



Order, War and Religion: The Chilean Republic Between Tradition and Change

Ana María Stuvén

THE POSSIBILITY OF THE REPUBLIC

Chile, like many other Latin American countries, is an excellent laboratory for studying the role of traditional practices and ideas in forging and enabling the creation of a republican state and nation based on the principles of modernity. If we understand the advent of modernity as a paradigm shift from the past to the future, then the era of Atlantic revolutions is responsible for a new experience and consciousness of time. This

José María Bazaguchiascúa, ‘Discurso político-moral sobre que peca mortalmente todo el que no sigue el sistema de la Patria, y respeta igualmente a las autoridades constituidas, deducidas del texto y contexto de todo el capítulo 13 de la epístola a los Romanos del apóstol San Pablo’, *La Aurora de Chile* (November 26, 1812).

This article is associated with Fondecyt Project 1180123.

A. M. Stuvén (✉)
Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile
e-mail: ana.stuven@udp.cl

new temporality is in part due to the European intellectual controversies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and to the ideology of progress, sparked in the Industrial Revolution, which held that humanity would ascend gradually and continuously, guided by reason and will, towards a higher stage of development. Figures like Voltaire, Turgot, Condorcet, Saint Simon and Reynal in France were frequently read by Chilean and Hispanic American elites, giving their political construction a purpose which enabled them to justify the gradual adoption of republican principles by defining their times as transitional.

We understand that the concept of modernity is polemic, but for our purpose, we must admit that it introduced a series of unprecedented concepts into the political lexicon, which inspired and also put pressure on the actors of the era of Atlantic revolutions to design and construct new referents starting from concepts as broad as freedom and equality.¹ The process was accelerated in Hispanic America with the 1808 Monarchical crisis in Spain when, on the peninsula as well as in its overseas possessions, its elites were driven to question where political power should lie. Scholastic thinkers had debated the origins of political power. However, the events of Bayona and the autonomy assumed by the elites in America in the representation of the captive king forced political decisions and unleashed debates on topics such as alternative political regimes, which were already circulating in enlightened discourse.

The founders of the Chilean Republic worked towards the future implementation of the ideals that emerged from that debate, such as independence, self-government, sovereignty, progress, and rationalisation. However, they were fully aware that the transition towards the realisation of these new concepts required avoiding a sudden rupture with the past. The concept of sovereignty exemplifies the difficulty that these new ideas posed in a period of transition. Popular sovereignty, as understood by republicanism, was completely alien to Spanish monarchical codes under which, if the king was removed, sovereignty reverted to the ‘pueblos’, a concept that is not equivalent to the modern concept of ‘the people’. The idea of ‘the people’, taken as a depository of power, created feelings of uncertainty among those who had to lead the transition process towards

¹ C.f. Javier Fernández Sebastián and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada, eds., *Diccionario político y social del mundo Iberoamericano* (Madrid: Fundación Carolina, 2009), Introducción.

republicanism—namely the same ruling class holding power in the peninsular administration—about the outcome and the risks of the times. In Chile, this feeling was responsible for the predominance of the concept of order—namely social order to support institutional order—as a hinge between tradition and change. The Chilean ruling class maintained its internal cohesion based on the rejection of any reform that might jeopardise its social and political hegemony, regulating, in accordance with its perception of order, the implementation of republican institutions.

War and religion became functional elements for the consolidation of the modern Chilean nation and its State. Republican ideas mixed with traditional institutions and rituals, with war fostering adherence to the nation, and religion offering transcendental arguments for political change.

Fighting wars had become familiar to the authorities of the General Captaincy of Chile, a relatively marginal space of the Viceroyalty of Peru during the Spanish administration, due to the difficulties of defining its borders with the indigenous population. On the other hand, religion was the strongest bond between institutions, corporations and authorities. It was a common faith and cohesive force of Chile's culture. In the move towards the republican period, these two elements became favourable to change, insofar as they evoked and preserved traditions that were useful for creating a nation state through a ruling class deployed to a frontier territory ever since the Spanish Conquerors attempted to instal order on what they considered chaos. This insularity became an advantage to which one can in part attribute the relative lack of conflict between Spaniards and 'criollos' during colonial times and later during the transition to republicanism. Some Spaniards even pledged allegiance to the new flag. Eduard Poeppig, a German botanist and explorer, visited Chile between 1826 and 1829 and recalled that, after the revolution, around 3000 peninsulars remained in the country and were respected and included in society, while in Peru they were being persecuted.²

Bearing in mind the particular conformation of its territory (a narrow strip of land between the Andes and the sea), Chile was successful (compared to neighbouring countries) in institutionalising order, consolidating the early state and building the nation due to the elite consensus around social order. Without it, they saw no possibility of awarding the

² In Patricio Silva, *La república virtuosa. Probidad pública y corrupción en Chile* (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Diego Portales, 2018).

people republican rights. This order was bolstered by the wars waged by the State with the support of religion, administered politically by the Church, which accompanied the armies and gave legitimacy to their mission. War and religion were also factors of social stratification as well as of selective inclusion. War was important in creating a sense of territorial belonging, loyalty to one's homeland and cultural identity, even before a modern concept of a nation was consolidated. To the extent that the Church and the State remained united after independence, maintaining Catholic rituals and practices from tradition strengthened republican authority.

ORDER

The rejection of the Hispanic monarchy and the need to build a state and shape a nation identified until then with the great unity of the Crown were not the result of conscious deliberation, although the ideas circulating at the time and those coming from Europe gave rise to conjecture about the future. The builders of the Chilean state and nation (i.e. members of the same ruling class that administered the territory under the monarchy) had to face this 'threshold' period saddled with the fears and uncertainties of those who have much to lose, but also much to gain, if they could transition towards the new regime without destabilising their social power. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento expressed it masterfully almost 30 years after independence: 'Social questions, after being ventilated by thought ... become ventilated by passions, by bayonets, until they fall rolling at the feet of the masses ... who decide by crushing under their feet the question and the litigants This is the abbreviated history of all social changes.'³ Andrés Bello, the great jurist and constitutionalist, witnessed the desire to control possible ruptures and preserve attachment to traditional forms. 'Democracy, which is freedom, is not legitimated,

³ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, 'Escuela Normal', *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* (June 18, 1842). Sarmiento was one of the Argentine intellectuals who took refuge in Chile when persecuted by Juan Manuel de Rosas. They made great contributions to the cultural progress of the nation. He served as President of Argentina from 1868 to 1874.

useful nor does any good until the people have reached their maturity, and we are not yet adults.’⁴

The ethos that prevailed within the Chilean ruling class oscillated between its awareness of necessary change and its fear of losing its political and social hegemony. The dichotomy between chaos and order can be used to explain the process that shaped the Chilean nation state at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Chaos was the world of the ‘other’, the barbarian indigenous and the ‘people’, feared as future depositories of sovereignty.⁵ On the other side was the Christian Western ‘we’, justified by being rooted in history and tradition. The idea of order was not problematic, since the ruling class’ organic vision of society coincided with that of the Catholic Church, where the ‘other’ (the indigenous people and in general those who did not share its faith) had a place in the intellectual and political universe only for their conversion and civilisation. Consequently, the concept of order was defined within the polarity between ‘supernatural order’/‘natural order’. The idea of social and moral order, the latter derived from the supernatural, was also linked to a fear of the eruption of popular demands, a fear that leading groups also shared.

Members of the ruling class had become familiar with republicanism before 1808. The circulation of republican ideas, and especially political manifestos in the form of Catechisms written sometimes by priests, is an indication that independence was a process triggered by the Napoleonic invasion but not completely alien to the imagination of the elites. Around 1810, before Independence, the text *El Catecismo Político Cristiano* (The Christian Political Catechism) published by the pseudonymous José Amor de la Patria, declared that the republican government recognised the right of the people to elect its representatives, because ‘... when the peoples (pueblos, in its traditional sense equivalent to ‘villages’) were established with freedom and formed without coercion, they almost always preferred a republican government.’⁶ In 1812, the *Catecismo de los Patriotas* (Patriots’ Catechismo) by Fray Camilo Henríquez, a Dominican friar and

⁴ In José Victorino Lastarria, *Recuerdos literarios* (Santiago: Zigzag, 1967), 96. Andrés Bello (1781–1865) born in Venezuela, and educated in Britain became Chile’s most important intellectual figure.

⁵ At the time of Independence, approximately half of the Chilean population, around 800 thousand in total, were ‘mestizos’.

⁶ Rafael Sagredo Baeza, ‘Actores políticos en los catechismos patriotas y republicanos americanos, 1810–1821’, *Historia* 28 (1994), 273–298.

defender of the patriotic cause, stated: ‘... Heaven has declared itself in favour of the republican system. So we see it was the government it gave the Israelites.’⁷ Their loyalty prevailed until Ferdinand’s attempt to re-establish absolutism after his liberation. The king was blind enough not to realise that the world was facing a progressive dynamic of revolutions that made it impossible to turn back the clock.

The preservation of social order was the backdrop to the deployment of political order, both in its fidelist and republican stages. Part of the tension comes from the interpretation of the concept of order. Social order referred to the elite’s hegemony in power. After the fall of Ferdinand, political power implied creating a new order without upsetting traditional hierarchies, which obviously created uncertainties. Antonio José de Irisarri, a Guatemalan politician living in Chile, stressed the need to be particularly careful in fostering civic virtues in the new order. If not carefully controlled, he thought, ‘a Republic can show the most horrible picture of disorder and weakness.’⁸ When President Joaquín Prieto inaugurated the 1833 Constitution, a result of the victory of conservatives over liberals in the Battle of Lircay, he stated that its main purpose was to establish ‘the means to secure order and public tranquillity forever against the risks of the ups and downs of parties to which the country had been exposed. Reforms’, he said, ‘are the way to end the revolutions ... which disturbed the political system in which the triumph of independence put us.’⁹ Likewise, religion was valued widely as a mechanism to confront the uncertainty generated by the monarchical crisis. According to the jurist Juan Egaña, author of an experiment with a utopian constitution in 1823 ‘religious ideas are the strongest barrier against threats to good order.’¹⁰ A year later, Camilo Henríquez argued that ‘in the dangerous crises of the states (religion) has always been the last resort of public order amid the impotence of the laws.’¹¹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ ‘Sobre los gobiernos republicanos’, *El Semanario Republicano* (September 25, 1813).

⁹ ‘El presidente de la república a los pueblos’, in *Constitución de la República de Chile* (Santiago: Imprenta de la Opinión, 1833), I–II.

¹⁰ Juan Egaña, ‘Plan de Gobierno’, *Colección de Historiadores y Documentos Relativos a la Independencia de Chile* 19 (Santiago: Imprenta Cervantes, 1911), 97–109, there 107.

¹¹ Camilo Henríquez, 1811, ‘Sermón en la instalación del primer Congreso Nacional’, in *Escritos políticos de Camilo Henríquez* (Santiago: Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1960), 50.

The struggle between order and chaos can be seen in the way the ruling class implemented the rights that the republic had to guarantee. After independence, the concept of order transcends its supernatural meaning, as well as its disciplinary significance, and inserts itself into the world of political definitions. For Camilo Henríquez, the American revolution initiated a ‘new order of things’, as opposed to the ‘old domination’.¹² In the new polarity between ‘order’/‘anarchy’, political change will be admitted only under the rule of order and when social order is guaranteed.

For authors such as Antonio José de Irisarri, the political change brought about by the revolution followed a progressive logic with no point of return: ‘Things will not return to the old state or order and the waters will take another course.’¹³ Only a few months earlier, Irisarri had expressed his fear of revolutionary change, showing how contradictory the perceptions of the era of revolutions were for its contemporaries: ‘There is not a sweeter voice in the civil order, nor a more sonorous one, than that of Republic. This voice sends us an idea of justice, equity and convenience that makes its meanings sound kind. We imagine a State wisely governed by the general will, where the most just laws protect the rights of man... to say republic is to say happiness.’ However, immediately after he warns: ‘The astuteness of some individuals about the lack of illustration of the popular mass, has always been the stumbling block in which republics perish. The people, enthusiastic about freedom, perhaps work to destroy it...’¹⁴ Irisarri expresses clearly the ambivalence afflicting the elite when facing the challenge to create this new order, whose characteristics were defined elsewhere, in countries with social conditions not comparable to those of Europe or the United States. Failed experiments, like the federalist attempt by José Miguel Infante in Chile in 1826, demonstrated that former Spanish possessions could not be assimilated to European intellectual and political models.

The era of revolutions in Chile was lived as a transition between tradition and modernity. Tradition prevented all excesses, like those committed during the French Revolution, which were fresh in the elite’s minds, and made the idea of a republic simultaneously desired and feared.

¹² *La Aurora de Chile* (July 23, 1812).

¹³ *El Semanario Republicano* (December 18, 1813).

¹⁴ *El Semanario Republicano* (September 25, 1813).

This paradox appears early in the political debate.¹⁵ It was natural that it should do so, considering that the majority of the ruling class perceived society more as a traditional association or community, rather than an aggregation of individuals. The two dimensions, political and social, cannot be separated in order to avoid the paradox between principles and practices or the impasse where one must choose between one or the other to explain historical development. As Francois Xavier Guerra points out, the nation assumes an essentially political character and the state a social one. From a political point of view, it was a question of conceiving a human collectivity that would reconcile the predicaments of modern politics, with the intimate structure, social links, relationship with history, values and beliefs of the ruling group.¹⁶

Recovering the feeling of confidence that had already been threatened during the last colonial governments was a key factor for the Chilean ruling class. It was the guarantee, as Bernardo O'Higgins, the first republican ruler, would say, against the 'impotence of authority' and against 'despotism'.¹⁷ The concept of order as opposed to anarchy replaced that of confidence (originally the opposite of uncertainty). When speaking of anarchy, what came to the minds of the elites was the situation that plagued other Latin American nations: their difficulties in forming nation states and avoiding fragmentation and civil war. During practically the entire nineteenth century, the perception by the ruling class of the ascendancy of their conception of social order exercised a decisive power over their openness to change. Maintaining the dominance of their ethics, religion and cultural expressions was important to avoid any rupture. As Mario Góngora observed, the notion of order is a moral quality belonging to a class that in turn defines that moral quality.¹⁸

¹⁵ A similar paradox will appear with democracy: desired and feared at the same time.

¹⁶ Francois Xavier Guerra, *Modernidad e independencias. Ensayo sobre las revoluciones hispánicas* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1992), Chapter 9.

¹⁷ Bernardo O'Higgins was the illegitimate son of the Viceroy of Peru, Ambrosio O'Higgins and the Chilean Rosa Riquelme. A hero in the wars of Independence, he became the first republican ruler, but was instrumentally used and never fully admitted into the ruling class because of his origins.

¹⁸ Mario Góngora, *Ensayo histórico sobre la noción de estado en Chile en los siglos XIX y XX* (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1986), 46.

RELIGION

With a more modern but not totally effective war apparatus, the Spaniards supported their conquest by the imposition of Catholicism. The sword and the cross were planted simultaneously in American territory when Columbus stepped onto the Caribbean island of Guanahani. Both proved to be valid resources in generating institutional identity and loyalty, which the peninsular authority knew how to use to preserve its power.

During the Ancien Regime, by virtue of the concordats between the Hispanic monarchy and the papacy, as Roberto Di Stefano observes, it is not possible to conceive of them as two separate entities, at least when it comes to their agency.¹⁹ What we understand today as the Church (i.e. a juridical-political entity that we can identify as conceptually different from society as a whole, relatively autonomous from the State, with a common hierarchical structure recognised as legitimate, and subordinated to the authority of the Holy See) did not exist in this period. Temporal and spiritual power were oriented towards the same goal: ‘The cohesion of the community through government and justice—civil and ecclesiastical—in a worldly sphere ..., and the salvation of souls in the supernatural/sacramental sphere (in the perspective of eternity).’²⁰ Thus, the fact that they were different implies that they could be distinguished but not separated. Of the two swords, the ecclesiastical power wields one and delegates the other. This mesh of powers had not been totally peaceful before Independence. In fact, Jesuits had been expelled from Spanish territories in 1767 and the Crown was fearful of their influence over local indigenous communities, their fidelity to the Catholic pope and their economic power.

While Chile was under Spanish administration, both the political and religious powers provided each other with legitimacy and authority following the pattern of Catholic monarchies. The legitimacy of royal power derived from, and was intimately linked to, its adherence to the Catholic faith and to its authority in ecclesiastical matters, which it defended earnestly. Only since the nineteenth century, with the creation of the republican state, can we identify two institutions that were

¹⁹ Roberto Di Stefano, ‘¿De qué hablamos cuando decimos “Iglesia”? Reflexiones sobre el uso historiográfico de un término polisémico’, *Ariadna histórica. Lenguajes, conceptos, metáforas* 1 (2012), 197–222.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 202.

constructing themselves independently, defining their individual boundaries, and creating their own codes of legitimacy. In this context, it was necessary to define the rights and duties of the members of the nation, as well as the attributes of the institutions that coexisted within it. Concepts such as popular sovereignty, citizenship and political representation, although limited in their application, challenged the power structures that had prevailed during the Spanish administration. The new statute demanded that a process of differentiation be initiated for religion, politics, economics, science and other areas, creating a potential conflict by turning the Church into an institution with sovereign attributes, different from the State, and in potential competition with it. In other words, it put pressure on the Church to define its own contours. At the same time, and despite the tensions between Church and State, sanctions justified by the symbolic power of religion maintained a political and cultural significance, thus contributing to the social order. The Church retained an enormous capacity to mobilise through the capital of authority at its disposal and because it was territorially dispersed, reaching areas where the State initially could not penetrate.²¹ In this sense, the Church fulfilled political functions for the social and political body by virtue of its spatial extent and symbolic efficacy.

In this process of differentiation, it was natural that friction between the two powers would appear in the first decades after Independence, particularly when it became evident that Church and faith had to separate to preserve the latter while reducing the political power of the former. The State needed not only to avoid serious conflict with the Church but to keep its subjects close to the faith as well. In order to foster a harmonious relationship between the two powers, clergy members were included in the main representative institutions of the new system. Good Catholics, according to elite opinion, would never support the revolution and would always prefer consensus rather than conflict. What is relevant is that both the State and the Church resorted to forms of legitimation that came from tradition to support their respective demands and prerogatives: the Church resorted to its divine authority, the doctrine of perfect 'societas' and papal authority as superior to all other political forms; the State resorted to 'regalism', an enlightened version of 'patronato', which

²¹ Cfr. Pierre Bourdieu, *La eficacia simbólica. Religión y Política* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2009).

aimed to return the nobility's and the clergy's faculties and prerogatives back to the monarchy because of the divine origin of the power of kings.

A kind of 'cultural war' developed among them for predominance over the identity of the nation, although the faith itself was not questioned until the mid-nineteenth century. Unlike what happened in pluri-confessional European countries, where nation states had to face interreligious conflict, Chile, as well as other mono-confessional countries, witnessed polemics within the same Catholic confessionality over political, non-theological issues.²² For the State, it was a matter of defending its autonomy from some religious symbols (i.e. creating its own republican pantheon while preserving Te Deums, which were celebrated on each independence anniversary) and also exercising power in traditionally ecclesiastical aspects, like the designation of bishops. The Church, in turn, wanted to defend the Catholic character of the nation through its control of aspects of the public sphere, such as education and culture in general, including aspects of symbolic representation within the secular-clerical conflict.²³

The 'patronato', for whose control State and Church struggled, had originated in the power of dominion Pope Alexander VI granted to the Catholic Monarchs over the lands discovered by Columbus, and from other Bulls that gave the Crown some authority on the appointment of ecclesiastical authorities, the collection of tithes, and the public distribution of pontifical documents. The republic understood the 'Patronato Regio' in its Bourbon interpretation as a form of 'regalism' that the State inherited. Rome, of course, did not recognise it, inaugurating some and anticipating many of the intellectual and political wars that ultramontanism fought in its defence of pontifical sovereignty. Although there was conflict over its exercise throughout the nineteenth century, in general, the common interest of the two powers prevailed, allowing an institution of medieval origin to transition towards political modernity, reinforcing republican authority and preventing a rupture that would have weakened state legitimacy in the absence of ecclesiastical support.

²² Only in mid-nineteenth century with the arrival of positivism did religion have to defend itself from secularisation.

²³ Wolfram Kaiser and Christopher Clark, *Culture Wars. Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Introduction.

WAR

The wars that Chile fought during the nineteenth century were crucial to the creation of the nation as well as to the successful institutionalisation of its State. As Mario Góngora observed, the emergence of the State in Chile antedated the presence of national sentiment. This was not the case in Mexico and Peru, where pre-Columbian cultures provided an identity that preceded the viceroalties and republics. In Chile, it was possible to identify only some sort of natural sense of regional belonging rather than national sentiment. This regional sense, associated with loyalty to the Crown, persisted during the centuries of Hispanic domination. As has been mentioned, the consolidation of a national sentiment was linked to the strength of the state. Military victories, patriotic symbols, education, and institutions contributed to this strength. War was a mobilising concept which territorialised political consciousness. Religion occupied a fundamental place, including in war, because its representatives were present throughout the country and could sacralise State mobilisation for war.

Each nineteenth-century generation in Chile experienced war in the country. The wars of independence started with the offensive of the Viceroy of Peru in 1813 to re-establish peninsular control after the ruling authorities had shifted from being loyalists in 1810 to separatists in 1813. After that, Chile waged three wars in bordering territories. The first, the 'Expedición Libertadora' of Peru, undertaken under the command of General José de San Martín in 1820, served the purpose of strengthening the nation's political body. The War against the Peruvian-Bolivian Confederation of 1837 contributed to the country's national consolidation and internal pacification. The victory over Peru and Bolivia was publicised as the victory of civilisation vs. tyranny. The War of the Pacific, started in 1879, completed this 'patriotic trilogy', giving Chile a relevant position along the Pacific coast and an international prestige it had not previously enjoyed. Two new provinces, containing rich nitrate mines, were incorporated into its territory. In all of these conflicts, religion played a decisive role with priests preaching in favour of the war and claiming God for their side. In 1865 Chile waged a short war with Spain defending Peruvian independence and control of the 'guaneras'.

A series of works have reflected on war in the process of creating Latin American nations and states. Based on sources that have analysed the relationship between war, violence and nationalism, especially those that have

studied both World Wars,²⁴ Fernando López Alves²⁵ and Miguel Angel Centeno²⁶ have maintained, on the basis of comparative analysis, that the wars of the nineteenth century in Latin America were a great stimulus to centralising power and building institutional capacity. Following the model of Charles Tilly, also known as the ‘warmongering approach’,²⁷ Centeno complements the argument by stating that this strengthening of the State requires that its ruling classes possess a sufficient degree of social cohesion to be able to perceive war as an instrument to ratify their position of power and neutralise centrifugal forces. This was not the case in most Hispanic American states, which explains their lack of external wars. Chile, on the contrary, managed to maintain its oligarchic consensus with few interruptions, preventing the emergence of more autonomous instances of popular activism or other more charismatic, divisive figures. This can in part be attributed to Catholicism as a common religion. Religious rites and symbols permeated the rest of the country more effectively than republican speeches or harangues. If we follow Sinisa Malisevic, there would have been an ideological construction of adhesion to the nation, which required appealing to traditional rituals and symbolisms.²⁸

The cult of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, considered the ‘patron saint’ of Chile, illustrates how Chilean political modernity required religious support to justify its republican wars. Since the seventeenth century, together with the Virgin of Mercy and the Rosary, the Carmelite devotion had penetrated deeply into both the elite and popular sectors and was particularly sponsored by the order of Saint John, who erected the first brotherhood to Our Lady of Mount Carmel in 1678. Also, the Augustinians were promoters of its cult and of brotherhoods in its name in different parts of the country.

²⁴ For an overview of the sociological and theoretical views on the subject, see Sinisa Malesevic, *The Sociology of War and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

²⁵ Fernando López Alves, *La Formación del Estado y la Democracia en América Latina* (Bogotá: Norma, 2002).

²⁶ Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt. War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

²⁷ Charles Tilly and Gabriel Ardant, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

²⁸ Malesevic, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 193.

The first episode that relates the patriot army to Our Lady occurred on 5 January 1817, when José de San Martín, leading the Ejército Libertador de los Andes in the main square of Mendoza, requested the Virgin's protection and saluted the flag in her name. Immediately the troops and the people shouted 'Viva la patria' (Long live the fatherland). With this gesture, San Martín symbolised his surrender of power to Our Lady. After crossing the Andes, General Bernardo O'Higgins, prior to the battle of Chacabuco, proclaimed her 'patron saint and generalísima de las Armas de Chile'. The Chilean triumph was attributed to divine intercession. However, there were still battles to fight against the Spanish enemy. On 14 March 1818, Santiago's citizens gathered in the cathedral to pray for the intercession of the Virgin during the next confrontation. On 5 April, the battle of Maipú ensured Chile's independence. Bernardo O'Higgins, appointed Supreme Director, immediately ordered the erection of the temple he had promised her for saving the country 'from the greatest danger in which it had ever been'.²⁹ Although one cannot say that O'Higgins manipulated the cult of Our Lady, it is important to set his allegiance in the perspective of his political actions after Independence when he tried on several occasions to reduce Church influence and strengthen that of the State through the Patronato, for example by establishing a lay cemetery for dissidents.

It is interesting to mention that Carmelite devotion declined in times of peace and had to wait for other international wars to be reincorporated into the collective devotions. The war against the Peru-Bolivian Confederation of 1837 was such an occasion. On the eve of Yungay, the last battle, which gave Chile the final victory, tradition has it that Manuel Bulnes, commander in chief of the army, invoked Our Lady, and the obstacles that prevented the cavalry from advancing disappeared instantly.

During the War of the Pacific of 1879, Chilean soldiers marched with the Carmelite scapular on their chests. Clerics claimed that it would act as a 'protective shield' and give the soldiers free passage to heaven if they died in combat. A milestone in the use of this devotion with patriotic intentions occurred during the battle of Dolores in 1879, when chaplain José María Madariaga, together with General Erasmo Escala, raised the

²⁹ *Gazeta Ministerial de Chile* (November 20, 1819); Sebastián Rico Díaz, 'La virgen del Carmen en Chile. Dos momentos de un vínculo identitario (1910–1968)' (Unpublished Masters' Thesis, Institute of History, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2018), 26.

banner of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The exhausted troops reacted with great enthusiasm and continued fighting until victory. It is also important to mention that Arturo Prat, the hero of the war of the Pacific, carried with him the Carmelite scapular at the time of boarding and was killed on the *Huáscar*, the Peruvian ship.

RITUALS

In addition to wars and religion, the republic also needed to adapt traditional festivities and symbols to new times, especially if they had a transcendent origin and meaning. Feasts helped to strengthen national sentiment and grant credibility to institutions. An important example illustrating the logic of continuity and change in religious practices is that of *Te Deums*. Considered one of the Catholic Church's oldest celebrations of thanksgiving, taking place 'on the occasion of some solemn event',³⁰ *Te Deums* were part of everyday life in colonial America. During this period, they were confined to important monarchical commemorations, such as the king's birthday or feast day, as determined by the different royal warrants. For example, for the celebrations of King Charles III, a royal decree was issued in 1750 ordering the suspension of all the activities of the *Cabildo* to facilitate the attendance of religious communities, military corps and important members of society at the mass of *Te Deum*.

During the period of Independence, this celebration underwent a transformation, serving both patriots and monarchists as a means of intercession to God or of commemorations of their respective endeavours during the revolution. One of the first moments in which patriots requested the celebration of a *Te Deum* occurred in 1812 when José Miguel Carrera stated that 'the government of Chile is in critical circumstances, and the Junta, conscious that its efforts will be fruitless without the protection of Christ, has determined that public prayers be made to Him, so as to obtain His adhesion as has always been His disposition towards the prayers of the children of His most holy mother (Prayers

³⁰ Marciano Barrios, *Chile y su Iglesia. Una sola historia* (Santiago: Ed. Salesiana, 1992), 207.

should) begin as soon as possible in this Holy Cathedral with the greatest solemnity possible'.³¹

In the case of monarchists, after recovering control of the country in 1814, they organised several ceremonies in the main square as well as a Te Deum in the Cathedral of Santiago to give thanks 'for the regeneration of Chile and the restitution to the throne of the beloved, ... innocent ... persecuted and slandered Ferdinand'.³² In both cases, the solemn character of the feast and the attendance of all the respective authorities and city dwellers were highlighted to give a signal of unity.

However, it was once final Independence was achieved that the Te Deum became established as a patriotic commemorative feast and, again, the Cathedral of Santiago was the place designated for the sacralisation of new authorities with formulas coming from the colonial tradition. The victory in the battle of Chacabuco in 1817 was commemorated with 'an act of thanksgiving to the Almighty, remembering these august events ... a solemn mass must be celebrated in the Holy Cathedral Church with its patriotic prayer'.³³ A similar celebration took place to commemorate the Battle of Maipú. The Senate issued a statement saying that the celebration of this date with a Te Deum 'will be a sweet memory for the defenders of freedom, and will serve as a reason to repeat our gratitude to the divine author for the unique benefits with which the country has been favoured and prevented from suffering a degrading and destructive subjugation of humanity'.³⁴ On that day, the various troops lined the street from the government palace to the temple.³⁵

Te Deums were institutionalised as a patriotic festivity, aimed at nourishing feelings of nationhood. This religious practice underwent visible changes in its meaning. From serving the Bourbon kings, it came to celebrate the founding milestones of the homeland. The attendance of colonial officials was replaced by that of the new authorities of the

³¹ Arzobispado de Santiago, letter by José Miguel Carrera to the ecclesiastical authority (January 2, 1812).

³² ¡Viva el Rey! *Gazeta del gobierno de Chile* 29 (June 1815), 286.

³³ 'Oficio del Director Supremo al Senado Conservador', in *SCL*. Vol. 3 (February 11, 1820), 577.

³⁴ 'Contestación del Senado al Director Supremo', in *SCL*. Vol. 4 (March 28, 1820), 69.

³⁵ Jaime Valenzuela, *Fiesta, rito y política. Del Chile borbónico al republicano* (Santiago: DIBAM, Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, 2014), 225.

republic. War was the element that marked the rupture with tradition because it replaced monarchical feasts with the main dates of Chilean national liberation. War was the element that gave cohesion, identity and meaning to the *Te Deum* within the festive practices of this new republic, which continue to this day.

Although the republic imposed the need for differentiation from the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the new authorities considered it necessary to maintain other traditional religious festive practices to which they added patriotic commemorations. The new institutions regulated the participation of their authorities in religious festivities, thus replacing the colonial structure by the republican corpus. By government decree of 1832 it was established 'that the order of precedence of the magistrates and employees of the republic and of the province and city of Santiago be established, and that the ceremonial dress be determined in which they have to attend the religious and civil festivities of solemn attendance and the official and public acts of their respective ministry'.³⁶ This decree preserved the hierarchical structure in the attendance of republican authorities at certain ceremonies, in the same manner as had been carried out in colonial festivities.

What is interesting is that, along with establishing the order of republican precedence, it regulated and imposed attendance at religious ceremonies and new national holidays. It included the feast of Corpus Christi, the feast of the principal patron saint of the State, the masses of Good Thursday and Good Friday, the civil feasts of 12 February and 18 September in the Cathedral Church (both patriotic feasts) and the prayer of 13 May in St. Augustine and the opening and closing of Congress.³⁷ The incorporation of national festivities with the corpus of religious festivities indicates how the patriotic nature of the republic was assimilating the practices and rituals of celebration from colonial times.

In addition to the festivities and symbols necessary to support the new political statute, the republic allowed institutions of the Old Regime, such as the 'cabildo', to move towards the new regime with all its ritual apparatus. The cabildos were one of the oldest institutions in colonial America. Their origin went back to the Castilian tradition and they were closely linked to the foundation of new cities. When the conquerors drew the

³⁶ *Boletín de leyes y decretos del gobierno* 5: 10 (August 2, 1832), 208.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

plots of a new colonial city, it was necessary ‘that their settlers be qualified citizens and have all the rights and franchises of Castile’.³⁸ The cabildo occupied a central role among the institutions of the city. In the case of Santiago, it was established on 7 March 1541, with the appointment of its first members by Pedro de Valdivia,³⁹ as part of an ‘agreement between the conquerors’. Later on, its members were elected by the citizens.⁴⁰

Prominent *vecinos* (literally ‘neighbours’) met at the Cabildo to discuss matters related to the operations of the city. Its authorities were chosen from among them: mayors, the city procurator, the butler, the sheriff, the royal bishop and the alarife.⁴¹ Appointments to the Cabildo were restrictive and they excluded ‘the infamous, illegitimate children, the religious, the recently converted to Christianity, those who exercised offices or jobs held by vile people and the debtors of the royal estate’.⁴²

The cabildos adopted a dominant political position in the cities in which they sat during the period of Independence. They assumed power in the absence of the king. After the imprisonment of Ferdinand VII, a Junta was convened on 18 September 1810 which included ‘prelates of the religious communities’.⁴³ This is relevant because, in the case of ordinary meetings, members of religious orders were not admitted. Once they were included, the church became part of the independence process. It participated in an act of rupture. Even though this form of exercise of sovereignty was assumed in the name of the captive king, it denied recognition to the Council of Regency constituted in Spain. Once the Junta was established and having ‘bridged the revolution’ between 1808 and 1810, the Cabildo hosted the political debates with members of the ruling class, who were to lead the country to its full independence, until the so-called Spanish Reconquest in 1814. As an institution created during Spanish rule, it underwent a ‘chameleonic’ transformation with the triumph of

³⁸ Julio Alemparte, *El Cabildo en Chile Colonial* (Santiago: Ed. Andrés Bello, 1966), 44.

³⁹ Pedro de Valdivia was a Spanish ‘hidalgo’, conqueror of Chile and founder of Santiago. He was killed by the Indians while trying to conquer the south of the country. See Miguel Luis Amunátegui, *El Cabildo de Santiago desde 1573 hasta 1581* Vol. 1 (Santiago: Imprenta Nacional, 1890), 6.

⁴⁰ Alemparte, *El Cabildo en Chile Colonial*, 64.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴³ Acta de la instalación de la excelentísima Junta Gubernativa del Reino.

the revolution and kept many of its prerogatives until the establishment of municipalities or modern town halls. Shortly after having celebrated the glories of the monarchy, Cabildo members joined the ‘restorers’, hitherto insurgents, and asked the Supreme Director for funds to finance a religious liturgy ‘with as much pomp as possible’.⁴⁴

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Bearing in mind that the first Chilean identity was formed within the Hispanic Monarchy, the era of the Atlantic revolutions found its ruling class in contact with European Enlightenment, especially in its Spanish Catholic version. At the time of the collapse of the Bourbon monarchy the elites resorted to republicanism as an alternative to replace the legitimacy of the Crown with a statute that would provide guarantees of governability in the face of the uncertainty produced by political orphanhood. Institutions such as the Cabildo that prefigured future municipalities sheltered patriots with their legitimacy.

From the first autonomist moments, members of the clergy, such as Fray Camilo Henríquez, supported Creole patriotism and made great efforts to harmonise religion and politics in a republican key. Biblical exegesis served the purpose of providing arguments to defend the religious dimension of the political order. An article in the form of a Catechism by Camilo Henríquez is a good example: ‘Question: Did God Our Lord express His preference for a particular form of government? Response: It may be stated that heaven declared itself in favour of the republican system’.⁴⁵

Theological metaphors, moral allegories and other religious sources were widely used to capitalise on the respectability of Christian cultural heritage.⁴⁶ Religious rituals, intertwined in time with republican ones, were an important element in the consolidation of the nation state. In spite of the conflicts, the Church was able to deal with political modernity and make use of its social and cultural capital as well as its historical

⁴⁴ Carta del Cabildo al Director Supremo (Santiago February 20, 1818).

⁴⁵ *El Monitor Araucano* (December 10, 1813).

⁴⁶ François-Xavier Guerra, “Políticas sacadas de las Sagradas Escrituras”. La referencia a la Biblia en el debate político (siglos XVII a XIX), in Mónica Quijada and Jesús Bustamante, eds., *Élites intelectuales y modelos colectivos. Mundo ibérico (siglos XVI–XIX)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2002), 155–198.

authority to prevent or even delay secularisation. The Catholic faith was never called into question by the ruling elite, and the clergy enjoyed enormous credibility. Towards the middle of the century, radical liberals criticised the influence of the Church in education and public affairs, but their voices were largely ignored. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century did the contradictions of a republican state and a democratising society show the cracks that ended in the constitutional separation of Church and State in 1925.

The Church was also a fundamental element in providing legitimacy and popularity to the wars that Chile fought during the nineteenth century. Using the pulpit or contributing devotions that linked the population with its patriotic history, the clergy accompanied the troops and society while the State sought to achieve a place of relevance in the Hispanic American context. The Church's rituals and symbols, incorporated into the patriotic heritage, have been part of Chile's history up to the present day, despite the constitutional separation achieved in 1925. Although it may seem anachronistic, even today the presidents of the republic celebrate the anniversaries of the feasts of independence together with religious, civil and military authorities in the Cathedral of Santiago.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this license to share adapted material derived from this chapter or parts of it.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

