

The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile (Pitt Latin American Series)

Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney



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With the 2006 election of Michelle Bachelet as the first female president and women claiming fifty percent of her cabinet seats, the political influence of Chilean women has taken a major step forward. Despite a seemingly liberal political climate, Chile has a murky history on women's rights, and progress has been slow, tenuous, and in many cases, non-existent.

Chronicling an era of unprecedented modernization and political transformation, Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney examines the negotiations over women's rights and the politics of gender in Chile throughout the twentieth century. Centering her study on motherhood, Pieper Mooney explores dramatic changes in health policy, population paradigms, and understandings of human rights, and reveals that motherhood is hardly a private matter defined only by individual women or couples. Instead, it is intimately tied to public policies and political competitions on nation-state and international levels.

The increased legitimacy of women's demands for rights, both locally and globally, has led to some improvements in gender equity. Yet feminists in contemporary Chile continue to face strong opposition from neoconservatism in the Catholic Church and a mixture of public apathy and legal wrangling over reproductive rights and health.

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