



Generations of Protest: Chile's Students and the Fight for Democracy, 1975-2016

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Abstract: This article outlines seven waves of youth protest that unfolded in Chile from the 1970s-2016. High school and university students protested against the brutal military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, challenging his carefully-crafted neoliberal education system. In demanding a robust system of public schooling and rejecting the commodification of education, Chilean youth advanced both a strategy and message to reverse market-based schooling. The study finds that each wave of protest articulated more clearly how the structure of Chile's educational system impacted the nation's general welfare. We conclude that despite neoliberalism's deep roots, students' actions and explanations of education for the public good have impacted education policy and brought about structural alternatives.

Keywords: Democratic education, Student protest, Mobilization, Education politics, Education policy.

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Introduction

In March 1975, when world-renowned economist Milton Friedman returned to Chicago after two weeks abroad, he had no idea of the criticisms he would face across the U.S. (Friedman 1988; Grandin, 2006; Grandin, 2007). On his way to Australia, Friedman and colleagues from the University of Chicago had stopped in Chile to advise the country's military dictator, General Augusto Pinochet, on the nation's economy. Only eighteen months prior, Pinochet had orchestrated a *coup d'état* that violently crushed the democratically elected government, effectively ending civilian rule. Friedman recommended that the junta adopt a free enterprise model and its many corollary strategies—deregulation, reduction of printed money, privatization of state government, layoffs of public employees, budget deficit reduction, and the elimination of wage and price controls (Grandin, 2007; Taylor, 2006, p. 3). Unbeknownst to many, the coup had covert support from U.S. President Richard Nixon, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the U.S. Military (Constable & Valenzuela, 1993; Gill, 2004).

Friedman called the plan “shock treatment,” a catapulting of the economy away from a social-welfare system and toward a liberal free-market model (Franks, 1976; Vyasulu, 1976). The term fit well as a prescribed stimulus and also resonated with the military regime's campaign of terror and repression of thousands of suspected dissidents through the use of interrogation, torture, and execution (Holten & Austin, 2007; Dingles 2004; Grandin 2007; Rabe 2015; Willey & Pringle 1975). At the University of Chicago, a socialist student group vowed to expose Friedman's visit and drive him off campus, while the Student Governing Association organized a formal investigation of his actions. For the next year leading up to his acceptance of the Nobel Prize in Economics (in December 1976), Friedman's public lectures drew protests, forcing him to slip in and out of speaking venues via kitchens and

backdoors (Grandin, 2006). The protests are noteworthy in that they occurred when student demonstrations in the U.S. were at an all-time low. Significantly, and for the purpose of this investigation, Friedman's consultations with the military junta, considered among the most violent and repressive in 20th Century Latin America, provided a spark that would set in motion a forty-year period of student protest—not in the U.S. but in Chile.

For twenty years, the “Chicago Boys”—Chilean economists trained in Friedman’s body of work—turned Chile into the nation-state laboratory for testing Friedman’s neoliberal model (Letelier 1976; Taylor 2006). Sometimes called market fundamentalism, *neoliberalism* is the systematic application of market logic and practices to a broad range of previously nonmarket activities: from family life to the arts and sciences, education, and geopolitics. Additionally, it is a radical commitment to let the market drive social policy with little or no political intervention (Goldfarb, 2017). Against the backdrop of the Cold War, while the junta routed civilians, it also outlawed civic participation in the public square and behind closed doors, minimized government regulations, in essence redefining social policy in terms that fast-tracked economic freedom for the rich. Consistent with other authoritarian regimes, Pinochet also maximized his executive power and administered government via a team of technocrats. These undertakings, along with his campaign of terror, forced Chileans, as best they could, “to accept the values of consumerism, individualism, and passive rather than participatory democracy” (Grandin 2007, p. 174-5). In response, some Chileans—including labor union members, opposition intellectuals, and a core of high school and college students—rejected the formulation and set out to show that more inclusive types of democracy were not out of mind or possibility.

Much has been written about protests in Chile in the past two decades. Some authors concentrate on only one or two episodes of the protest, or efforts by one group (such as intellectuals, secondary students, university students, the working poor, or trade unions). Other studies either sensationalize protests or highlight the shortcomings of a specific protest. These treatments, though helpful in detailing events, tend to isolate stories within a particular time, group, or place (Burton 2012; Klubock 1997; Knaut 2011; Kubal 2006; Orlansky 2008; Schneider 1995; Winn 2004). Efforts to see these protests across time and category, however, are less common. Also missing is the application of analytical tools from educational history. In particular, Labaree’s (2007) writings on schooling as a *public and private good*, and on the commodification of education, prove helpful when analyzing the Chilean youth protests. Moreover, Labaree’s explanations of the interplay among three main goals of public education—democratic citizenship, social efficiency, and social mobility—allow us to identify the political and social ramifications of the movement.

This study finds that, over a 40-year period, a critical mass of students were tireless in their demands for an educational system that is driven by the principle that formal schooling also serves public interests, and as such, must be structured accordingly. Also, these demands proved to be mutually reinforcing across both space (high schools, universities, neighborhoods, public plazas, streets, etc.) and time (generation to generation). In addition, the collective actions themselves are exercises of democratic practice and models for the expression of democratic

citizenship. Finally, these multigenerational efforts resulted in well-established connections between national politics on the one hand and the structure of schooling on the other.

This article provides an overview of Chilean political and social reforms from the 1970s into the new millennium. We then examine several waves of student protest in response to the reforms. While the youth challenge to market-based schooling is the enduring theme of this study, it is important to convey that the rebellious students were not part of a unified, hierarchical organization. But their associations were not short-lived or truncated; student groups corresponded with each and with other stakeholders regularly, and maintained these communication networks across time. Not all protesters were in the same boat nor were they necessarily paddling in the same direction. Moreover, not all students agreed with or participated in the rebellions. While student protesters may have agreed on some shared goals and employed similar tactics; many other students sought to subvert them, and in some instances succeeded. Others were recruited by the *dictadura cívico-militar* (civilian-military dictatorship) and later, government and civilian free-marketers to counteract the protests. Nevertheless, these repeated protests represent a pattern of sustained dissent among a core of youth in Chile and an example of democracy in action.

In addition to charting politics and protests in Chile between 1973-2016, we sought to find the pulse of Chilean youth protesters; and to see how their ideals and activities compared with earlier episodes of dissent. To that end, we interviewed eight former participants in 2016 about four of the seven movements (1986, 2006, 2011, 2016). Our sample was limited by a technique known as snow-balling which gives more voice to a select few from the central regions of the country.¹ Nevertheless, the interviews suggest that while student protesters held common goals, they did not necessarily have the same priorities, nor did they operate in lock-step fashion. The interviews suggest that while each wave of protest was loosely organized and maintained communication channels across geographical regions, each site of protest also possessed much independence. Although waves and sites were linked, they were not orchestrated top-down across time and space.

The Foundations of Protest in Chile

Friedman's consultation with the military dictatorship, which helped spark the youth mobilization is only part of the story. Protest in Chile, in short, has a long and tumultuous history. The origins can be traced back to the 1880s when nitrate and coal miners protested for improved support services in the far north and south, central provinces of Arauco, Biobío, and Concepción (Schneider, 1995). Protests soon spread to the growing industrial and port centers as workers demanded better housing and living conditions. By the 1890s, over 10,000 workers had participated in more than 300 strikes. By 1902 the workers' movement had become country-wide, and by 1907, an additional 200 strikes had occurred, most of them in Chile's largest cities. Strife continued. In the 1930s labor faced a series of internal struggles and setbacks. Nevertheless, unions were able to tie their political action and protest to electoral

¹ As a precaution, the authors changed the names of those interviewed and the locations of the interviews in order to provide a layer of safety for those with whom we spoke. The interviews are not intended to present conclusive proof that all students engaged in protest (as many did not) or to suggest that those who did protest had the same specific goals and same lock-step breakpoints.

politics, and sometimes win concessions on bread-and-butter issues. Throughout the 1930s and 40s, multilateral alliances helped to further the progressive agenda as politicians introduced changes in Chile's institutions, transforming a once-conservative society into one that began to approach a participatory democracy. By mid-century, a combination of politics and protest allowed Chile to put in place a democratic electoral system of proportional representation and one of Latin America's best systems of public education.² The election of socialist Salvador Allende in September 1970 as the republic's 25th president was interpreted by the left and left-center as a culmination of three decades of progress, a result of deal-making and political action among the middle and laboring classes. As the U.S. advanced a policy of economic warfare against Allende, "a revolution from below" provided him with enough political capital to undertake industrial and agrarian reforms that improved the standard of living of the working and middle classes, and modernized the nation's infrastructure, education, and health. In the area of higher education, Allende's Popular Unity Coalition made a determined effort to reverse the ruling and middle classes' hegemony over it: university enrollments of women tripled, while those of working-class and peasant students more than doubled. As Allende pushed forward with additional reforms, Chile's conservatives, with support from the U.S., pushed back. While Nixon and conservatives inside and outside of Chile saw the nation moving dangerously toward the left, Chile's working classes and progressives welcomed the start of a social welfare state. Although much remained to be done, by 1973 Chile had become what one progressive scholar termed an "authentic political democracy" (Monroy, 2013).

The path toward participatory democracy ended abruptly on September 11, 1973. By the end of that day, *La Moneda*, the presidential palace had been bombed and Allende killed by the military and national police. Chile's conservatives could not prevail through electoral politics, but they could re-take control of the nation by force and with the help of the U.S.

With some important exceptions, those who opposed Chile's military junta in the 1970s initially did not take to the streets. Open protest was both illegal and dangerous. Shortly after the coup, the junta declared all political activity to be "in recess" and moved quickly to dissolve Congress, abolish elections, and control the media. It also outlawed political parties, professional associations, trade unions, sports clubs, and community organizations. Pinochet ran the government with a team of technocrats, a tried-and-true approach that enabled neoliberal economics in an authoritarian context (Puryear 1988).

The junta also declared martial law and organized interrogation units and death squads, targeting those on the political left, and later turning to suspected dissidents from the center and right. Over the next three years an estimated 130,000 people were arrested, tortured, or imprisoned, while 20,000 were assassinated or simply "disappeared." (Winn, 1986; Holton & Austin, 2007). Many who survived were expelled, or fearing death, sought

² Other reforms included the nationalization of the once privately-owned copper industry, national programs to provide houses to lower-income people, and free milk to all primary school children.

exile on their own. Revealing only a glimpse of the mass suffering and imprisonment, an investigation in 2004 reported that 35,000 survivors had submitted testimony of being tortured (Rabe, 2015).

In an environment of state-administered terror, some of the early dissenters established or joined existing academic research centers. On the surface the centers were numbers-crunching think tanks, where analysts worked on nuts-and-bolts policy and finance; yet, covertly they provided space for more clandestine actions. Unlike political activity, research was not unlawful (Puryear 1988). From 1973-1985 a veritable alphabet soup of think tanks emerged.³ Their activities included data collection, analysis, publication, and debate. Under the radar, the centers had the public face of research but served as a clandestine means to keep dissent alive.

Pinochet's Market Reforms to Education

Before 1979, Chile's central government ran and funded approximately 90% of primary and secondary schools, administering a large operation that oversaw licensure, hired teachers and principals, built and maintained buildings and infrastructure, and provided lunches and support services. However, after seven years of rule, with the 1980 Constitution in place and a set of reforms underway ("seven modernizations"), Pinochet drastically reduced the government's oversight of basic schooling. He eliminated centralized units within the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), such as construction and catering divisions. He also dismantled the government's centralized control and funding of schools. Starting in 1982, roughly 300 municipalities assumed authority over the local schools. Over the next five years, 8,000 schools and 120,000 teachers were re-categorized as local government employees. Funding from MINEDUC, which had once been designated exclusively for public school students, was now available at the municipal level to bidders aiming to establish private, state-subsidized schools. Significantly, private schools were also permitted to charge families for tuition and fees.

Attracted by the new funding scheme, that apportioned the state subsidy equally to public and private schools on a per-capita basis, entrepreneurs entered the market where they established private schools that absorbed and operated with state funds (via vouchers) and private money (via tuition). Within five years the revenue stream had rearranged the system into three distinctive types of schools: municipal/public (state-subsidized) schools; private/voucher (and state-subsidized) schools, and private schools that received no state funding.

Voucher schools were, for the most part, unregulated and retained "wide latitude" regarding student admission. In the 1980s more than 20% of Chile's primary and secondary students left the public schools to enroll in one of the more than 1,000 new voucher schools, fragmenting the system in a way that, as Solimano (2012) and Riesco (2007) later explained, replicated the social class system in the larger society.

³ Among the new centers were CISEC [Center for Socioeconomic Research], PIIE [Interdisciplinary Program of Education Research, PET [Program on Labor Economics], CIEPLAN [Center for Latin American Economic Research]. Centers that already existed included CIDE [Center for Educational Research and Development], CELADE [United Nations' Latin America Demographic Center], FLASCO [Latin American Faculty of Social Scientists].

Higher education followed a similar path. Prior to the coup, with increases in high school graduate rates, efforts were made to open the universities to working-class students who were traditionally denied entry. Although many in the working and peasant classes had no choice but to look for work, those who managed to pursue a tertiary education could enroll at almost no cost. By the late 1960s as the student body became more socio-economically diverse, modernization and democratization reforms spread throughout the system.

As in the nation at large, leftists, Christian Democrats, and right-winged groups formed clearly delineable blocs ... and began to vie for control of faculties, schools, and departments. University politics were often difficult to distinguish from national politics, and occasionally academic activities were interrupted by strikes, building seizures, elections, and the like (Fleet, 1977, p. 3).

Constable & Valenzuela (1991) describe the universities in the 1960s and 70s as vibrant, chaotic, and contested sites of inquiry and argument, allowing for the entire spectrum of social, political, and economic debate. Students “devoured the texts of Marx and Marcuse, wept to the ballads of Victor Jara, and dreamed of re-creating the Cuban revolution” (p. 248). The university had become a rough-and-tumble marketplace of ideas. Along with formal study, political debates outside of class were common among faculty and students; sometimes ideological battles erupted, and factions squared off. The university was by now a place where organizations of like-minded students formed and competed politically for institutional influence.

Although he had come to embrace free market competition for the national economy, Pinochet saw no value in universities as arenas for the open exchange of ideas, takeovers, and strikes. Such activities could spread easily to the public square, threaten the junta’s authority, and undermine any social cohesion that might have taken hold in the oppressive state.

Moving swiftly after the coup, the military government canceled student registration, hired faculty and staff on an interim basis, and dismissed known leftists. Many were also arrested, interrogated, and expelled. One outlet reported that three professors were shot by firing squad (Fleet, 1977.)

Pinochet planned to reform higher education in ways that aligned with the regime’s ideology and goals (Constable & Valenzuela 1991). This led to the expulsion of thousands of professors and ten times as many students. Scores of programs where leftists were dominant, were eliminated or reorganized. Materials and books were seized, and some were burned, with the social sciences and history taking much of the brunt. Fearing for their jobs, many professors who survived the purges narrowed their courses to conform to (or at least not conflict with) the junta’s call to teach “positive themes,” advocate “national values,” and promote the achievements of the military (Constable & Valenzuela 1991, p. 251). Intimidation reigned, limiting academic freedom and free expression (Schneider 1995). Protest was theoretically an option, but the costs of participating in such activities were high.

As part of a comprehensive plan to reform the system, the junta installed *Rectores Delegados* from the military, who followed directives from the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the rectors were tasked with reinstating order, reducing waste and inefficiency, and streamlining operations, some of which could be accomplished by eliminating programs that were identified as duplicative in function (Fleet, 1977). As part of the efficiency plan, Pinochet ended free tuition and reduced the state subsidy. If the university was to be for everyone, reasoned Pinochet, then as a first step, everyone must pay for it themselves (Constable & Valenzuela, 1991; Edwards & Edwards, 1991). Between 1973 and 1982 as tuition spiked, university enrollment dropped by nearly 20%.

After the reforms of 1980, the public system of higher education (consisting of eight public and publicly-funded Catholic universities and their regional campuses throughout the country) was reorganized into 27 regional and self-governing institutions (Hudson, 1994). New free-market rules drawn from the 1980 Constitution allowed entrepreneurs to enter the arena and found private universities and *Centros de Formación Técnica* (CFTs). Aiming to attract recent high-school graduates who would bring state subsidy with them (because of new scholarship and loan programs), the new institutes could now compete with the traditional ones for students, much like the private voucher schools in the primary/secondary arena. Higher education was a new and attractive commercial opportunity for Chile's entrepreneurs, the latter of which, had Pinochet's support.

The First Wave of Open Protest, 1975-1983

One major exception to underground resistance to the military junta appeared in the form of efforts above ground by poor and working-class urban dwellers and a core of university students. Schneider (1995) writes that Santiago's *poblaciones* (shantytowns and slums) and universities were the first sites of open protest against the junta. Cut off from traditional systems and spaces of political action, both groups came largely from the working classes and drew on labor's tradition of protest. In the *poblaciones* and University of Chile's *Instituto Pedagógico*, activists and students separately formed informal networks to protest Pinochet's human rights abuses.

The origins of the student protests can be traced to the mid-1970s when a core of students formed study groups and clubs to discuss and debate political issues. The activities, though outlawed, soon spread to larger social gatherings, performances, and sporting events. Initial concerns centered on the regime's control of higher education, particularly Pinochet's appointments of *Rectores Delegados* and the expulsion of leftist faculty and students. When the government hiked tuition at the University of Chile in 1976, however, students from the center and center-right entered the fold. As workshops on tuition and college debt took place, student groups from across the spectrum proliferated. On September 11, 1978, the 5th anniversary of the coup, students from *El Pedagógico* organized and "held a public assembly in the name of the disappeared." One participant recalled that "[i]t was the first truly political act [and] there was no question as to [its] implications." The junta promptly expelled two student leaders, interrogated, tortured, and relocated others, and focused more aggressively on silencing their peers. The crackdowns were selective and brutal, however, they had an unintended effect; they forced student groups to overcome their disparate ideological and sectarian divisions (Schneider, 1995, p. 122-3).

In addition to protests in the shantytowns and *El Pedagógico*, a growing number of students turned to artistic expression as a means of protest. Although Pinochet banned revolutionary protest songs, by the early 1980s groups had formed and “organized folk-song workshops, satirical dramas, and poetry readings” (Constable & Valenzuela 1991, p. 260) and engaged in colorful, often humorous, carefully crafted performances. These acts of creative expression would play a distinguishing part in future protests. Parallel to these acts, underground publications featuring satirical jokes, political essays, and poetry appeared on the scene (Constable & Valenzuela 1991).

Despite the dangers of engaging in dissent, the embers and flames of protest persisted; artistic displays, underground work in the research centers, and sporadic demonstrations in shantytowns and universities kept dissension alive. Although not well-articulated at the time, these efforts allowed for alternative visions of society to remain imaginable, if not possible.

The Failings of Markets: Wave Two, 1982-1986

By 1981 economic and social transitions orchestrated by the junta had become the “new normal” in Chile. Early into his dictatorship, Pinochet had proposed a five-year goal for the return to civilian rule, but instead pushed through a new Constitution in 1980 that strengthened his hand, ensuring military control for another eight years. The new charter also called for a referendum in 1988, when one candidate nominated by the junta would be accepted as president. The referendum was seen as a way for Pinochet to remain in power after 1988 (Gazmuri, 2014). The Constitution allowed for continued investigations and terror by the military; it also lengthened the timeline for the junta’s Chicago Boys to institute major transformations in the economy and society. By the 1980s the size and role of the state in economic affairs was sharply reduced. Labor unions remained illegal, tariffs were lifted, currency was stabilized, pension systems were privatized, and hundreds of state-owned operations dissolved and opened to the market (Taylor, 2006).

Compounding the problem for the opposition was the “miracle of Chile,” an economic boom that started two years after the coup. Touting the virtues of the free market, neoliberal policymakers pointed out that from 1975-81, Chile’s gross domestic product and real wages (for some) had increased while inflation and the fiscal deficit had declined. The gains were seen as proof positive that neoliberalism worked (Gazmuri 2014; Winn 2004). The miracle impressed a segment of Chilean society, particularly entrepreneurs and those with substantial wealth. Many accepted military rule as the price one paid for individual mobility. Over time a *dictadura cívico-militar* took hold in the nation-state, further complicating plans for protest.

A major banking crisis in 1982, however, gave the opposition an opening. By the end of the year, in part due to deregulation, the Gross Domestic Product shrank by 15%. Meanwhile, unemployment soared to over 27%. With the country in economic free fall, the dictatorship was forced to bail out the banks and proceed with a more pragmatic, hands-on oversight of the economy (Harvey 2004; Rytönen 2004). At the same time, dissenters in a second wave

of dissent surfaced. "Civil society remerged" as labor unions, community groups, professional associations, and student organizations "stepped up their activity [...]. A sense of change, even optimism, was in the air" (Puryear 1988, p. 72).

At this juncture, organized labor was next to openly challenge Pinochet. Although work stoppages remained unlawful, two copper mining unions went on strike in 1983 "for a day of national protest against the military regime" (Klubock, 1997, p. 106). The actions incited further protests in urban areas, as mostly working-class people throughout the shantytowns in Santiago and Rancagua took to the streets drumming on pots and pans. These actions began a succession of protests that continued for three years (Constable & Valenzuela 1991; Gazmuri 1995; Puryear 1988; Schneider 1997; Winn 2004). Accompanying shantytown strikes, an estimated 1,200 emboldened students marched down O'Higgins Avenue in Santiago, shouting phrases such as "It's going to fall," as bus drivers honked in support. Although it was still illegal, FECH resurfaced at the University of Chile (UC), and through elections, re-established itself as a key federation representing UC students. In 1986 high school students, working through their federations, joined forces with the reemerging teachers' unions, against structural changes taking place in their schools that were underway. Notably, the protesters argued that the new policies transferring control and funding to the municipalities and allowing for newly-established private schools to qualify for state subsidies would compromise school quality. Protesters demanded a reversal in structure. In actions that prefigured the larger mobilizations of 2006 and 2011, strikes took place for a week at several dozen schools in Santiago, leading to the beating of several students and the arrest of hundreds more (Constable & Valenzuela 1991).

In this context, Valeria Sanchez, a 21-year-old university student studying journalism, chose to join her schoolmates in a two-month open protest at the University of Chile (UC) in 1987. Prior to 1982, "[T]here was a lot of self-censorship and no [public] freedom of expression," Sanchez recalled (V. Sanchez, personal communication, June 14, 2016).

The [UC] Deans and [professors] supported our protests, but the students took the lead. There was no one to turn to, so we took it upon ourselves. There were no classes [for two months] but we came to [UC] anyway. The [professors] were allowed in. And students who opposed us were also allowed in. And the Deans would not let the cops in. I was not one of the leaders, but [those] elected to student government met with university leaders, articulated our demands, and returned with information (V. Sanchez, personal communication, June 14, 2016).

Sanchez was one of many students challenging the appointment of José Luis Federici as Rector of UC. Federici had worked for the regime in several posts, including ministerial appointments in transportation, telecommunications, and economics (Bizzarro, 2005). As rector, Federici sought to implement an efficiency plan that reduced faculty and staff, cut academic programs, and sold off assets. Sanchez recalls opposing Federici for two reasons: First, he was a Pinochet appointee, installed by executive action; second, she saw Federici's plan as going overboard in its free-market orientation and believed it would be harmful to UC's educational programs and mission.

Demonstrations began on August 29. Sanchez remembers assembling with others in the civic district of Santiago—on campus and nearby *Palacio de La Moneda*—and being blasted with water hoses and tear gas during encounters with the military police. Undeterred, Sanchez and other students persisted as the demonstrations spread to other campuses in the city. After eight weeks of protest, Federici resigned, and Pinochet suspended work on the rationalization plan.

The “Federici Movement,” as it became known, was seen as a key victory for opponents of Pinochet and the junta’s neoliberal reforms. “More autonomy was given to universities,” Sanchez recalled, and there was a sense that Pinochet “was “losing grip” (V. Sanchez, personal communication, June 14, 2016). She credits the growing strength and reach of FECH with organizing students and planning demonstrations, and notes that other strikes and demonstrations by workers over low wages in Rancagua, Santiago, and Concepción, helped build unity among protesters:

Starting In the 1970s, there were student federations at many of the universities, not just UC. Our federation was opposed the military regime and began to organize protests, while *Agrupacion Cultural Universitaria* hosted cultural activities [periodically]. It was an artistic way of opposing the regime. We communicated by posting flyers, printed leaflets, and by word of mouth. The [mainstream] press did not report the truth, but a few magazines—*Revista Hoy*, *Mesaje*, and the Catholic Church publication did. [During the strike] their directors [editors] were in and out of jail and UC students and other university students demonstrated against these lock-ups. There was solidarity (V. Sanchez, personal communication, June 14, 2016).

By the end of 1987, students had joined forces with other opposition forces and taken a symbolic stand against the government. It is a mystery as to why Pinochet did not initiate massive sweeps (*allanamientos*) to crush protests, as he had with earlier student rebellions and with organized labor. After weeks of protest, and while police used water hoses and tear gas against student protesters and made scores of arrests, the regime deviated from its typical *modus operandi* by interrogating, imprisoning, or exiling relatively few opposition protesters. Students and staff at UC had won concessions, and in doing so, set an example of how to organize, execute protests, and occupy important geographic spaces in ways that allowed for alternative social, political, and economic possibilities (Aitken 2016).

Wave Three and the “No” Vote, 1987-1990

After the Federici Movement, a third wave of activism began as students worked with other opposition groups—labor unions, working-class protesters, intellectuals, and the reemerging spectrum of established politicians—to debate ways to weaken, or even topple the regime. One idea was to mount a campaign to defeat the presidential plebiscite set for October 1988. As noted above, the referendum had been written into the pro-junta Constitution of the 1980s and was widely seen as a way for Pinochet to remain in power. It called for a national vote to determine whether to continue or end the dictatorship. The ballot contained Pinochet's name and was to be marked simply "yes" or "no." Leading up to the vote, there was no clear sense of the outcome. Families were divided on the issue;

many feared retaliation if they voted no. Genaro Arriagada, vice-president of the re-energized Christian Democratic Party, helped guide the "no" campaign. He later recalled that Pinochet had the support of the army and the business community. But "[w]e had the students, we had human rights, we had a [sic] very well-structured political parties, and we had the people in the streets . . ." (Khazan 2013, p. 3).

From the start of the campaign, there was no consensus on how to oppose Pinochet. Although committed to non-violence, most anti-Pinochetists were divided; some groups favored boycotting the referendum and strengthening the mobilization effort, while others thought that organizing a campaign to bolster support for the "no" vote was the best path. Still, others, such as *Movimiento Izquierda Revolucionario*, and Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front, both on the far left, promoted guerrilla warfare and all-out revolution (Constable & Valenzuela 1991). By early 1988, researchers from the think tanks began polling and using focus groups to ascertain the level of popular support across Chile for a "no" vote. Encouraged by the results, a coalition soon formed (*La Concentración*), pooled resources, and hired a professional advising agency to design messages for print, television, and radio advocating the "no" vote. The spots, the first of their kind in Latin America, were slick and positive. Together, polling and focus group research (also a first in Latin America), and the advertising campaign, caught the Junta off-guard. The "no" campaign culminated in a massive ten-day march (*Marcha de la alegría*) and drew headlines worldwide (Andrade Geywitz 1991).

On October 5, 1988, Chileans went to the polls where the "no" vote won with nearly 56% of the popular vote, thus ending the junta's seventeen-year reign. Pinochet initially wanted to declare the vote invalid and cracked down on news coverage and celebrations in the streets, but he soon accepted the results. Elections took place as scheduled in December, and Patricio Aylwin, a Christian Democrat, won and took office in March of 1990. The collective efforts of students, social scientists, shanty towners, and the working class prevailed and had done so forcefully and peacefully.

Pinochet's Neoliberal Legacy in Education, 1990-2006

While there was much to celebrate in October 1988, the opposition had not stopped Pinochet in his tracks. Although a lame duck, Pinochet still possessed great power and would wield it for another five months (Burbach 2003; Taylor 2006). On March 10, 1990, on his penultimate day in office, Pinochet secured the passage of *Ley Orgánico Constitucional de Enseñanza* No. 18962, 1990 (Organic Constitutional Law of Education). LOCE supplemented and preserved Pinochet's earlier redesign of public education, passed into law in 1980 when the junta's Constitution was refigured and ratified. The educational provisions in the Constitution sanctioned school choice, competition, and deregulation of the elementary/secondary and tertiary school systems, opening them up to the free market. Under LOCE, both systems continued to attract profit-seeking entrepreneurs. As such, LOCE allowed for the further commodification of education in Chile.

Even though free elections and the rudiments of democratic norms had returned to Chile in 1990, center and left-wing politicians hesitated to dismantle LOCE, an indecision that held for nearly as long as the military dictatorship.

One scholar claims that fear drove the inaction; repealing LOCE would provoke conservatives in Parliament and those sympathetic to the former regime (Solimano, 2012). Others felt that LOCE was so entangled with the Constitutional reforms of the 1980s and other regulations that it would be too difficult to undo. Regardless of the rationale, LOCE's impact was clear; by 1997 44% of all primary and secondary students were enrolled in private, state-subsidized voucher schools, a 24% increase in six years (Solimano 2012; Taylor 2006).

Over the next sixteen years, during four democratically-elected terms of the center-left *Concertación* coalition, the system remained "liberalized," indicating the staying power of what of neoliberal education policies established during the *dictadura cívico-militar*. Under LOCE, both private, voucher schools and public, primary and secondary schools remained under the auspices of municipalities—mayors and local boards—and continued to receive the same portion of governmental subsidy based on pupil enrollment. Still less regulated than public schools, voucher schools proliferated from roughly 2,800 in 1990 to more than 4,500 in 2006 (Solimano 2012). Ostensibly intended to increase institutional efficiency and encourage competition among schools, the law instead gave subsidized private schools an economic advantage over public schools, as parents paid additional fees out-of-pocket, believing that their children would receive a superior education in them. Many ordinary Chileans had been lured into seeing schooling as largely a private good for their child, something that ranged in quality, and as something available for purchase in much the same way as a house or car. On the ground, however, the voucher schools were unregulated; the extra money could be spent as the entrepreneurial school founders desired, opening the enterprise—legally—to profiteering and misuse of funds.

LOCE confirmed that the state would play a subsidiary role in education ("Preguntas y Respuestas" 2006). Rather than administering and fully funding a robust school system, post-Pinochet governments maintained a system that protected a family's right to choose a school, placing the freedom and duty to educate with that unit. With LOCE in place, the state took no responsibility for education as a social right or a public good. LOCE framed schooling as an individual matter for families, a private good, and made its commodification legal. For their part, many Chilean families came to see the schools similarly, and as consumers, used them to demonstrate any relative advantage they held over those in the lower classes. In the minds of many, if this did not then lead to social mobility, it would at least contribute to the family's sense of social status. Later studies would show that these school reforms negatively impacted equity by increasing levels of socioeconomic and academic segregation, widening the academic achievement gap among students from different social classes (Bellei 2009; Gauri 1998; Hsieh and Urquiola 2003/2006; Valenzuela, Bellei, & De los Ríos 2013). In addition, "no significant gains in the overall educational quality have been associated with market-oriented reforms in education" (Bellei & Calaban 2013, p. 111; McEwan & Carnoy 2000).

Although LOCE did not directly impact tertiary education, deregulation that began under Pinochet also persisted in that arena. By 2009 Chile, the number of universities had nearly doubled (from 35 in 1980 to 61 [36 of which were private]) and was home to 45 professional institutes, and 74 CFTs (Hudson 1994; Solimano 2012). That same year, a

study reported that 80% of the costs to attend Chile's Universities were shouldered by the students and their families, a rate that was three to four times higher than rates in Europe (Solimano 2012). The higher education system, rebalanced in favor of private interests and commodified, was now the most expensive in Latin America.

Wave Four: El Movimiento Pingüino, 2006

Neoliberalism continued to dictate education policy for another sixteen years, nearly as long as Pinochet's military government had ruled. Yet despite its tenacious grip for three decades, signs remained that it could be challenged. Even a system opened to the market and largely commodified could not limit the power of learning itself, nor could it train all Chileans to accept schooling solely as a private good and individual mobility. As had been the case in 1983 and 1987, students, in a fourth wave of protest, joined others in their communities in challenging policies that perpetuated privatization, deregulation, and decentralization. Hikes in university costs that shifted the burden from the state to families outraged the working and middle classes, in particular. Students were also resolute in their criticism of each Concertación government's "politics of consensus and pragmatism" that encouraged ongoing segmentation and inequality at all levels of the K-university system (Solimano 2012, p. 101). Perhaps what infuriated the students most was each successive decision not to enforce laws that explicitly prohibited profiteering in higher education. The existence and persistence of universities- and schools-for-profit, demonstrated that education had become increasingly commodified, turning schools into businesses rather than sites of learning, and students and their families into consumers rather than learners. By the millennium, resistance increased as other groups joined the students in openly criticizing the system. The university professors' union, teachers' unions, and even the rectors of the traditional universities joined in protest.

One key student protest in 2001 stands out as a precursor of what was to emerge in 2006 as the largest-ever student protest in the history of Chile, the Penguin movement, or as it was sometimes called, *Revolución Pingüina*. In April of 2001, 7,000 high school students took to the streets in Santiago in what became known as the backpacking (*mochilazo*) movement. In this case, the students, after years of access to affordable, state-administered bus service for school, learned that management of the program was to be outsourced to a private conglomerate and the cost of the transportation pass increased from 1,000 to 7,000 Chilean pesos (\$1.50 to \$10.50 US dollars). As part of the changes, the company planned to modernize the system, the costs of which were to be passed on to the buyer. The students saw both the cost of the program and its privatization as major problems. Operating through their umbrella organization, the Coordinating Assembly of Secondary Students (ACES), they organized and executed a mass protest (Donoso 2014; Wolf 2009). On April 4, several thousand students took to the streets of Santiago, in numbers that surprised even the organizers, and drew much publicity across the country.

Under pressure, MINEDUC negotiated with ACES and offered to lower the cost to 1,000 pesos. This, however, was not enough, as ACES demanded that the administration of the program be moved back to the MINEDUC. To drive home the point, ACES then organized a boycott (known as *paro*) of fifteen public schools in Santiago. The boycott brought President Ricardo Lagos to the table, and, yielding to pressure, he transferred the program back to

MINEDUC (Donoso 2014; Wolf 2009). The students thus won a major victory that extended beyond the bread-and-butter issue of cost. Their actions demonstrated that well-organized, principled challenges to the "liberalized" school system could be successful. As Julio Reyes, one of the ACES leaders, explained, "Demanding that the school pass is returned to state administration is more than a solution to the contingency. It is the rejection of irresponsibility of the [State]" (Donoso 2014, p. 24). With the return of the management of student transport back to a centralized public entity, students had successfully argued that school transportation was in the public interest, not something to be privatized (Wolf 2009).

From this point forward, ACES continued to press for changes in primary and secondary education and over the next four years met periodically with the officials at the MINEDUC. In late 2005, ACES presented to the Ministry a 27-page report that summarized their latest demands. The document included a critical analysis of the LOCE, a proposal for democratizing school governance, suggestions for adding new courses to the high-school curriculum, a critique of the newly-extended school day, and recommendations regarding *Centros de Formación Técnica* (CFTs). The report was well-received, and Sergio Bitar, the Minister of Education, "gave students at least token participation," arranging meetings "between [ACES and Ministry officials] once a week to work on education reform" (Wolf 2009, p. 24). Bitar even went so far as to show members of the assembly *Actores Secundarios*, a 2004 documentary that chronicled some of the student protests against the dictatorship. Students at the showing, Wolf writes, "later recalled the images from the film as a partial impetus for actions taken during 2006" (Wolf 2009, p. 24-5).

While these events were unfolding in 2005, another privatization action was underway as the central government replaced its student loan program, which covered entrance fees to traditional universities, with a program that raised the interest rates for those costs. As had been the case in the *mochilazo* movement, the new program was outsourced to a private loan company (Brooks 2016; Gutiérrez & Reyes 2006). Protests ensued, and although they were not successful, they kept the pressure on MINEDUC to think twice before privatizing the management of public programs.

By late April 2006, just weeks after Michelle Bachelet was sworn in as Chile's first female president, high-school students re-entered the fray to mount protests in the schools and streets of Lota, Concepcion, and Santiago. The first confrontations, however, were in Lota, a working-class city on the coast in the eighth region where coal mining had once flourished. Lota was home to some of the most distressed public schools in Chile. At issue was a flood-damaged roof at Liceo A-45 that the students, with support from parents, asked to be repaired, but their requests fell on deaf ears. Inaction regarding the leak prompted a school takeover (known as *toma*) on April 24. Three days into the occupation, authorities sought to end the stalemate and called in the police to remove the students. The occupiers left peacefully but persisted; within hours they had shifted their protest strategy to an organized school boycott (*paro*). By April 27 students at two other public high schools joined Liceo A-45 in organizing *paros*. After negotiations between student leaders, school officials, and the mayor of Lota, the city agreed to fix the infrastructure

problems and work to improve the quality of education across the city. By April 29, the crisis in Lota had subsided (Orlansky 2008).

Actions in Lota set the stage for what would become two months of growing protest. On April 26, while those in Lota were still in negotiations, high-school student protests erupted in Concepción and then Santiago. The Santiago protests initially addressed bread-and-butter issues—a hike in the fee for the university admissions examinations (PSU), and a proposal to restrict the number of reduced-fare trips students could take on public transportation between home and school to two per day. But as the days passed, students' demands grew to include a shorter, more efficient school day, free lunches for poor students, and greater involvement by the central government in addressing the inequalities and social segmentation of Chile's primary and secondary system. Drawing support from university students and teachers' unions, the high school students targeted the 1990 Constitutional Law of Education (LOCE) ("Chile Student Protests" 2006). For the next nine weeks, the protests continued, culminating in a nationwide school walkout (*paro nacional*) on May 30, 2006, that included an estimated 800,000 high school students, roughly 80% of all high school students in the country.

Even in small conservative towns that had once been Pinochet strongholds, students organized and participated in takeovers and strikes. For example, after unsuccessful bids to get a chemistry lab and adjust the daily schedule, students at Liceo Claudio Arrau León in the town of Coihueco, not far from Chillan, took over the school, stacking chairs and desks around the entrance gate. Like their fellow schoolmates, those at the school called for the repeal of LOCE and free and reduced university admission test fees for students (based on parental income). At its peak, approximately three hundred students, half of the school's enrollment, participated in the *toma*. "They took [the school] and they stayed for three or four days inside the school and nobody [else] got in. And City Hall called the cops," recalled Ricardo Souza, a young physical education teacher who also served as an advisor to the student federation (R. Souza, personal communication, May 26, 2016). As the students held tight, the police grew angry. The teacher-advisor then arranged for a face-to-face meeting at the school. "They made this ... [human] corridor with the kids, and [in] came the cop, came [sic] the superintendent, and the principal, and some teachers" (R. Souza, personal communication, May 26, 2016). The students in Coihueco had also watched the TV coverage of events unfolding in Chillan, Concepción, and Santiago, and exchanged logistical and substantive information—by telephone, text message, and email—with other student federations across Chile.

At the peak of the *Pinguino* movement, some of the protesters came from private schools. Two 14-year-olds, Lainer Fuentes, from an all-private high school in the city of Talca, and Neil Arias, from a subsidized voucher school in the town of Molina, were among them. At Fuentes' school, a small group of students, against the advice of teachers, orchestrated a takeover that lasted only a few days. Afterward, classes resumed, but during the *toma* Fuentes and a few of his classmates joined in a massive street demonstration in downtown Talca.

Some of the public school students looked at us in a really rude way because they said the same as our teachers told us the day before. 'Why are you guys here?' This is our movement... our demands. The

effects of this movement will have an impact on public schools, not private schools nor [sic] subsidized schools.' ...[T]here were several arguments, but we told them we were there because of solidarity of purpose (L. Fuentes, personal communication, May 30, 2016).

In Molina, students took over Arias's voucher school for the entire semester, blockading the entry gates with chairs and desks, and taking shifts day and night. During the *toma*, only students could enter the school, while some parents, in support of the effort, dropped off food and blankets for the occupiers. Inside, students discussed the logistics of the strike and used Messenger, SMS, Hotmail, and mobile phones to communicate and coordinate with other protesters across the country. Although his mother worried for her son's safety, and pleaded that he not stay overnight, Arias arrived at the school at 8:30 am and returned home by 4 pm. (During the dictatorship, Arias's mother had worried constantly about her brother and cousin, then university students in Santiago. Both lived with the constant fear of arrest, so much so that her cousin's family later went into self-exile in Australia. For his part, Arias abided by his mother's curfew but was fully engaged in the *toma* (N. Arias, personal communication, June 9, 2016).

As was the case almost everywhere during *Pinguino*, the occupiers developed local demands (usually regarding improvement to their schools' infrastructure, schedule, and curriculum) and participated with other federations to develop national demands. In Arias's school, students organized daily work details and took on the role of teacher to continue delivering the school's academic instruction. Arias later recalled that "the best students, in terms of math, science, lingua, English, and other subjects too were chosen by the student council ... to teach the rest of them, so they don't fall behind" (N. Arias, personal communication June 9, 2016). Student-to-student teaching of academic subjects occurred frequently during the takeovers in 2006, and this practice would be repeated in schools and universities during the 2011 Chilean Winter Mobilization. Perhaps the hardest job during the takeover in Molina and elsewhere was keeping dissonant factions of fellow students from destroying the school.

"That was one of the drawbacks of the movement. .. There were ... some who wanted to break furniture. ..[and windows]. There were no regulations...so it would have to be the other students [who policed deviant behaviors]. So organizations [to solve our problems] started right from the student community" (N. Arias, personal communication June 9, 2016).

Damaging the schools would only serve to delegitimize the mobilization and undercut student demands for more equity and funding for public schools. While there were reports of school vandalism, to the credit of the student, there were fewer incidents that resulted in major damage to school property than one might expect during the 2006 movement ("Chilean High School Students Strike" 2006).

LOCE Falls, 2006

President Bachelet, a leftist who had been in exile the during first six years of Pinochet's dictatorship, had campaigned on a 36-measure reform agenda that included free health care for older patients, a revamping of the

social security and electoral systems, and a centrist economic path, similar to Ricardo Lagos's approach. In 2001, the student movement pushed education to the top of the president's agenda and forced Bachelet to negotiate directly with the students. Within days after the massive walkout, she set up the Advisory Presidential Council for Quality in Education, a committee of eighty-one members that included an array of stakeholders—students, teachers, parents, education experts from all political backgrounds, school owners, university rectors, and people from diverse ethnic groups and religious denominations. The goal of the commission was to exchange ideas and deliberate about the role of schools in civil society, and ultimately to recommend policy change (Bellei & Calaban 2013).

Many thought Bachelet had the background and wherewithal to move Chile away from neoliberalism, especially its manifestations in education, but she faced opposition in Parliament and failed to put the right people in place to begin the process. Although Bitar had supported Bachelet in the build-up to the election, he announced that he would be leaving the Ministry when she took office, and promised ACES that the roundtables would continue. But Martín Zilic, who succeeded him, had different priorities. As *paros* and *tomas* continued across Chile, Zilic dismissed the students' demands as unrealistic and lacking in seriousness ("Ministro Zilic" 2006). Events would later prove that the new MINEDUC underestimated the collective resolve of the students.

In July, as political pressure from the *Pinguinos* persisted, Bachelet reshuffled her cabinet, sacking Zilic, along with the ministers of the interior and economics. The Advisory Committee issued its final report in December. Bachelet accepted many of the committee's recommendations and called for a "new architecture" for the school system. The plan included a new General Law of Education (LGE) to replace LOCE; the creation of a Superintendency on Education and an Agency for School Quality, and changes to the administration of the public schools. The legislature approved all of these proposals save the last (Bellei & Calaban 2013). In August 2009, Bachelet signed the education reform bill into law.

As the bill made its way through the legislature, students throughout Chile pressured Bachelet and the legislature to reject it, arguing that the bill did not go far enough in restructuring the system. "[W]e reject having the profit motive inserted into education on any level—elementary, high school, and in the university...education reform is the only means we have for solving the social problems in this country," commented the president of FECH ("The Failings" 2006). In April and May of 2008, high school and university students marched in the streets of Santiago, Valparaíso, Concepción, Temuco, and Valdivia, and took over schools in Antofagasta ("Movilización Estudiantil" 2008). Many were arrested and detained.

Despite the protests, Bachelet signed LGE into law in 2009. However, students continued to voice their displeasure with the new educational reforms, arguing that the privatization features that remained were the real culprits. Under LGE, government subsidies to private schools were still allowed, prompting students to proclaim that the new law still allowed for profiteering and unequal access ("The Failings" 2006).

Wave Six: The Chilean Winter, 2011

Though frustrated with Bachelet's modest reforms, the students found much more to oppose in her successor, Juan Sebastián Piñera (Guzman-Valenzuela 2016). A billionaire businessman from the National Renewal Party, Piñera narrowly won the presidential election on January 25, 2010, in a run-off with leftist rival Eduardo Frei. As the first conservative elected to the Presidency since the end of the dictatorship in 1990, Piñera hinted at his vision for Chilean education reform by appointing Joaquín Lavín as the new MINEDUC. Lavín, who moved between careers as a journalist, newspaper editor, and politician, was a true "Chicago Boy," having earned a master's degree in economics at the University of Chicago. A conservative to the core, Lavín had long supported the economic policies of Pinochet (and even written a book in support of them) and was rumored to have once retained shares in a property company that leased its property and buildings to a private, non-traditional university that had prospered under Pinochet in the 1980s (Figueroa and Araya 2011).

Before the student movement could start against Piñera, two major earthquakes and a tsunami in 2010 devastated the central regions of Chile, postponing any activism. By the late fall of 2011, however, protest resumed, ushering a sixth wave of protest in what became known as the Chilean Winter. Unfolding over a period of five months (April through August), the winter protests, which included high school and university students, matched *el Movimiento Pingüino* in size and were arguably even more intense.

The trigger this time was a proposal for the Central University of Chile (Universidad Central de Chile), a private university in Santiago, to sell its land and buildings to a private, for-profit holding company (Kerfoot 2015). The shell company would then lease the real estate back to the university, allowing for those in the company, who were often relatives or business partners of the university's owners, to profit. These activities—which involved kickbacks, and violated the law—had been tolerated by successive Ministries of Education since the 1980s and were opposed by students for just as long (Carmona 2011). Lavín's position was both predictable and provocative; a supporter of deregulation and school choice, he turned a blind eye to the deal and set off to rebalance government subsidies in favor of the post-1981 private universities.

On April 4, 2011, marches began, soon to be followed by more strikes and country-wide university and high-school takeovers, with students calling for investment in public schooling and an end to for-profit education. As had been the case in certain previous mobilizations, the students drew inspiration and support from two other protests that were already underway in Chile, one against a controversial hydroelectric dam project and another against rising gas prices in southern Chile (Pousadela 2013). The mobilizations were organized by local and national student federations, such as ACES, FECH, and *Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile* (CONFECH), and used the latest communication technologies to coordinate their actions and democratically vet their demands. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram were used, along with the older technologies available during the *Pingüino* movement (Messenger, SMS, Photolog, phone calls, and messages). Rafael Sandoval, a participant, set up a website to collect and share information and news about the fast-changing events of that winter:

I was teaching English at the time in private houses and I remember some of my students' fathers or mothers ... started obviously speaking about this. Nobody was indifferent, and I realized that they were not having the whole picture because they were not listening to the students or to the allegations of those who were part of the movement. So they needed a place where they could read about this and that is why I created this (Sandoval, personal communication, May 10, 2016).

Sandoval also posted speeches and discussions to the website, including one broadcast live from an occupied school. The speaker, the well-respected leftist economist Marcel Claude, asserted that a centralized, public-administered education system was affordable and workable in Chile. After the talk, students from other occupied sites throughout Chile used Twitter to dialogue with him. Claude's analysis was important because it helped counter claims that the protesters were being unrealistic, even childish in their demands.

In the fall and winter of 2011, Claude had been traveling throughout Chile, talking with students at *tomas* and *paros*. Upon his return to Santiago in August, he reported that protest "is much more solid than at any other time in the post-dictatorship history. ... [and that] "there is an awareness and an excellent level of political reflection among all students." ("Marcel Claude" 2011). Indeed, he identified a clear understanding among protesters that the core problems in schooling were ideological and structural. The situation demanded large-scale reforms, not technical tweaks (N. Arias, personal communication, June 9, 2016; R. Sandoval, personal communication, May 10, 2016). As Sandoval later explained:

Suddenly you realize that the things we were doing were not exactly ... about education only, but it was about how we organize as a society, what is the society based on... We also saw the people who owned the schools. They were trying to avoid any change because they knew that it was a very good business for them ... my point is that suddenly we start speaking about education and we start speaking about the kind of relations of power (R. Sandoval, personal communication, May 10, 2016).

In April and May, the protests were expanding across the country but were almost exclusively peaceful. In hundreds of high schools and university takeovers, students marched, banged on pans and pots, held protest concerts, staged "kiss-ins" (to show passion for public education), and dressed as superheroes. By June some even undertook hunger strikes. By mid-June, July, and August, as size and intensity increased, episodes of violence erupted between protesters and the authorities in the larger cities. By then journalists from around the world had arrived in Chile to report on mobilizations in the major cities, focusing much of their coverage on the clashes between riot police using water guns and plastic bullets, and masked protestors who vandalized targeted businesses and threw stones and Molotov cocktails. Under mounting pressure, Piñera sacked Lavin in July, replacing him with Felipe Bulnes, a younger, more diplomatic operative from the center-right, and promised he would invest heavily in public education. But the students, working through their federations, stood firm as negotiations continued, as did peaceful protests in the smaller cities and towns, and both peaceful demonstrations and violent clashes in the big cities. As in 2006, the protests were subsidized in early spring. While the students, though ready for recess, refused to see the stoppage as a

defeat. Only six months into his term as Minister of Education, an exhausted Bulnes resigned before the end of the year (Vargas 2011; Benedikter, Siepmann, & Zlosilo 2015).

Though drained, Piñera, Lavin, Bulnes, and others in the Ministry had stood firm against the students' key demands to rid the system of its neoliberal features such as ending public funding for subsidized private schools. And they had turned away petitions to add progressive and more inclusive measures such as providing free higher education, and fully funding and managing the public municipal schools. Nevertheless, the protesters did win some concessions. Notably, in higher education Piñera increased the number and percentage of student scholarships, awarded student loans and reduced interest rates, finally meeting demands that dated back to 2005 (Bellei and Cabalin 2013; Gutiérrez & Reyes 2006; Guzman-Valenzuela 2016; Orlansky 2008). These results, along with the removal of Lavin as Minister of Education, were victories in what students came to know as a long and ongoing war against neoliberalism in education.

Wave Seven: "Because we are Committed," 2015-16

In yet another episode of nationwide protest in June 2016, three students from Universidad Católica del Maule (UCM), in the city of Talca, gathered downtown with hundreds of other university and high-school students. All three were preparing to be primary or secondary-school English pedagogy teachers and were nearing the end of their studies and preparing to enter the job market. They had set up a microphone in front of a graffitied wall at the center of the square, once the site of the city's central market until the 2010 earthquake damaged the surrounding buildings. Student federation representatives from Universidad de Talca and local high schools took turns speaking about the mobilization and developments at their respective locations. Between speeches, other students, some with guitars and drums, played protest songs or read poetry. Creating a focused and festive mood, some students with painted faces danced and juggled. Others joked or kissed, as others assembled around large, colorful banners, including two that proclaimed, "*No Vamos a Callar Hasta Nuestra Voz Valga!!*" (We will not shut up until our voice is heard), and "*LUCHAR un contra \$I\$TEMA OPRESIÓN que LUCRE con la EDUCACIÓN*" (Fight against the oppression system that profits from education). Several police officers stood calmly around the periphery, occasionally talking with a protester.

The events in Talca were part of a seventh wave of protest that had started in 2013, and under which the students had made real gains. In March of 2015, President Bachelet in her second term, signed into law a bill that banned profits, tuition fees, and selective admissions practices in subsidized, private schools. The law was to be phased in gradually over four years (Achtenberg 2015; "Cómo Cambia" 2015). And in early 2016, an additional 80,000 students became eligible for free tuition and fees at universities and CFTs, bringing the total of students receiving tuition to 170,000, or about 15% of the tertiary education student population. The new program aimed to provide access to students from the most vulnerable households (Achtenberg 2015; Eurostat n.d). Despite these monumental reforms, Chilean education remained the most segmented, class-divided, and expensive system in Latin America. Only time and continued protests would tell if these new policies could untie four decades of market education. For

the students, the reforms did not go far enough, and thus, the protests would continue. Students and their supporters continued to organize protests and demand structural reform. "What the government does with this scholarship is give families money to buy education," said Gabriel Boric, a former student leader who in 2013 was elected to represent his region in the lower house of Parliament. "The education market is still there, the only thing that changes is that the family doesn't have to go into debt but can pay along with everyone else. [...] Our struggle is to eradicate the education market and strengthen public education" (O'Boyle 2016, p. 2).

The three students from UCM were dressed warmly in hats and scarves. "We're on a social movement ... because education in Chile has been related to money," said Fernanda Morales, a federation representative (F. Morales, personal communication, June 23, 2016). "It's [become] just a service for giving, earning money. So it's not fair for us as students because we have the right to have education, to be educated" (F. Morales, personal communication, June 23, 2016). Morales continued that the protests over the past decade had resulted in some true gains, bread-and-butter gains for students, such as lower interest rates on student loans (from 12% down to 2%), and for the first time, the university entrance exam was now free (down from 25,000 pesos or \$40). Valeria Constanza and Catalina Briceño remarked how the mobilization consumed their time and taxed their energies even more than going to classes and studying did.

Actually, on Monday we were [working for] twelve hours at the university. We had to open the voting center [so UCM students could vote on whether to strike or not]. And we had to close it and count the votes. So it was long. We [also] have been in meetings, we have been working with students at the campus. It's all day ... We get more tired doing these kind[s] of things [but] we are going to give this fight because we are committed. You have to be committed to the cause. That's why we are here (V. Constanza & C. Briceño, personal communication, June 23, 2016).

Morales (2016) pointed to a group nearby who she said were not students but had joined the demonstration to protest the Trans-Pacific Trade Agreement. "This movement touches every aspect [of Chilean life]. That I will say. That is why it is that big in the country" (F. Morales, personal communication, June 23, 2016). The three women were well aware of the 2015 and 2016 bills that Bachelet had signed into law but had not yet seen any of the results. "We are leaving university this year or next year, so this [mobilization] will not be for us, this is for our sisters, brothers, our children," remarked Valeria Constanza (V. Constanza, personal communication, June 23, 2016).

Conclusion

While the tentacles of neoliberalism remain embedded in the Chilean education enterprise, the Chilean high school and university students of the new millennium continue to challenge the commodification of education and the government's actions to craft the enterprise as a private good for individuals and families to consume. They have not wavered in their insistence that for-profit schools have no place in the system. In their asymmetrical war on neoliberal education, each successive wave of protesters better articulates the critical links between the educational system and the nation's general welfare. Students insist, on the one hand, that free, universal public education

affirms the common good; on the other hand, they argue that treating education as a private good damages the country's well-being.

Large-scale student protests against neoliberalism across Chile have become commonplace, expected in much the same way that earthquakes are. Each one differs in terms of magnitude and impact on the environment. In the wake of earthquakes and the challenges to neoliberalism, Chile slowly returns to a version of itself. One is tempted to see all three earthquakes, neoliberalism, and student protests—as permanent fixtures in Chilean society. However, there is a key difference. As they are a force of nature, earthquakes will continue, but neoliberalism is human-made and therefore reversible and perhaps even removable. Chile's students know this well, and over four decades have persistently engaged in protest to reinvigorate a robust version of democracy that they understand is indelibly connected to education. For them, the formula is to maintain a clarity of vision and direct action over time. Along that path, they have not only found dignity in the struggle, they have brought about real results. Sustained student protest in Chile is homegrown. As such, it has become a national force to be reckoned with, and a worthy model of participative democracy for others around the world to emulate.

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