported the campaign to mark the vote with the acronym AC, and the demand for a new Constitution for a more equal society. In addition, she shared various expressions of support for the Nueva Mayoría, especially for Michelle Bachelet, on the importance of placing the person at the center of decisions in the appropriation of politics.

A relevant dimension was the arts, especially music, painting and literature. The socialist candidate used her tweets to promote activities within these disciplines, such as piano concerts, art auctions, and even to launch a book about the speeches of her grandfather Salvador Allende (former President of Chile between 1970 and 1973) (image 2).

In terms of sexuality and reproduction, she positioned herself as a supporter of therapeutic abortion in the country and the implementation of a “real sex education in schools” (Fernández, 2013a). She declared that she had always “condemned violence and especially towards women as mothers” (Fernández, 2013b). In addition, in close connection with her profession, she denounced animal abuse and promoted forestry and responsible pet ownership activities.

Indirect or implicit local meanings

This candidate’s discourse combines favorable publicity for the political conglomerate Nueva Mayoría and the government program of her candidate for

presidency, Michelle Bachelet, which reflects her goal of helping to reestablish a socialist government. Within this space of communication diffusion, highlights the pending task of rebuilding the social fabric and bringing politics closer to the citizens.

Subtle formal structures

When Maya Fernández refers to the need for a 'real sex education' in the country's educational establishments, she questions the formality and transversality of this process, which to date has not been the subject of widespread public discussion, but is subject to the will and ideology of each school.

The candidate also imputed to the National Service of Minors (Sename) institutional bad practices in the care of infants and young people, based on journalistic revelations in the matter. Fernández points out, therefore, that it is necessary to articulate public policies of childhood, because this institution "as it is today does not give children any guarantee, (...) deep transformations that really protect children must be made" (Fernández, 2013d).

Context

From her tweets, there is a certain appropriation of a gender discourse in what concerns education, abortion and violence. However, beyond some propositions, there is not a large-scale argumentative development that actually accounts for the extent of her progressivism in these issues. Nor is there any question about the role or roles of women in our society and how it would be possible to deconstruct some hegemonic views on that. Ultimately, her comments are not aimed at generating debate, but consensus on other less controversial aspects, such as the arts, environmental care or children.

MÓNICA ZALAQUETT

Direct or explicit local meanings

The UDI candidate shares tweets about her work as a politician and about the communicational events that affect her. To a lesser extent, she tweets about education. She emphasizes the greater participation of women, noting that for there to be "transversal support of women in politics, it is important for Congress to have women parliamentarians" (Zalaquett, 2013a). For this reason, she shares the news of the newspaper *La Segunda* about the surprise support that her candidacy

had received from other candidates of the opposition alliance, Nueva Mayoría, just because she is a woman.

Zalaquett focus on the diffusion of her interviews, and also on the importance of debating with other political figures, women and men, within the framework of the campaign. For example, she thanked the invitation of radio Cooperativa to discuss women and politics, as well as the debate on an broadcast television channel for the elections.

Within the election's framework, the candidate tweeted about the conversation with merchants in the center of Santiago, to whom she refers as "victims of delinquents in each of the protests" (Zalaquett, 2013b), for the damages caused by the social mobilizations developed there. In this regard, she adds that a policy of integrated neighborhoods should be promoted, where the neighbors have all the guarantees that allow them to live in a dignified and quiet way.

In educational matters, on the other hand, she proposes to work against gender-based violence that mainly affects women in Chile. The candidate says that, to counteract femicide, it is necessary to invest in greater education, prevention and protection of women, beyond just increasing the penalties for the aggressors.

Indirect or implicit local meanings

Her proposal to counteract gender violence against women is articulated from the cultural rather than the legal, which could be a progressive look. However, there is no greater allusion to this initiative than the commentary analyzed at the end of October, about what kind of education would be needed to address this phenomenon.

On this platform, she enlightens the expressions regarding her female moral superiority, such as honesty and commitment, communications that the candidate receives and retweets to her followers. This contrasts with the accusation of theft of political propaganda by the command of Felipe Kast (Evópoli), which she faced by pointing out that she has never endorsed bad practices in the campaign.

Subtle formal structures

In addition to the instances of political conversation that the candidate emphasizes, she gives space –in a contrasting way– to television stations for food preparation and to the relevance that culinary



Image 3. Electoral campaign of Mónica Zalaquett

Source: Zalaquett (2013d).

knowledge could have for women. In this way, she wrote to be happy to “meet the queen of the home recipes of the capital” (Zalaquett, 2013c). Continuing with this idea, she appealed to the central role of the family in the campaign. Several of her photographs show how Zalaquett would represent a family, especially housewives and mothers (image 3).

Context

In the tweets of Zalaquett we can see the importance she gives to the maintenance of public order, over the generation of societal transformations. Integration and security, therefore, stand as social values to the detriment of the extension of rights. As for gender, in her speeches Mónica Zalaquett defends women’s greater participation in politics and, above all, in the Chilean Parliament; in other words, a redistribution of power in institutionality. Nevertheless, she presents herself as a woman pro family and close to household chores, traditional aspects related to the private sphere.

MARCELA SABAT

Direct or explicit local meanings

The candidate of RN uses the virtual platform, first, to promote her activities and political ideas. Second, she gives important space to the categories of aesthetics and traditional role of care for others. With minimal frequency, she refers to the categories of education and reproductive rights.

An important reinforcement of her candidacy is based on the approval of the initiatives of the former right-wing government of Sebastián Piñera (2010-2014), along with the propaganda of candidates from her political sector in different positions (regional councils, senate candidates, presidency).

A recurring theme in Marcela Sabat’s tweets is her portrayal as an affectionate and warm woman, especially with children, whom she defines as “magical and unique” (Sabat, 2013a) and with whom she constantly appears depicted (image 4). However, she does not position herself in terms of any childhood



Image 4. Electoral campaign of Marcela Sabat.

Source: Sabbath (2013b).

policy, but only promotes recreational activities aimed at this sector. Something similar happens with older adults. The candidate poses in front of the camera and only refers to them within the framework of a possible project that reduces the contributions and the price of public transport to this age group.

The highlight of her aesthetic attributes and aptitudes for parliamentary office by her followers in this social network are highly publicized by Sabat, who is called “beautiful”, “pretty”, “nice” or “gorgeous”; and in addition, of woman “worker”, “prepared”, “perseverant”. This happens in several messages between October 25 and November 11, which she thanks and retweets constantly.

Regarding education, she basically refers to the importance of including children with special educational needs and to benefit the youth with the elimination of titling fees and a plan to facilitate labor insertion.

About abortion, she is categorical in her rejection of the legislation on its decriminalization when the health of the mother is endangered; she wrote on her Twitter account that an abortion law is not required in this circumstance. This candidate does not state the arguments of her categorical negative, but it is inferred

that she would not agree with other causes that could possibly allow the interruption of gestation.

In terms of gender policies, Sabat only refers to the inauguration of a new female prison in the commune of San Miguel, Santiago, Metropolitan Region, which she considers a breakthrough in prison policy with a gender focus.

Indirect or implicit local meanings

The candidate assigns, basically, infants and older adults with the condition of fragility; in her speech, they are the ‘most vulnerable’ subjects, and she appears as eminently protective of them. Her varied photographs represent her as an affectionate woman, but at the same time with a character for politics, given the citizen support that she receives to continue her legislative work. She defended herself of the accusations made by Luis Mariano Rendón against her father, Pedro Sabat (mayor of Ñuñoa), on giving privileges for political propaganda to the candidacy of his daughter, whom Rendón called “doll-face”. Faced with this accusation, Sabat responded by calling it “violence against women” (Sabat, 2013c).

Subtle formal structures

Sabat is in favor of the project that aims to reduce the economic remuneration of those parliamentarians who do not attend the Congress sufficiently. She reinforces the impression of having done an effective work in her previous legislative period as the reason to continue in the position. This is strengthened by the expressions of support that qualify her as a worker and with outstanding ability. It is striking that when it comes to advances in gender in prisons, Sabat does not provide details regarding the measures that these institutions would implement that consider the socio-cultural relations between women and men.

Context

In these comments we can distinguish a charity approach over social rights for the elderly, young and infants. The excessive closeness to children, a non-voter population, appears as a component of the 'allegory of the mother'. She maintains her project to remain in the parliamentary seat in her iconic representation of traditional gender roles, such as reproduction and female moral superiority.

FINAL DISCUSSIONS

Based on the critical analysis of the speeches made by the candidates in their Twitter accounts, there are several representations regarding politics and gender.

Camila Vallejo, candidate from the Communist Party, favored the elements of class inequality over gender inequity, always in macro or structural terms, but not the obstacles and difficulties that women face in politics or in other spheres of society. In this new media, and from her evident progressivism in politics by her relation with the Communist Youth, she represents herself like a candidate distant of the alliance Nueva Mayoría. As for gender, she appears indifferent (neither progressive nor traditional) to the relational inequality based on bodies and socially attributed roles and meanings. This is surprising given that part of the media-public discussion during her campaign was precisely the apparent contradiction between the maternal role and the political role that a woman could develop (Cooperativa, 2013; La Nación, 2013).

Maya Fernández, candidate from the Socialist Party, did position herself in her political campaign tweets in issues that specifically affect women, both those that generate controversy and others that still do not arouse public discussion. However, she did not reiterate or argue more strongly about her convictions, so we can say that she is half-way between gender progressivism and indifference. In politics, and unlike Vallejo, she provided space and attention to the Nueva Mayoría, and especially to Michelle Bachelet, for the 2013 elections. It can thus be concluded that she is self-represented as moderately progressive in this matter, because of her inclination towards reforms rather than transformation.

Mónica Zalaquett, candidate from the Unión Demócrata Independiente, represented herself as a promoter of normativity and order maintenance for the next legislative period, instead of opting for profound changes to the structures of Chilean society or for inviting others social actors to participate in political activity. In that sense, she is a traditional woman in the political axis. As for gender, she emphasized the greater presence of women in Congress; nevertheless, she maintained the roles of mother and wife for the women intact, without digging into the core problems regarding women's rights. Although she referred to some specific issues related to gender, the protection of the family and the maintenance of the historical place of women in the private sector predominated, so it can be said that she embodies a moderate traditionalism in gender.

Marcela Sabat, candidate from Renovación Nacional, represented herself in her social network as a woman-mother and guardian of the children and the elderly in their condition of vulnerability, sharply pro-life and against women's rights to decide on their bodies. Her perspective of social change revolves around economic compensations, not cultural changes, as they could be the relations between men and women. Her representation is clearly traditional, both in terms of gender and politics, where she uses her aesthetic objectification to propose social maintenance through her work as a parliamentarian.

All of the above points to the fact that in the new media, such as Twitter, favorable attitudes towards the formal political participation of women State positions are promoted (Inglehart & Norris, 2003), but not by all parliamentary candidates. Only Mónica Zalaquett, a

militant of the UDI, managed to refer without disguise to the importance of having more women in the National Congress. The problem is that it does not arise from a gender perspective, but merely a “womanist” one (Lamadrid, 2010), where, as in the case of the candidate from RN, Marcela Sabat, the hegemonic social attributions about female bodies are not questioned. The PS candidate, Maya Fernández, approaches, but fails to appropriate the importance of the distribution of power within these seats more deeply. Finally, the communist candidate Camila Vallejo did not focus on the debates about social relations built on gender and only refers to how to combat class inequalities. This is consistent with the tendency to subsume gender within other social categories within policy frameworks and their planning (Moser, 1999).

This study confirms that the theoretical-practical background on gender relations, that is, the problematization of inequality faced by women, was not a relevant issue in the media controlled by these four women aspirants to The Lower House of the National Congress. This is a key aspect if we think about the possibility of bringing gender demands to the legislative discussion for democratic development.

Not only is it of interest that there are more women assuming a political power, but that they manage to question the logic of the sexual difference with which representation and leadership of an eminently masculine character is legitimized (Castillo, 2011). It is precisely in the development of the gender consciousness of women themselves that actions and measures aimed at the transformation of the patriarchal system are to be expected (Araujo, 2002). As Moser (1999) emphasizes, the ability to confront inequities that affect women is to promote strategic needs rather than practical gender needs. The former are aimed at identifying forms of female subordination in particular cultural contexts and modifying socially attributed roles, while the latter concentrate on solving problems of survival in contexts of poverty and vulnerability, so they do not challenge gender divisions, but rather often maintain and reinforce them.

If neither the candidates nor the media are guiding referrals so that more women question the prevailing gender logic and can participate in the space of politics in order to assert their rights and make their demands

heard beyond the expectation of social reproduction, the mentioned gender inequalities will tend to remain. Such a situation can be interpreted as a skillful maneuver that extends the approval and social legitimacy of patriarchy by not visibilizing or positioning the strategic gender needs (Moser, 1999), i.e., to problematize extensively the relations of subordination between genders.

Social (self)representations, as ways of interpreting and thinking reality, constructed and disseminated by social networks –now also a new political strategy of campaign– let us glimpse the persistence of those pre-existing cognitive systems that, rather than modify, adapt the old belief systems (Sandoval, 2004). In our case, those relating to the place that, in its system of references, corresponds to women and men in society. In the use and appropriation of media such as Twitter and other social networks, women tend to reproduce and disseminate social stereotypes about gender features and roles (Morales & López, 1993), without major questioning⁸. This is how the overlap between political domination and cultural domination is understood: the formal and practical “paradox of political inclusion” analyzed by Castillo (2006), according to the general/particular distinction, to which media communication contributes to the expectation of “Public Mothers” (Vera, 2009), which reinforces a long-term female subjection.

In view of the above, we suggest to open the media to gender in order to change stereotypes, enlarge images and models of women for the present and new generations (Marco, 1996, p. 80). The persistent “ideological criteria or cultural patterns rooted in society constitute the main enemy of freedom and democracy” (ibid., p.79). Thus, “if we want to combat the deep inequalities existing on the basis of gender (...) the behavior [and appropriation] of the media regarding women representation must be modified” (Rovetto, 2010, p. 220), making their multiple roles and needs visible. This is the only way to build a society with greater gender equity.

Increasing the sensitivity of public opinion to gender equality is crucial to promoting these changes. Postindustrial societies, younger generations and women tend to ‘show greater openness to gender’ because they have had the experience of having more

women involved in political life. This has allowed them to change their attitudes in a more egalitarian direction, deconstructing those traditional stereotypes that reduce political leadership to men and the role of women in housework and care (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). A major obstacle is that these cultural changes are not visible in the short term, but can be driven by government

regulations, internal laws and regulations within political parties, so that women and their diversity of interests and needs are effectively protagonists in the media, even more when they have political careers. This constitutes a legitimate “claim related to justice, parity and the democratization of society” (Rovetto & Simelio, 2012, p. 223).

FOOTNOTES

1. This study was funded by the National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FONDECYT), Project No. 1131144: Imaginaries of the gender, representations of the body and sex markets in Chile (20th century) 2013-2015, directed by academic Jorge Pávez from the Alberto Hurtado University.
2. The written text is understood, in the first place, by the rationality, and in a second, with the senses. Images, on the other hand, are perceived “in immediacy at an unreflective level” and constitute the most rapid way of accessing a figure of reality (Ortega, 2009, p.170).
3. We refer to freedom “to participate and influence public affairs” (Castillo, 2011), which, from a gender perspective, implies the ability to “question the logic of sexual difference inherent in the construction of female leaderships, the naturalized logic of social inequality proper to the formation, consolidation and legitimation of democracy (p.19), as well as “de-framing women’s politics from the forms of patriarchal representation that have historically constituted it” (p. 24).
4. Article 30 of “Propaganda and Advertising” of Law 18,700 on Popular Voting and Scrutiny states that electoral propaganda through the press may only be carried out from the thirtieth day until the third day prior to the election or plebiscite, both days included. En <http://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=30082>
5. Of the total of 538 candidates in 2013, 81.2% (from 469) to the Lower House and 82.6% (from 69) to the Senate were men (Centro de Estudios Sociales y de Opinión Pública [CESOP], 2013).
6. Renovación Nacional (RN) and Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI) and right-wing independents.
7. Partido Socialista de Chile (PS), Partido Demócrata Cristiano de Chile (PDC), Partido por la Democracia (PPD) and Radical Socialdemócrata (PRSD), plus the Partido Comunista de Chile (PCCh), Izquierda Ciudadana (IC), Movimiento Amplio Social (MAS) and center-left independents.
8. Aunque los propósitos de este estudio no permiten profundizar en estos elementos, es posible plantear la emergencia de algunos estereotipos femeninos, tales como la dama de hierro, dama, dueña de casa, madre y muñeca.

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