2008

The Penguins' Revolution: An Analysis of Student Response to the Multi-Dimensional Chilean Educational Crisis

Abigail Hall
Colby College

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The Penguins' Revolution: 
An Analysis of Student Response to the Multi-
Dimensional Chilean Educational Crisis

Abigail Hall

Latin American Studies Honors Thesis

Colby College

Spring 2008
The Penguins’ Revolution:
An Analysis of Student Response to the Multi-Dimensional Chilean Educational Crisis

Abigail Hall has completed the requirements for Honors in Latin American Studies.
May 2008

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To all my teachers and professors throughout the years

Y obvio, a todos los chiquillos de la Revolución Pingüina
# Table of Contents

Table of Contents  
Acknowledgments  
List of Tables and Figures  
Glossary of Acronyms and Terms  
Abstract  
Introduction  

Chapter 1: Neoliberal Antecedents to the Current Education System  
1.1 Educational Reforms of the 1980s  
1.2 The 1990s: Attempts to patch the system through reform  

Chapter 2: Educational Crisis and the Student Response  
2.1 The Current Educational Crisis  
2.2 The 2006 Revolución de los Pingüinos  

Chapter 3: Perpetuating Societal Inequality through Educational Disparity  
3.1 Inequality in Chilean Society  
3.2 Links between socioeconomic and educational inequality  
3.3 Inequality in the Education System: Why more students can’t go to college  
3.4 Conclusion: The emergence of a new discourse on inequality  

Chapter 4: Popular Protest and Political Attitudes  
4.1 Popular Protest: historical antecedents to the Revolución  
4.2 Authoritarian enclaves and the compromises of the Concertación  
4.3 Student attitudes towards politics: “No estoy ni ahí?”  
4.4 The Political Response to the 2006 Mobilizations  

Conclusion: Implications for the Future  

Bibliography
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List of Tables and Figures

Tables
1.1 Characteristics of three main types of Chilean primary and secondary schools 7
2.1 Timeline of events during the RevoluciónPingüina 32
3.1 GSE characteristics for Greater Santiago 42
3.2 Percentages of GSE by comuna of Santiago 43
3.3 Monthly average autonomous income by income quintile 44
3.4 Average years of schooling based on quintile of earnings 53
3.5 Summary of spheres of inequality 56
3.6 Enrollment in school type by income quintile, 2000 57
3.7 SIMCE scores for 1999 fourth graders by income decile 58
4.1 Comparative participation in elections 79

Figures
3.1 Work Earnings (CHP) of Men by Years of Schooling 53
Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

ACES
Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios
Coordinating Assembly of Secondary Students

ANES
Asamblea Nacional de Estudiantes Secundarios
Assembly of Secondary Students

CAPCE
Consejo Asesor Presidencial para la Calidad de Educación
Presidential Advisory Comité for Educational Quality

INJUV
Instituto Nacional de la Juventud
National Youth Institute

JEC
Jornada Escolar Completa
Complete School Day

LGE
Ley General de Educación
General Education Law

LOCE
Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Educación
Organic Constitutional Law on Education

MECE
Improvement Programs instituted in the 1990s for Primary and Secondary Schools

MDP
Popular Democratic Movement (1980s)

MINEDUC
Ministry of Education

MIR
Revolutionary Left Movement

P-900
Improvement Program instituted in the 1990s for the 900 most vulnerable schools in Chile

PME
Projects of Educative Improvement

PRODEN
Project for National Development (1980s)

PSU
Prueba de Selección Universitaria
Test of College Admissions

PUC
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Chilean Catholic University

SIMCE
Chilean Standardized Test given in Grades 4, 8 and 10

Alianza Democrática
Organization of the Opposition in the 1980s

Alianza por Chile
Political coalition of the Right (Alliance for Chile)

Colegio de Profesores, AG
Chile’s only Teachers’ Union

Comuna
Similar to a borough, territorial division of a province. Santiago is divided into 36, each governed by a municipality.

Concertación
Center-left political coalition (Coalition of Parties for Democracy)

Poblaciones
Shantytowns on the outskirts of Santiago

Proyecto de Ley
Proposed Law, similar to a bill in the U.S. system.

Municipal School
School publicly funded (through vouchers) and managed by municipalities

Subsidized Private School
School publicly funded (through vouchers) and privately managed

Unsubsidized Private School
School privately funded and privately managed
Abstract

Through exploration and analysis of economic, historical and political factors stemming from the authoritarian period (1973-1990) to the present day, this project offers an interdisciplinary explanation of the emergence of the “Penguin’s Revolution” in Chile. In May-June 2006, 700,000 high school students paralyzed the Chilean education system by protesting in the streets, taking over schools and not attending classes. Students organized under the Coordinating Assembly of Secondary Students (ACES) demanded that the government take responsibility for providing universal high quality and equal education. The roots of student discontent lie in the multi-dimensional education crisis, generated by the semi-privatized, decentralized educational system created by Augusto Pinochet in 1980 and the failure of subsequent democratic administrations to alter the model. A breakdown of the government’s response to the student movement will also be presented along with implications for the future.
Introduction

In May 2006, mass protests by high school students erupted in Santiago, Chile, spreading to almost every other major city in Chile. More than 700,000 students participated in the protests, popularly known as *La Revolución Pingüina* (The Penguins’ Revolution) due to the black and white uniforms worn by public school students in Santiago. Spurred by increases in the cost of university admissions tests and student transportation, the movement eventually called for the repeal of the Organic Constitutional Law of Teaching (LOCE) that dictator Augusto Pinochet implemented on March 10th, 1990, the day before leaving power. LOCE allowed for the “freedom of choice” in education, essentially opening the market for education and allowing schools to compete for students. This and other binding laws implemented by the military dictatorship made it almost impossible for the ruling center-left political coalition to win a majority in the Legislature, in turn increasing the difficulty to implement structural reforms to the decentralized, neoliberal educational model established in the 1980s.

These protests projected a general discontent about the fundamental organization and performance of the educational system in Chile. However, other factors also contributed to the eruption of the movement. I argue that at its roots, these collective complaints are a result of the harsh socio-economic inequality that exists in Chilean society and the fact that the current education system reproduces this inequality. It also reflects wide-ranging dissatisfaction with the Chilean political system among the first generation of youth not to grow up under dictatorship. Students’ grievances are further aggravated by the belief that the political party system is unable or unwilling to meet citizens’ demands due to both authoritarian enclaves and the changing nature of the Chilean political system. Sixteen years after the arrival of democracy, the Penguins’ Revolution still exemplifies remnants of Chile’s democratic transition. In they eyes of student
protesters, the outcome of the negotiations between with government represent another “compromise” that will not bring about real change.

This topic is noteworthy because it can be approached from an interdisciplinary manner, exploring historical, economic and political factors that contributed to the outbreak and results of the movement. A wealth of scholarly literature exists that relates to topics explored in this thesis, such as neoliberalism, the privatization of education, Chilean educational reform, transitions to democracy and popular protest. However, there are very few scholarly works published that solely examines the Revolución Pingüina on its own. For this reason, this thesis will make a significant contribution to the understanding of the event in an historical, economic and political context.

The thesis is organized in four chapters. Chapter One describes the neoliberal antecedents to the current educational system, put into place by the Pinochet Dictatorship starting in 1980, as well as attempts to “pay back the social debt” through reforms during the 1990s. Chapter Two explains the current educational crisis and the development of the three months of protests that would come to be called The Penguins’ Revolution. Chapter Three analyzes the role that the educational system plays in perpetuating Chile’s vast socio-economic inequality, and how it caused the students to protest. The final chapter explores popular protest as a way to bring about political change, starting with the period under the dictatorship as well as analyzing the effect that other student protests had on the Revolución. In addition, it dissects political attitudes among Chileans, especially students, stemming from the transition period, and how a political space was opened for popular protest in the twenty-first century. The chapter concludes by describing the political outcomes of the protests.
The scope of this investigation remains limited to the capital city of Santiago, because the protests started and were largest here. Santiago provides an interesting case study because it itself is divided along socio-economic lines; neighborhoods are clearly delineated according to household income and wealth. I use a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative analysis, as well as comparison and review of scholarly literature on topics related to the protest as mentioned above. Quantitatively, I evaluate data on school and student performance available through the Chilean Ministry of Education, demonstrating the inequality of educational quality according to socioeconomic groups and school type. I use the results from various opinion polls to evaluate students’ and citizens’ attitudes towards politics and the education system.

In January 2008 I traveled to Santiago, Chile where using anthropological methods I interviewed student leaders of the movement, members of the Teachers’ Union and a participant of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Education. For the most part, their experiences, opinions and attitudes reinforced the conclusions presented in the above-mentioned data, but I also gained invaluable insights into the inner workings of the protest themselves. Most importantly, I gained an understanding of attitudes towards outcome of the protests, and the possible future of the student movement in Chile. I found out that there is a huge gap between policy-makers and the students themselves when it comes to educational policy. Educational policy-makers see the outcome of the protests as a triumph for participatory democracy, whereas students are disappointed, and see a compromise and mollification of discontent in the face of the limitations posed on the political system by the authoritarian legacy and neoliberal economic theory.
Chapter One
Neoliberal Antecedents

The current education system in Chile is based on a model conceived by the infamous Chicago Boys, economists trained at the University of Chicago in neoliberal theory. Chilean education is presently decentralized, semi-privatized and funded by a voucher system. As characterized in Table 1.1, three types of schools exist: municipal schools administered by municipalities and publicly funded by per-student vouchers, subsidized private schools that are run by a private entity (business, church, etc.) and publicly funded by vouchers, and unsubsidized private schools that are managed and funded privately. This chapter will explore the history of this system, and the effects that it had on education throughout the 1980s. It will also examine changes to the system enacted by administrations following the transition to democracy in 1990 to improve and modernize a system that had been neglected for an entire decade.

1.1 Educational Reforms of the 1980s

As Joseph P. Farrell notes, the education system in Chile has historically been considered one of the best and most advanced in Latin America, and Chilean policy makers have consistently employed policies to try to improve the system. Under the administration of Eduardo Frei Montalva (1965-1970), educational reforms backed by necessary financial resources sought to expand the system and provide access to a greater sector of the population. Curriculum changes were also made, including increasing primary schooling from six to eight years and decreasing secondary school from six to four years, an arrangement that is still in effect today. This is not to say that the education system prior to the Pinochet regime did not

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1 Not to be confused with his son, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Chilean President 1994-2000.
have problems; it was inherently unequal and drop-out and repetition rates were high. However, the administrations of Frei and his successor, Salvador Allende assigned importance to improving the system through reform.

The socialist administration of Allende had a very different view of education. He saw education as a way to create a “new man” for a socialist society. He sought to transform the educational system through the creation of a National Unified School. This meant a system of schools that would be democratic and integrated into the community, offering educational opportunities regardless of socioeconomic level or philosophical beliefs. Teachers, parents and administrators would work together in the decision making process. It would be nationalistic, recognizing traditional Chilean values as well as class-consciousness and the struggle for the proletariat. The term “unified” referred to the fact that this system would get rid of the divisions between types of schools and grade levels. This model was seen as a way to liberate humans from the exploitative capitalist methods of teaching.

This was obviously a radical approach to education; Farrell attributes this specific proposal to the fall of Allende’s administration in the 1973 military coup due to divisions it caused within the ruling coalition and the fact that it alienated more moderate sectors of society that had originally supported Allende. Nonetheless, this policy was never implemented; Allende abandoned the proposition a few months before he fell from power. However, it is interesting to note the stark contrast between the importance given to education by Allende and the utter neglect of the system under the authoritarian dictatorship.

The implementation of the Organic Constitutional Law on Education (Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Educación, LOCE) on March 10, 1990 represented the culmination of over a decade of economic reforms carried out by the authoritarian regime. As well as being infamous

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3 Ibid, 97.
for harsh political repression and human rights abuses, the military dictatorship in Chile is known for an economic program that radically liberalized the Chilean economy with the help of economists educated at the University of Chicago, known as the “Chicago Boys.” In his book on the subject, Juan Gabriel Valdés argues that after the 1973 coup, the authoritarian regime lacked a “government project;” the military as an institution had little experience in governing due to Chile’s strong history of democracy. The economy was in shambles with over 800% inflation due to price controls set by the Allende government, as well as economic punishment from the US in the form of cutting off bilateral aid and loans from international institutions. It was obvious that the economy needed attention, but the regime lacked the technical expertise to design an effective policy. Aided by a Cold War era scholastic partnership between the University of Chicago and the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (PUC), Chilean economists trained at Chicago became Pinochet’s economic team and began a neoliberal reconstruction of the economy and the formation of a neoliberal state—the first of its kind in the world.

In the social sciences, the term neoliberalism is often misunderstood and poorly defined. For the purposes of this paper, I will use David Harvey’s definition:

Neoliberalism is a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.

In this model, the role of the state is to create institutions to secure private property rights (such as military, defense and legal systems) and to create markets in areas such as land, water,

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education, health care, social security and environmental pollution. Other than that, the state should not intervene because misinformation from interest groups could second-guess price signals and cause inefficiency.⁷

In Chile, the overall goal was to reduce and reorient the state's role in the economy and combat inflation.⁸ The Chicago Boys' first job was to negotiate loans through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and then to restructure the economy through privatization, deregulation of natural resources, and the facilitation of foreign direct investment and freer trade.⁹ The state's role as producer, which was popular in Latin America in the 1960s-70s under the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) program, was rejected under neoliberalism in exchange for the "comparative advantages" of export goods such as mining, agriculture, forestry and fishing. Under Allende, the state owned over 500 firms and banks; after privatization, this was reduced to twenty-five, including only one bank and the lucrative copper sector. State spending decreased from 40% of GDP in 1973 to 26% of GDP in 1979 due to the decrease in state employment and the elimination of many social programs.¹⁰

Neoliberal reconstruction had enormous social costs due to the dismantling of social welfare institutions, a drop in the real wage, increases in unemployment and severely limited union power. The theory posits that unemployment is voluntary but created because labor has a price below which it will not work.¹¹ Under the military regime, unemployment rose from 9% to 18% in 1975.¹² With the Chicago Boys' policies, union bargaining power was extremely diminished and could not prevent a fall in the real wage; by 1975 it had dropped to 64% of that

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⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Valdés, 23.
⁹ Harvey, 8.
¹⁰ Valdés, 22-23.
¹¹ Ibid, 53.
¹² Spooner, 106.
of 1970. In addition, neoliberal theory states that poverty should be eliminated through the "trickle down effect" of free markets and free trade, with the state playing a minimal role in poverty reduction. Marcus Taylor argues that neoliberals in Chile wanted to rid the state of welfare institutions for two main reasons. First of all, interventions by the state were believed to create inefficient economic outcomes. Secondly, social programs were seen as the "source and outcome of the pervasive politicization of Chilean society." The elimination of the role of the state in providing a "social safety net" of health care, social services and education left large sectors of the population vulnerable to impoverishment, but the regime justified this as a way not only to help the economy recover, but also to "depoliticize" the welfare system. As a result, communities mobilized to organize soup kitchens and other self-help services. The regime saw these types of programs as a possible threat—the effects of social disintegration combined with increased community organization could cause mounting political opposition. This led the regime to concern itself with the provision of certain services to help eliminate the most extreme poverty. Nonetheless, large sectors of poor still suffered because the criteria were very strict in determining who was to receive benefits.

With such high social costs, how did this neoliberal program gain popularity and acceptance in Chile? Harvey argues that under democratic regimes this requires a transformation of ideologies within civil society by capturing sectors of the media and converting intellectual elites to neoliberal ways of thinking. For the Pinochet regime, it was most important to gain support from the dominant economic class that had supported him in the coup; this was accomplished through giving them access to policy-making arenas and eliminating regulatory

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13 Valdés, 22; Spooner, 106.
14 Harvey, 65.
15 Marcus Taylor, From Pinochet to the 'Third Way': Neoliberalism and Social Transformation in Chile (London: Pluto Press, 2006.)
16 Harvey, 76; Taylor 80-82.
barriers to the formation of financial conglomerates, banks and firms under the same umbrella.\(^{17}\) Through political repression, notably the elimination of the opposition by torture and disappearances, Pinochet created an environment of fear where few dared speak out against the government or its policies.\(^{18}\) Also, although many businesses suffered due to certain neoliberal policies such as tariff reduction, memories of class conflict and mass labor militancy under the Allende regime prevented them from protesting these measures.\(^{19}\)

By 1980, the Chilean economy was showing evidence of neoliberalism’s effects. Inflation had finally fallen to only 31.2%. The economy exhibited positive growth from 1978-1980. Per-capita income had returned to 1970s levels. However, unemployment continued to be high at 12.5% (1979), not including those who worked menial jobs under the regime’s minimum employment program or those active in the informal economy.\(^{20}\) Notwithstanding, on the surface the Chilean neoliberal restructuring seemed to be a success, despite the fact the richer were getting richer while the poor were driven deeper into poverty. Pinochet decided to take advantage of his economic “accomplishments” by institutionalizing his power. When the military junta took power in 1973, it suspended the Constitution of 1925. After seven years ruling Chile, Pinochet decided to draft a new constitution.

Part of the 1980 Constitution focused on the “Seven Modernizations,” which in addition to labor relations, agrarian reform, political decentralization and judicial procedure, targeted social welfare institutions, including education. Taylor observes that the main tenets of this program were to promote the neoliberal ideals of individualization, privatization and decentralization, opening new prospects to earn profits and at the same time removing the central

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\(^{18}\) Taylor, 40; Scott and Leight, 6.

\(^{19}\) Spooner, 148.

\(^{20}\) Ibid, 145.
government as the target of social movements by eliminating its responsibility for social welfare institutions.\(^{21}\) This can be seen in the reforms enacted to the education system. A dual private-public education system was created whose goal was to reduce the role and expanse of the state and involve the private sector to encourage greater efficiency. The system was decentralized and administrative responsibility passed down to the municipal level. The other major change in education policy was a shift to a demand-side approach. Instead of direct funding, schools would receive a “voucher”—a quantity of money per enrolled student. Therefore, schools received more money if they attracted more students, supposedly providing incentives for schools to improve quality. The system was also semi-privatized: the state started providing public funding for privately owned schools, known as particulares subvencionados (subsidized private schools). This allowed for-profit businesses (as well as non-profit foundations) to compete for student enrollment while receiving public funds.\(^{22}\)

It was at this point that the education system became characterized by three main types of schools, summarized in Table 1.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
<th>Type of Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>State voucher, municipal budget</td>
<td>Municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidized Private</td>
<td>State voucher; starting in 1993 schools could also charge supplemental tuition</td>
<td>Private foundations, corporations, individuals, churches, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsubsidized Private</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>Private foundations, corporations, individuals, churches, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The voucher system is among one of the most popular methods of educational privatization researched. Theory explaining the benefits and losses of privatizing education and specifically programs such as the voucher system are outlined by Henry M. Levin and center on four criteria: freedom of choice, efficiency, equity and social cohesion. As in the Chilean case, advocates of privatization emphasize that it enables parents to choose a school that is in line with

\(^{21}\) Taylor, 85

\(^{22}\) Ibid, 89-90.
their religious, moral and political outlooks, as well as based on educational quality. Proponents also argue that privatization leads to greater efficiency, producing better results given the same resources. However, when it comes to equity, opponents of privatization contend that it creates inequalities in opportunities, resources and results. Advocates counter with the opposite argument; a competitive market will create incentives for schools to fully meet the needs of all students. The final criteria is social cohesion, or the ability for schools to provide a common educational experience for students of different backgrounds to learn to accept shared social, economic and political institutions of a particular country. There are doubts as to whether schools that compete for students based on private goals (which in the case of Chile include profit) can achieve this goal.23

The Pinochet administration did not set providing a high quality education to the masses as a goal. Its economic plan, focusing on the export of raw materials such as copper, did not require a well educated population. Public education was not considered a public good, and therefore the central government took little responsibility, besides minimal funding, to supply it. Despite the drastic reorganization of the education system, Taylor argues that during the authoritarian period, the most harmful effects came from the decrease in educational spending. The real value of the monthly per-pupil voucher dropped throughout the 1980s, from over 13,000 pesos (1996 pesos) in 1980 to a low of around 8,000 pesos in 1988.24 The voucher amount was supposed to be indexed to inflation, but after the 1982 financial crisis, it was not. The decrease was felt throughout the education system—from the drying up of school resources to a sharp


decline in teachers' wages.\textsuperscript{25} It is hard to measure the effects of decentralization and privatization of education during the 1980s because the drastic reduction in funding had its own devastating effects that very well could have masked the outcome of the reforms. Also, the results of student performance on the standardized test \textit{Programa de Evaluación del Rendimiento Escolar} (PER), were not widely published, and the test was only given from 1982-1985, due to budget restraints. Results from the \textit{Sistema de Evaluación de Calidad de la Educación} (SIMCE) are more widely available. This test replaced the PER in 1988 and is still used today as the main evaluator of educational quality and performance.\textsuperscript{26} However, these two sets of results can not easily be compared to each other, due to the fact that the SIMCE includes rural schools that consistently perform at a lower level than urban schools.

Cristián Cox recognizes the difficulty in analyzing and comparing these two sets of results. However, it is valuable to at least acknowledge that when comparing fourth grade test results from 1982 and 1988, the percentage of correct answers dropped among both municipal and subsidized private schools by an average of 3 points in Math and 6.5 points in Spanish. In unsubsidized private schools, the percentage of correct answers increased .2 points in both Math and Spanish. Cox sustains that when observing results from only the schools that were analyzed at the beginning and end of the 1980s (excluding rural schools that were newly assessed in 1988), the general tendency towards the reduction in scores is maintained. He concludes that “it seems a conservative hypothesis to sustain that the learning results did not improve throughout the decade.”\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Taylor, 91.
\textsuperscript{26} Conroy and McEwan, 155.
Despite the lack of quality results, another general trend observed is that families tried to send their children to subsidized private schools instead of public schools. Enrollment at this type of school increased from 16% in 1981 to around 35% in 1990, while the share of public school enrollment fell from around 78% in 1981 to 59% in 1990, and traditional unsubsidized private school enrollment remained constant at less than 10%. However, just because parents chose to enroll their children in private subsidized schools does not mean that the implementation of the voucher program or the creation of subsidized private schools increased the quality of education. Ann Matear argues that in practice, the “free choice” that parents were supposed to have over their children’s education was constricted by physical limitations on school capacity, unequal access to information regarding school performance and the segregation of Santiago by income. As noted above, results from the PER were not available to parents, so it was difficult to judge the quality of a school. Many parents were unwilling to send small children across the city on public transportation to be able to attend a better school. Because the best schools were (and still are) located in the richer neighborhoods in Santiago, parents from higher-socioeconomic levels did not face this obstacle. In reality, the freedom of choice only existed for those who were able to pay for it. As will be seen, many of these patterns continued after the transition to democracy as well.

Alejandra Mizala and Pilar Romaguera contend that despite the numerous investigations on the quality of a private versus public education, the majority of studies do not take into account the characteristics of the students, such as socio economic level or parents’ educational level, when comparing results. Raw data from the 1988-1989 SIMCE tests, testing fourth and eighth graders in Math and Spanish show that subsidized private schools outperformed municipal

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28 Chilean Ministry of Education in Conroy and McEwan, 156.
schools by seven points among fourth graders and five points among eighth graders, while unsubsidized private schools outperformed municipals by twenty-seven points and eighteen points, respectively. Mizala and Romaguera note that when it comes to these results, “the point of discussion is to what extent these differences are attributable to differences in teaching methods of the different schools, and how much is attributable to the characteristics of the students.”

In their econometric study, Mizala and Romaguera conclude that when socio-economic level is kept constant, the performance differences between municipal public schools and subsidized private schools was not statistically significant.

These results show that one of the most important indicators of educational performance is socio-economic level, and that the introduction of these new reforms did not correct the low performance of students from the lowest income quintiles. During the 1980s, education remained segregated along socio-economic divisions. In 1990, students from the lowest income quintile made up 41.9% of municipal enrollment, 25.8% of subsidized private school enrollment, and only 4% of unsubsidized private schools. In comparison, students from the highest quintile composed only 4.9% of municipal school enrollment, 11.3% of subsidized private schools and a whopping 67% of unsubsidized private schools.

The evaluation of student performance during the 1980s can not only be seen as a function of the new reforms. Although the neoliberal policies implemented by the Chicago Boys represented a radical change in educational philosophy, the decrease in funding for education also affected education quality. As discussed above, the “Seven Modernizations” program called for a cut in social funding, but this was exacerbated by the global financial crisis. In 1982, an

31 Ibid, 20
32 Ibid, 10
economic recession due to sharp increases in oil prices affected the entire world, but Latin America was hit especially hard. The Chicago Boys’ policies did not insulate Chile from plunging into crisis as well. The contraction of the world economy hurt exports, especially copper. Unemployment surged to 30% and the Central Bank lost 45% of its international reserves. As a result, the first team of Chicago Boys was dismissed and replaced by a new team. Valdés characterizes the 1982-1984 period as a time of unstable economic decisions, significantly departing from the neoliberal model, including the devaluation of the peso and daily exchange rate adjustments and government intervention in five privately owned banks. He argues that Chile maintained the free market model due to interventions by the IMF and World Bank in 1983 that restructured Chile’s foreign debt through a $760 million loan. The conditionality of these international lending institutions followed neoliberal theory, calling for minimal state intervention and austerity measures including reduction in state social spending. For this reason, care was not taken to re-index the educational voucher to inflation and the real value dropped throughout the 1980s as discussed above.

The current education system is still based on the decentralized model established by Pinochet’s “Seven Modernizations,” following the Chicago Boys’ neoliberal economic reforms. However, important reforms were carried out during the 1990s after the transition to democracy. The current education system in Chile is both a legacy of reforms carried out by the democratic regimes of the 1990s and the basic model established under the authoritarian regime. The LOCE ensured that major structural changes to the model would be dependent on an unattainable quorum in Congress. Therefore, the 1990s reforms sought to modernize and improve the system while maintaining the same basic framework.

33 Váldes, 28.
34 Ibid, 263.
1.2 The 1990s: Attempts to patch the system through reform

The democratic transition in Chile occurred after Pinochet was defeated in the 1988 plebiscite. Patricio Aylwin from the opposition Coalition of Parties for Democracy (Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia) beat the dictatorships’ candidate and became president in a subsequent election held in 1989. However, due to the fact that there was a gap of time between the elections and when Aylwin took power, Pinochet was able to enact legislation authorizing him and the military to maintain power and future making drastic reforms difficult. The LOCE was part of this strategy, severely limiting changes to the fundamental model of the education system. These restrictions, plus the Aylwin administration’s desire to maintain a stable transition to democracy and macroeconomic performance, resulted in the perseverance of “authoritarian enclaves” within the democratic political system that not only affected education, but the quality of democracy in Chile. This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Four.

Matear notes that during the period 1990-2003 the education reforms enacted sought to improve the quality of education in order to promote economic growth and social cohesion. Despite slight improvements in the overall quality of education during this period, the achievement gap between socioeconomic groups actually increased. There are both endogenous (inappropriate teaching methods, irrelevant curriculum and overcrowding) and exogenous (low levels of cultural capital, poverty and low aspirations) factors that can lead to inequality.35 According to Matear, the most important determinant of educational inequity is the growing tension between policies that intend to promote equity and a market-oriented education system that is not designed to support policies straying from the neoliberal model. It is quite clear that certain policies enacted during this period—such as increased educational spending—obviously strayed from the neoliberal model. However, it is true that reform mainly focused on endogenous

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35 Matear, 102
factors to improve education inside the public-private decentralized model. In spite of Matear’s grim view of education reform, some improvements were implemented during the 1990s.

In his overview of educational reforms of the 1990s, Cox divides them into three categories: Policy, Labor and Financing Conditions; Programs of Pedagogic Improvement and Renovation; and Curricular and Length Reform. The first category is the most legally regulated—changes are subject to votes in the National Congress and therefore must be the result of agreements between the governing coalition and the opposition. Any constitutional change, such as the revocation or reform of the LOCE, would fall under this category. No changes of this type were implemented during the 1990s. The second category includes interventions to directly address pedagogic improvement and equity of learning. These types of reforms are easier to pass, because they signify additional programs in which schools choose to voluntarily participate, and operate within the already existing system. The third category includes policies that refer to learning quality, such as curriculum changes and increases in the length of the school day. These changes are system-wide and mandatory, and in general were approved at the end of the 1990s when the legislature was more open to more “controversial” reforms.36

Cox also divides the reforms of the 1990s into three time periods that roughly follow the presidencies of Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994), Eduardo Frei (1994-2000) and Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006). Cox’s first time period covers 1990-1995 and he characterizes it as providing fundamental conditions for the better functioning of the scholarly system. Important reforms enacted during this first period include Program-900, MECE-Básica and Media, the 1993 Shared-Funding Law, and Estatuto Docente (Teaching Statute) Nos. 1 and 2.

Being the first democratically elected president after the dictatorship, Patricio Aylwin faced many challenges in terms of education reform. His goal was to promote equity within the

36 Cox, 39-40
mixed public-private system, as well as overcome severe deficits caused by the decreasing real value of the education voucher under the authoritarian regime, resulting in extreme public under spending on education. His overall economic strategy was to promote "growth with equity;" this was reflected in his economic reforms that maintained the fundamental model established by Pinochet but increased funds for education.\textsuperscript{37} One of the greatest accomplishments of his administration was a redefinition of the role of the state in education. Under Pinochet, the state was considered a "subsidizer" of education. Aylwin redefined this role to that of a "promoter" of education, recognizing the states responsibility to provide education as a public good to benefit all of society.\textsuperscript{38}

In 1990, statistics on the quality of education were devastating. On average, it took 10.8 years to complete the 8 year primary school cycle, and 5.4 years to complete 4 years of high school. This obviously represented inefficiencies in a system that was supposed to promote efficiency. Access to education was also biased based on socio-economic level, especially on the high school level. Less than 75\% of students in the lowest income quintile attended high school, compared to around 95\% of the highest quintile. Other problems included an outdated curriculum, low compensation for teachers and high failure and drop-out rates.\textsuperscript{39} Aylwin had a difficult task ahead of him. As mentioned, he targeted public investment toward education in order to improve teaching and learning quality. State educational spending increased unequivocally from 1990-2000. During this period the education budget more than tripled, from US $940.3 million in 1990 to US $3.02 billion in 2000. Educational spending as percent of GDP also increased from 2.6\% to 4.3\% over the same time period, with GDP itself increasing 6\%.

\textsuperscript{37} Taylor, 100
\textsuperscript{38} Cox, 37
\textsuperscript{39} Cristián Bellet, "¿Ha tenido impacto la reforma educativa chilena?" in Cristián, Cox, Ed. Políticas educacionales en el cambio de siglo: La reforma del sistema escolar de Chile (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 2005).
during the decade. As a result, teacher compensation also increased between 145-170% in real terms. In spite of these gains, Taylor remains skeptical of increases in educational spending, sustaining that it merely represents escalation from an extremely low starting point and that the increases have had ambiguous effects on educational and socioeconomic inequality.\textsuperscript{40}

Private spending on education also increased starting in 1993 as a result of the Shared-Funding Law. This reform has permitted subsidized private primary and secondary schools and municipal secondary schools to charge parents a supplementary monthly fee in addition to the voucher they receive from the state. Leader of the Chicago School, Milton Friedman, was one of the first to advocate a voucher-style approach to funding education, hence its implementation as part of the Chicago reforms of the 1980s. However, Friedman’s vision included a fairly small publicly-funded voucher that could be augmented by family contributions. In Chile, the state remained the primary provider of funds for education until this policy change in 1993. By 2000, 1,530 schools had implemented this policy, representing about 30% of the students in the subsidized system. Approximately 93% of subsidized private schools had started charging a monthly tuition, while only 7% of municipal schools had joined the program.\textsuperscript{41}

After an initial boom in the founding of publicly subsidized private schools in the 1980s following the introduction of the voucher program, the number of these types of schools remained fairly constant from 1985-1994. From 1994-2001 more than 800 subsidized private schools were founded, clearly due to the profit incentives provided by the shared funding law. As a result, matriculation at these schools increased from 32.5% to 36.6% of the student population from 1995-2001, as enrollment in public schools fell. Students from the highest income quintiles started attending private schools more; their attendance at public schools dropped from 18% to

\textsuperscript{40} Taylor, 175
\textsuperscript{41} Cox, 49
11% from 1990-2000. Matear and Taylor concur that this structural change improved pedagogical quality overall, but increased polarization and inequality between schools. To try to combat this effect, a system of scholarships per establishment was enacted in 1998 for subsidized private schools. Depending on enrollment and tuition costs, schools were obligated to admit a certain percentage of scholarship students. While improving on the original plan, these means were not sufficient and inequality persisted.

Matear worries that the trends towards preferences for private schools hurts the reputation of municipal schools. In Santiago, less than 30% of respondents to a public opinion poll in 1992 preferred to publicly educate their children. Municipal schools educate the poorest sectors of society. By 2000, 80.9% of students that attended these schools were from the bottom half of income earners, and as noted above, students from the highest income quintiles attend private schools. The small percentage that do attend municipal schools do so in the rich municipalities such as Las Condes or Providencia, which can afford to provide a higher quality public education. Although parents from the lowest income levels undoubtedly aspire to send their children to publicly-subsidized private schools (unsubsidized private schools are out of the question due to exorbitant costs) they often can not afford to pay the fees that these schools are now allowed to charge. Even if they could pay the tuition, the schools employ admissions policies that discriminate against low-income students that could put the school at risk for lower test scores. Overall, the shared funding law has benefited middle-income students whose parents are able to pay the extra fee that provides more resources for a higher quality education. The prestige of municipal schooling, never high to begin with, has dropped considerably threatening to turn these schools into “dumping grounds” for poor or low-performing students.

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42 Ibid, 50.
43 Ibid, 49
44 Matear, 107
However, school type is not the best indicator of student performance. Instead, as Matear, Levin and Mizala and Romaguera have calculated, socio-economic level determines performance on standardized tests. In other words, low income students who attend subsidized private schools do not perform better than low income students at municipal schools. Middle income students actually have performed better at municipal schools than at subsidized private schools. This means that private subsidized schools, despite more funding, are not compensating for lower-income students’ social disadvantages in their home and community environment. The results also implicate that municipal schools are “achieving more with less,” speaking well to the Improvement Programs aimed at the lowest performing (usually municipal) schools and demonstrating that private schools are indeed not necessarily more efficient than publicly administered schools.

During this first period a strong educational base was formed by focusing public investment on infrastructure, advancing teaching methods and providing up to date technology through the Improvement Programs. These were voluntary programs with universal reach that invited any school to implement them as well as programs that focused on the most “educationally vulnerable” and rural schools. As Cox notes, by the end of this period the days when a classroom contained nothing more than a blackboard and chalk were gone. MECE-Básica was a universal program that targeted primary school to improve classroom effectiveness, curriculum reform and higher quality teaching resources. It provided materials such as classroom libraries and text books, while also training teachers in modern instruction and management methods. Improvement in learning quality did not come from rigid curricular standards.

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45 Matear, 111
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid, 40
48 Ibid, 61
imposed from above. Instead, schools were expected to come up with their own initiatives and projects (called Projects of EDUCATIVE Improvement, PMEs) to receive funding. This strategy of school improvement has since been institutionalized by the Ministry of Education as a way for schools to receive more funding and improve pedagogical quality at the same time.

The program was jointly funded by the Chilean government and a loan from the World Bank. Under the administration of Aylwin’s successor, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, the program was expanded to the high school level under MECE-Media. Taylor criticizes the participation of the World Bank, arguing that it emphasized the neoliberal model of selectivity, privatization, decentralization and compensation. However, the Chilean government did not show any signs of moving away from the model established by the authoritarian regime, but rather worked to enact reforms within this framework. For this reason, accepting World Bank funds did not impose any new limits to the education system.

The Aylwin administration also sought to improve the poorest schools through focalized reforms. Programa-900 (P-900) targeted the 900 most “educationally vulnerable” schools in Chile’s urban areas. Vulnerability was assessed through student performance on the SIMCE, the average socio-economic level of the enrollment, location and number of grades taught. As for the MECE programs, funding was dependent on the development of a PME to outline how the funds would be used to increase student performance. This program had largely positive effects. Beller observes that in general, P-900 schools improved their SIMCE points relative to similarly vulnerable schools that did not choose to participate in the program as well as improving their SIMCE rankings among all subsidized schools. He does contend, however, that the program was more successful in its first two years (1990-1992) and among schools with an average SIMCE

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49 Taylor, 173
score lower than 60 points (on a scale of 100). A similar program targeting vulnerable rural schools called MECE-Rural had comparable results.\footnote{Beller, 174.}

Another reform enacted during this first period that falls under the category of Policy, Labor and Financing Conditions were two Teaching Statutes. The first Statute was passed in 1991, and as a systematic reform was one of the most controversial reforms of the entire period, dividing the cabinet of President Aylwin and subject to sharp opposition in Congress. It created unique labor rules for teachers, removing them from the Work Code that applied to private industry workers. The statute established national regulation for working conditions, a common and improved compensation structure, a system of bonuses and high job security. This last element was highly criticized by the opposition, who saw increased difficulty in firing teachers or school directors as contrary to the liberal theory behind the education system and strongly believed that it would lead to inefficiencies that the system sought to evade. This indeed happened, and in 1996 Teaching Statute No. 2 was passed, allowing more flexibility in the hiring and firing of teachers, and correcting the structural financial disequilibrium.\footnote{Cox, 52-53.}

The second period of democratic educational reform, 1995-2000, coincided with the administration of Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, and ushered in a new focus on curricular and school day length reforms, while maintaining the base of programs started by Aylwin. Cox contributes the success of educational reforms in Chile to the fact that one has built on the base of another, providing continuity and consistency. For example, an Improvement Program called Enlaces, enacted during Frei's administration to provide computers and educational networks to schools, would not have been effective without the prior implementation of the MECE programs. Nonetheless, glaring gaps in educational quality remained despite these reforms.
At the beginning of the 1990s, the curriculum in use in Chile was outdated and required changes to be able to prepare students to live in the modern world while maintaining a national identity. The LOCE allowed schools to create their own curriculums while conforming to the minimum standards set by the Ministry of Education. These curriculums then had to be approved by the Consejo Superior de Educación (CSE). Although the curriculum changes of the 1990s could not get rid of the freedom that the LOCE established, only 14% of schools exercised this right as of 2001. The vast majority adhered to the Ministry of Education’s improved curriculum, but this curriculum was still weak.

Under Pinochet, the educational curriculum was considered irrelevant to economic performance, because he did not value education as a public good that would benefit all of society. Thus, the lack of an adequate and high quality curriculum created “unreliable foundations for continued growth.” Cox summarizes that in general terms, during the 1990s changes to the standards set by the Ministry of Education were determined by “the necessity to respond to outside demands of society to the education system.” Skills emphasized in the new curriculum included: the ability of abstraction, systemic thinking, experimentation and “learning to learn,” communication and group work, problem resolution, the management of uncertainty and adaptation to change. These abilities were deemed essential for successful participation in the Chilean society and economy. The new curriculum for primary school was implemented in 1996, followed by that for secondary school in 1998.

The Jornada Escolar Completa (Full School Day, JEC) policy was implemented during this second period of reform as well. This policy came under sharp criticism from the student

53 Cox, 72
54 Ibid, 72-73
movement. Prior to this law, as in many Latin American countries, Chilean schools typically ran two shifts; half attended in the morning and half in the afternoon. In Chile, this half day meant six scholarly hours of forty-five minutes each totaling a 4.5 hour school day. The JEC increased the school day to eight scholarly hours, making the school day six hours long, and eliminated the two shifts. This was good for teachers because it decreased the hours that they had to be at school teaching classes and left more time for planning and professional development. Also, it aimed to improve learning and achieve better equity. Lower income students generally have different “social linguistic codes” and it takes more time for them to adapt to a school environment than children from higher incomes or who have educated parents. As Cox notes, lower income students can not count on a “learning space” in their homes and therefore will benefit from more time spent at school.55

However, this meant a serious investment in terms of infrastructure for the Chilean state due to the fact that, in theory, some schools would now have to handle twice the amount of students. To address this, the state provided a 30% larger voucher for schools with JEC. It also allocated non-voucher educational funding towards creating better infrastructure for this program. To enter the JEC program, schools must first have the infrastructure, equipment and personnel necessary to accommodate all students and a Learning Project outlining how the extra hours would be used. Revisions to the law in 2004 extended the time by which all schools receiving state vouchers would have to implement the JEC; municipal and “vulnerable” subsidized private schools would have to start by 2007, and the rest of the private subsidized schools by 2010. 56 The students’ main complaints about the JEC were that the Learning Projects

56 MINEDUC, “Jornada Escolar Completa.”
were not effective—they spent more time learning the same subjects instead of receiving instruction in less traditional areas such as foreign language, art, computation or technology.

The 1990s encompassed the first two periods of educational reform under democracy. However, as Chile moved into the twenty-first century, its policy makers and public began to realize that although an important first step, the educational reforms of this decade were not enough. National test scores widely showed that the lowest socio-economic groups were still performing much lower than their peers in the highest socio-economic levels, and that overall test scores had not increased. However, what really caught the attention of the Chilean public were international test results that showed Chile lagging way behind the international average. Chapter Two will describe the third period of educational reform and show how the educational crisis contributed to the explosion of student mobilization and protest in May and June 2006.
Chapter Two
Educational Crisis and Protest

In Chile, the beginning of the twenty-first century meant that it was time to see whether a decade worth of reforms to Pinochet’s neoliberal educational model would “pass the test,” literally and figuratively. For the most part it failed. Performance on standardized tests was not improving, and disparities in access to high quality primary and secondary education were stagnant or worsening. Students and teachers recognized this educational crisis, but it took 700,000 students mobilizing in the streets and at their schools to draw the attention of the government to the emergency affecting its nation’s future.

2.1 The Current Educational Crisis

The first two periods of education reform as defined by Cristián Cox were discussed in Chapter One. The third period started during the second half of 2000, when results of the SIMCE and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests were released, and signals the beginning of the current educational crisis in Chile. The Chilean government realized that as a whole, the educational system was performing way below standards to be competitive in a globalized world. The public was shocked to find that Chilean students scored 50-70% lower on this test than Chilean GDP predicted, and well below the international average. As detailed above, Chile had just enacted an entire decade of reforms, but the results did not reflect these efforts. María-José Ramírez analyzed the math scores from the TIMSS, and blamed poor performance on the fact that compared to other countries with similar economic profiles, Chilean students had parents with fewer years of schooling, the Chilean mathematics curriculum covered

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less content, and the meager official curriculum had weaker implementation.\(^{59}\) Also, results on the TIMSS demonstrated the inequality in education between socio-economic groups. Those able to afford an unsubsidized private education outperformed their peers at municipal and subsidized private schools due to stronger curriculums and more resources to execute them.\(^{60}\)

Cox argues that according to the social and political view of education, quality matters more than equity due to the fact that Chileans focus more on performance within their social group rather than how certain policies affect the population as a whole. However, according to the student movement, as well as the *Colegio de Profesores* (Chile’s only Teachers’ Union) the current educational crisis is more complex. Grounded in three main themes, the first is a crisis of poor quality. Despite slight improvements during the first half of the 1990s that shrunk the gap between municipal and unsubsidized private school performance, the SIMCE results have shown almost no improvement since 1996, and the achievement gap has once again widened.\(^{61}\) To some extent, this less than stellar performance on the SIMCE throughout the 90s can actually be attributed to improvements in education; more students from low-income families attended school and stayed enrolled for longer. These types of students, who in earlier periods tended to drop out before taking these exams, are now performing lower than their peers, in turn decreasing aggregate test scores.\(^{62}\) However, as shown by the TIMSS, despite slight improvements, the quality of education as a whole in Chile is poor and has shown little improvement.

Secondly, there is a crisis of inequality. Currently Chile has almost universal coverage of primary and secondary school, but the student movement asserts that a high quality education is


\(^{60}\) Ibid.


\(^{62}\) Ramirez, 93
only available for those who can afford to pay for it. Although test results among the poorest 15% of students increased over the course of the 1990s, mostly due to the specialized programs discussed in Chapter One, the truth is that students from higher socio-economic levels still outperform their peers from lower socioeconomic levels. The 2006 SIMCE testing students in tenth grade shows that the highest socio-economic quintile outperformed the lowest socio-economic quintile by 78 points in Spanish and 109 points in Math.\(^{63}\) Also, access to higher education is still very limited depending on socio-economic level, one of the main complaints of the student movement. As of the year 2000, only 10% of students from the lowest socio-economic quintile were enrolled in post-secondary institutions, compared to 65% of the highest socio-economic quintile.\(^{64}\) As will be shown in Chapter Three, access to higher education in Chile is essential for social mobility.

Directly related to the theme of inequality, the third element is the crisis of social segmentation among schools. Students in Chile attend schools with peers from the same socio-economic level, and this phenomenon has deepened since 1990. Although officially three types of schools exist in Chile (municipal, subsidized private and unsubsidized private), the student movement argues that in practice, five types are defined by exclusivity, divided according to socio-economic level. In addition to the three publicly recognized, the student movement distinguishes between municipal schools from poor neighborhoods and municipal schools from rich neighborhoods as well as subsidized private schools with and without shared funding.\(^{65}\) The OECD report on Chile’s Educational policy illustrates this “educational apartheid” using data from the 2001 SIMCE of fourth grade students:

\(^{63}\) Resultados Nacionales SIMCE 2006, Informe Nacional, 39.
\(^{64}\) CASEN Survey, Mideplan 2000 in OECD, Reviews..., 59-60.
\(^{65}\) OPECH, “¿Por qué hay que cambiar la LOCE y Revisar la Municipalización?” Santiago, Chile. 1 July 2006 http://www.opech.cl/bibliografico/doc_moved/opech_loce.pdf (25 January 2008).
about 80% of enrolment coming from the low and low middle groups (42% of the total), have mothers who did not complete their education, family incomes ranging from CLP 100,000 to 130,000 per month and attend municipal education; the middle group (37% of total enrolment), is divided almost equally between municipal and private subsidised education (47.6% and 52.3%, respectively), and their mothers have 11 years of education, while family income is almost CLP 200,000 per month. The high middle and high income groups study primarily in private schools, be these subsidised or paid, and show substantial educational and income differences compared to the rest.  

In fact, according to SIMCE results from 2006, all students from the highest socio-economic quintile were enrolled in unsubsidized private schools. Supposedly, “free choice” allowed parents to choose the highest quality school, but as in the 1980s, a lack of information on test scores, discriminatory admissions policies, and geographical limits prevent this.

The tri-part crisis of quality, inequality and segmentation can mainly be contributed to the 1980 Chilean constitution (discussed in Chapter One), the Organic Constitutional Law of Education (Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Educación, LOCE), the Law of Municipalization and the Law of Subsidies. The main problem with the LOCE is that it prioritizes the “freedom of education” over education as a human right. This essentially means that the law holds the freedom to educate—to establish schools that profit from state vouchers—higher than the right to a quality public education. In other words, the LOCE has transformed education into a lucrative business that in many cases sacrifices educational quality. Despite setting minimal curricular requirements, it permits the owners of the school ample freedom to use the subsidies as they see fit, and does not provide for the sufficient monitoring of curriculum quality, teaching or educational infrastructure. It also allows discriminatory selection of students based on socio-economic level or learning ability. Subsidized private schools are often for-profit businesses, and for this reason have more incentive to enroll better performing students because they are cheaper.

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66 OECD, Reviews... 61.
67 Resultados Nacionales SIMCE, 40.
to educate. This means that lower-performing and poorer students are forced to attend public schools administered by the municipality, which are often under funded and of poorer quality. The LOCE is supposed to allow parents to choose where to send their child to school, but really it has come down to the school choosing the child. 68

The problem with the Law of Municipalization is that the majority of municipalities in Chile are not well-equipped to manage a public education system. In fact, of the 345 municipalities in Chile, only thirty-two have specialized teams in charge of administering the public schools of their municipality. MINEDUC does not provide adequate monitoring to make sure that municipalities offer a high-quality education or use the resources provided effectively. Municipalization also leads to inequality, in that some municipalities, such as those in the northeastern parts of Santiago, are richer and can provide a better quality education than those found in the poorer sectors. Here, the Law of Subsidies also comes into play. As of now, the state provides a flat subsidy, around $CH 32,000 (US$64.00) per month per student. This means that a student from the lowest socioeconomic quintile attending a public school receives the same subsidy as a student from the highest quintile attending a subsidized private school with shared funding. The subsidy does not cover the entire cost of educating a student, especially one with lower social capital. For this reason, all subsidized schools are forced to go to other sources for funds. In the case of municipal schools, this is the general budget of the municipality. Poor municipalities cannot supplement the subsidy like rich municipalities or subsidized private schools do, negatively affecting the quality of education and promoting educational inequality. 69

Cox contends that this poor performance has led to policies in recent years designed to “bring the reform to the classroom.” These reforms have focused on improvements in teacher training and more public funding for education departments at Chilean universities. In 2002 the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) reformed the primary school curriculum once again, making standards and expectations much more explicit. It also implemented a system of teacher evaluation. As mentioned above, the JEC was revised in 2004. However, these reforms were not enough, and were seen by the students as a “band aid” solution to a crisis requiring major “surgery” to correct a structural problem. It is in this context that the Revolución took place in 2006. After a decade of reform, Chilean students expected results in terms of quality as well as equity.

2.2 The 2006 Revolución Pingüina

Student participants of the 2006 mobilizations agree that the movement itself did not begin in 2006. The four weeks that have come to exemplify the student struggle in Chile were the result of over a year of organization on the part of the ten emblematic high schools in Santiago that formed the Coordinating Assembly of Secondary Students (ACES) in 2001. Emblematic high schools are municipal high schools in Santiago that have traditionally had better reputations for quality than other municipal schools in Santiago and the rest of the country. For example, the Instituto Nacional was the first high school founded by the Chilean Republic, and is the Alma Mater of seventeen Presidents, including Salvador Allende and Ricardo Lagos. According to Sebastián Vielmas, alumnus of the Liceo de Aplicación, another emblematic high school, these are schools “where a parent, that wants to put their child in a public high school,

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70 Cox, 42.
could do so calmly without expecting that they arrive home stabbed by a classmate." This strong statement represents the common perception that the emblematic high schools are an “acceptable option,” while also revealing the notion that all other municipal schools are “dumping grounds” for underprivileged or problem students. Vielmas contends that it was not surprising that the student movement emerged under the leadership of the emblematic schools, due to the democratic way in which students organize to make decisions.

The right to student organization is protected by Decree No. 524 of the Ministry of Education. Students at all high schools can democratically elect course representatives to form part of the Committee of Course Delegates. Within the Committee a board of directors is elected known as the Student Center (Centro de Alumnos), and in the case of the emblematic high schools, the president of the Student Center represents the entire high school at the ACES. Although every high school has the right to democratically organize, Vielmas and Sanhueza contend that prior to 2006, many schools were not exercising this right, or doing so poorly, due to little support from school administrations or lack of consciousness and information. It was from March to May 2006 that other schools started joining the Assembly, which eventually grew to include more than 100 high schools. At this point, the ACES divided into five zones within Santiago, and each of these zones elected a representative to the newly formed National Assembly of Secondary Students (ANES), including representatives from each region of Chile. As Vielmas pointed out, the curious thing about both the ACES and the ANES was that neither ever created or published a legal document establishing itself as an official organization. However, it is undeniable the organizational role both groups played before and during the

71 Sebastián Vielmas (Former President, Student Center, Liceo de Aplicación) in discussion with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
72 Vielmas and María Jesús Sanhueza (Former Spokesperson, ACES) in discussion with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
73 Vielmas, in discussion with the author, January 2008.
mobilizations of 2006. They provided leadership, education, and made all official decisions regarding street protests, strikes, school take-overs, and eventually when to end the major mobilizations. The ACES elected four spokespeople, María Jesús Sanhueza, Karina Delfino, César Valenzuela and Juan Carlos Herrera. Sanhueza described the spokespeople as having a “communicational role,” to make sure that the public, MINEDUC and the high schools were familiar with the position of the assembly.74 They also became the public face of the student movement.

Starting in November 2005, student leaders of the ACES came together to dialogue with the Ministry of Education about the educational crisis in Chile. They published a document, diagnosing various problems and detailing proposals to rectify them. The students touched upon major themes of the educational crisis, including municipalization, the LOCE, the JEC and the financing of education. They also proposed reform to Decree No. 524 and a renovation of the Student Centers in many schools, as well as changes to include Sex Education in the curriculum. This proposal was handed to then Secretary of Education Sergio Bitar, inviting him to review it with the Secretariat of Education, and to start “systematic and sustained work based on this proposal during the year 2006.”75 They also asked to form a working group between student leaders and functionaries of MINEDUC during the summer of 2005-2006 (December-February in the Southern Hemisphere). However, during this time presidential elections were held, President Michelle Bachelet was elected, and Sergio Bitar left his post to Martin Zilic, along with the student proposal. Needless to say, the proposal was ignored.

In March, the students began to organize to figure out ways to get their agenda through to MINEDUC. On 26 April, a peaceful march was held in the capital of Santiago. In less than a

74 Sanhueza in discussion with the author, January 2008.
month it escalated to include more than 700,000 mostly high school students from more than 100 high schools and almost every major city in Chile. At first, the students’ demands focused on a “short-term” agenda, highlighting specific educational policies. A brand new transportation system, known as Transantiago was to be implemented within the next year and the students protested government-announced restrictions on the use of the student transport pass under the new plan. The second demand during this preliminary manifestation was a decrease in the price of the University Selection Test (Prueba de Selección Universitaria; PSU). This test is required for all students wishing to attend college in Chile. In 2006, the price of the PSU rose to $21,000 pesos, approximately US$40, increasing an already high cost barrier for low income students. A third demand during this initial period focused on expanding the free school lunch program.

| November 2005 | The ACES submits petition outlining education crisis to MINEDUC |
| 26 April 2006 | First organized march in Santiago |
| 10 May 2006 | 2000 students attempt to march to MINEDUC, confronted by police, 800 students arrested |
| 19 May 2006 | Students from Instituto Nacional and Liceo de Aplicación take over their schools, student demands start to focus on “long-term” agenda |
| 21 May 2006 | In her annual address to the nation, President Bachelet barely acknowledges the student movement, prompting more tomas |
| 26 May 2006 | 30 schools in toma, 70 on strike |
| 30 May 2006 | 700,000 students participate in first national strike, approximately 300 schools are in toma, and more than 100 are on strike, university students join in support |
| 1 June 2006 | President Bachelet presents proposal to students that includes the formation of a Presidential Advisory Committee for Educational Quality (CAPCE), rejected by the ACES |
| 5 June 2006 | Second national strike, supported by teachers, labor unions, university students |
| 7 June 2006 | ACES finally agrees to the formation of the CAPCE |
| 9 June 2006 | Student leadership within ACES becomes divided, announce end of mobilizations |
| 13 June 2006 | Students return to classes |
| October- November 2006 | Some mobilizations continue, but do not have widespread support |
During this first manifestation, Minister of Education Martín Zilic expressed willingness to dialogue with students. However, the students did not leave satisfied and the mobilizations did not end there. On 7 May, the ACES announced a nation-wide student mobilization to take place on 10 May. It claimed that despite meetings with the government, no concrete solutions had been proposed. María José Sanhueza contended that "the meetings with the Ministry (of Education) have been dialogues which have not arrived at concrete solution. Because of that, we suggest continuing with the mobilizations...until [there is] a negotiation that is favorable to us."  

On 10 May, approximately 2000 students started marching from Plaza Almargo in Santiago, attempting to arrive at the Ministry of Education to voice their concerns. However, they were stalled when confronted by the police, and violence erupted resulting in the arrest of 800 students. By this time, the students’ demands had increased to include revisions to the "Full School Day Policy" (JEC) As previously discussed, students contended that the extra hours of instruction prescribed by the policy were not being effectively utilized; the law did not specify how the time was to be used, and students complained that they were receiving “more of the same,” as in more time was being spent on the instruction of traditional subjects, instead of arts, foreign language or technology instruction. It also put a lot of pressure on schools to improve infrastructure to accommodate many more students at once. For this reason, the revision in 2004 included funds for infrastructure improvements as well as prohibited the expulsion of students who could not pay in the middle of a school year and implemented fines for schools that did not

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accept pregnant students or teenage mothers.\textsuperscript{78} Despite these improvements, students had not yet seen concrete changes and continued to find fault with the program.

The government ignored the students’ demands, avowing that they would not achieve anything through street protests. For the next three weeks, mobilizations continued sporadically throughout the capital city, with little success. However, on 19 May, the students of two of the emblematic high schools, El Instituto Nacional and Liceo de Aplicación, in the comuna (neighborhood) of Santiago took over their schools. To take over a school, a group of students arrived early in the morning and blocked all doors and windows with chairs and desks to prevent anyone from entering. Once students and teachers started to show up, only fellow students could come into the school. When all of the students had arrived, a popular vote was held to approve or refuse the take-over. If the take-over was approved, they started to organize into committees that took charge of food, security, communication and finances. Students spent the night at the schools, and in many cases participated in workshops where they would discuss various topics to do with the educational crisis.\textsuperscript{79} The tomas (take-over) signaled an important turning point in the mobilizations. By now, students realized that street protesting would not produce the desired reaction from the government. Guided by the student leaders of ACES, the students changed their methods to instigate a positive response from the government and re-initiate negotiations.

At this point the student demands amplified to include a “long-term” agenda: the serious structural reform of the educational system. These demands included the derogation of the Constitutional Organic Law on Education (LOCE), a legacy of the Pinochet regime that made education reform difficult. The LOCE became one of the focal points of the students’ campaign,


\textsuperscript{79}Vania Gonzalez (Current Student, Liceo No. 1 Para Niñas) and Nicolás Vicente (Former student leader, Liceo Agusto D’Halmar de Ñuñoa) in discussion with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
reflecting back to the 2005 proposal, and demonstrating a significant divergence from prior student protests that only focused on specific short-term policies. Calling for the dissolution of the LOCE as well as an end to municipalization and the Law of Subsidies demonstrated that they wanted profound structural change to address the stark inequality in access to a quality education—reforms that would mainly affect future generations of students. As previously discussed, by 2006, various educational policies had been reformed by democratic administrations to try to improve educational quality. However, the LOCE still existed because it required a two-thirds vote in the National Congress to overthrow it, and strong right-wing representation prevented this. However, the ruling coalition, Concertación, took seats in both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies from the right-wing Alliance for Chile (Alianza por Chile) during the December 2005 Parliamentary elections, signaling the first chance at greater constitutional reform since the transition to democracy.

The students participating in tomas and strikes wanted President Michelle Bachelet to recognize their demands and address the quality of Chilean education during her speech to the nation on 21 May. However, the students were disappointed to hear only a small and indirect reference to the mobilizations in the president’s speech to the Congress in Valparaiso. She chastised the students, saying “what we have seen in recent weeks is unacceptable. I will not tolerate vandalism, destruction or the intimidation of people! ...We won democracy with an uncovered face, and we must continue that way.” Nicolás Vicente, student leader of his high school in the comuna of Ñuñoa, contends that if Bachelet had acknowledged the students in her

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speech, perhaps the movement would have taken a very different turn.\textsuperscript{82} In the wake of the President's silence, students at the Instituto Nacional decided to hand the school back to authorities, and instead began an indefinite strike, announcing that they would not return to classes until the government authorities recognized the deficiencies within the education system. They called for non-violence, urging students not to take to the street, hoping to be taken seriously.\textsuperscript{83} Zilic insisted that the government would not talk to students on strike, a strategy that proved ineffective as more schools joined the Instituto Nacional and stopped attending classes, and even more started tomas of their own. On 25 May, twenty-four schools were taken over and sixteen were on strike. By the next day the situation had exploded—thirty schools were in toma and over seventy declared strikes across the country. Zilic finally conceded to a dialogue with the students for 29 May, but the ACES called for a national strike of all Chilean students for the 30\textsuperscript{th}.

Karina Delfino of the ACES declared that if during the meeting on the 29\textsuperscript{th} “the answers are favorable...with respect to our... themes...only in that case will we call off the manifestation.”\textsuperscript{84}

Zilic did not even show up to the meeting, and instead sent sub-secretary of education Pilar Romaguera to the meeting. More than 100 students showed up at MINEDUC, but only twelve were allowed to enter. Disappointed and angry that the government had once again not taken them seriously, the students confirmed the national strike for the following day.

On 30 May 2006, more than 250 schools throughout the country participated in what has been called the greatest student protest in thirty years, and the first great challenge of Michelle Bachelet's presidency. Between 700,000 and one million high school and university students participated as well as teachers and professors. Before the protest, the ACES called for a

\textsuperscript{82} Vicente in discussion with the author, January 2008.


\textsuperscript{84} “Cerca de 100 mil estudiantes se movilizan y confirman paro nacional para el martes,” La Tercera, 26 May 2006, http://www.tercera.cl/medio/articulo/0.03255_566_21285176.00.html. (29 October 2007).
peaceful mobilization, highlighting the desire to be taken seriously by the government. Unfortunately, provoked by police-launched tear gas and fire hoses directed at protesters, some students reacted aggressively. More than 600 people were arrested. In response, the president called a meeting of her cabinet and invited twenty-five students to participate in dialogue. Despite the violence—later confirmed to have been started by police aggression—the students had managed to get their voices heard, and thus began the process of negotiation.\footnote{Chile: 730 detenidos en la mayor protesta estudiantil en 30 años,” Clarín, 31 May 2006. http://www.clarin.com/diario/2006/05/31/elmundo/i-02001.htm (9 November 2007).}

After two days of dialogue while the strikes and tomas continued, President Bachelet presented a proposal to the students. It included a commitment to establish a Presidential Advisory Committee on Educational Quality (Consejo Asesor Presidencial para la Calidad de Educación, CAPCE) to reform the LOCE. She also promised to provide free school transport passes for the neediest students without restrictions on its use, establish scholarships for the PSU for 155,000 students (80\% of the poorest in Chile), and expand the free lunch program.\footnote{“Bachelet anuncia profundo plan de educación en medio de movilizaciones,” La Tercera, 1 June, 2006. http://www.tercera.cl/medio/articulo/0,0,3255_5664_214732300,00.html (9 November 2007).} The ACES met to consider the proposal. After eight hours of discussion, it rejected the proposal based on the fact that it did not include a free school transport pass for all students which they argued was feasible given the high price of copper, Chile’s main export and significant source of state revenue.

On 5 June, another national strike took place. Many schools peacefully participated by holding cultural days (jornadas culturales) inside school grounds with musical performances, speeches, theater productions and debates about the quality of education in Chile. University students, professors, and various unions supported the high school students in this strike by peacefully demonstrating. However, members of the left-wing organization FPMR (Miguel
Rodriguez Patriotic Front) provoked violent protests in the streets, angering the students due to fears that they would be blamed for the destruction caused by others and hinder the negotiation process. On 6 June, students from Liceo de Aplicación peacefully occupied the Chilean office of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) to voice their demands, publicly sending the message to the Chilean government that they were willing to go to an international organization if it refused to listen to their demands. The students later left amicably, satisfied by UNESCO’s response.87

On 7 June, President Bachelet announced that Juan García Huidobro would head the Presidential Advisory Committee. The ACES communicated that they were in agreement with the formation of the Committee, but insisted that half the members be chosen by the student assembly. The government rejected this proposal, stating that the President had the right to choose the committee. Out of seventy-three posts, the president reserved six for high schools students and six for college students. On 9 June, after a press conference in which it was obvious that the student leadership was divided over the issue of the Advisory Committee, the ACES announced that the mobilizations had officially ended, and after twenty-two days of protests, students returned to classes on 13 June.88

Although some mobilizations continued, they did not resemble the strong organization, cohesiveness and determination as those of May and June 2006. The organization of the protests was nothing short of incredible—students used cell phones, text-messaging, e-mail and blogs to communicate with each other, demonstrating the power of new-age communication technologies. The students were also able to modify their strategies when they realized that the government

would not respond to violent protest and delinquency. Despite the fact that student leaders came from different political backgrounds from right to left, during early critical moments they were able to rally around the cause, projecting a united voice to government officials. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, party politics eventually infiltrated the movement, and unfortunately was one of the factors that lead to the weakening of the ACES.

The student movement made clear that structural reforms are needed to address the division of education system along socioeconomic lines, in turn affecting the quality of education that poorer students receive. This segregation is not only unfair, but also affects Chile’s socioeconomic inequality. Despite being a leader in Latin America in terms of economic growth and development, Chile still remains one of the most unequal societies in terms of income differences between the richest and poorest quintiles. The next chapter will analyze how inequalities in the Chilean education system perpetuate inequality in Chilean society, and how this issue became one of the catalysts for the Revolución Pingüina.
Chapter Three  
Perpetuating Societal Inequality through Educational Disparity

Undeniably, the students’ main issue focused during the mobilizations that I discuss the previous chapter was the poor quality education system. These next two chapters move beyond the surface and analyze other background factors that are related to the educational crisis and student discontent. This chapter will demonstrate how inequalities in the education system contribute to socioeconomic inequalities in Chilean society. Chapter Four will explore popular protest in Chilean history and its role in bringing about political change. It will also analyze current political attitudes among Chilean youth and how an “apathetic” generation came together to fuel the reaction that occurred in 2006 over the educational crisis.

Inequality in the Chilean educational system was an important factor when it came to the student protests. In addition, what lies beneath students’ complaints about an unequal access to high quality education is discontent with inequality in Chilean society as a whole, and especially the ways in which the educational system replicates societal inequality by failing to provide an avenue for social mobility. This chapter first examines socioeconomic inequality in Chile and demonstrates the difficulty that the majority of the population faces in providing a high quality education to their children in a market system. Secondly it shows how socioeconomic inequality is directly linked to education due to the extremely high returns of a university education compared to the low returns of primary and secondary education. Third, the chapter analyzes inequality in the education system itself and how this diminishes educational performance both overall and among lower-income students, limiting access to higher education. Lastly, a connection is established between the student movement and the changing political discourse on socioeconomic inequality.
3.1 Inequality in Chilean Society

Walking along the tree-lined streets of central and eastern Santiago in the comunas of Núñoa, Providencia and parts of La Reina and Las Condes, it is hard to imagine that Chile is one of the most unequal societies not only in Latin America, but in the world. Everyone seems to belong to the middle or upper-middle classes. The only hints of poverty are the odd beggar or the old woman selling band aids at a bus stop. However, continue the trajectory to the south or west and it becomes clear, as the houses get smaller, the apartment buildings shabbier, and one reaches the shantytowns on the outskirts of the city that perhaps Chile does suffer from inequality. To really glimpse the stark differences, one must then travel far to the northeastern part of the city, encroaching upon the cordillera of the Andes, and view the large sprawling houses of Lo Barnechea with huge lawns, swimming pools, tennis courts, private security guards and the latest model cars parked in the garage. Santiago itself provides an excellent model for inequality in Chile. Comunas, or neighborhoods, are generally separated by socio-economic level. By asking where someone lives, one can determine their socio-economic status with few exceptions.

Statistics on income distribution also demonstrate this stark inequality. Chile is ranked among countries with a high human development index (HDI) according to the UN Report on Human Development, falling in at number 38 worldwide. This ranking is based on GDP per capita, life expectancy, literacy rates, and an education index. Despite this high ranking, the report also reveals that the richest 10% of the population control 47% of the nation’s wealth, while the poorest 10% control only 1.2%. Chile ranks twelfth from the bottom worldwide in terms of the UN GINI index, used to measure inequality of income distribution, with a 57.1.89

89 The GINI coefficient runs from 0-1; closer to 0 signals a more equal society, closer to 1 signals more inequality. For reference, Japan has the lowest GINI with .249, and Namibia and Lesotho the highest with .743 and .632,
Originally created for marketing purposes, Chilean society is divided into socio-economic groups (*grupos socioeconómicos*, GSE) using a calculation based on information from the national census. It takes into account income, career, house value, education level and the number of "goods" owned out of a sample group of ten items. Currently, these categories are used to conveniently describe someone's socioeconomic situation. Table 3.1 provides a description of each GSE for the metropolitan area of Santiago, reflecting the inequality shown in the above statistics. Table 3.2 shows the distribution of GSE by comuna, ordered by percentage of ABC1. It demonstrates how the members of ABC1 (that only make up 11.3% of the total population of Santiago) are concentrated in six comunas that virtually exclude all other GSE with the exception of C2. Group C3 is the most evenly distributed throughout the city with the exception of the six elite comunas, while Groups D and E are for the most part concentrated in the bottom six comunas on the list that also have the least percentage of the group ABC1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GSE</th>
<th>% of population Greater Santiago</th>
<th>% population Chile</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Average # Goods owned</th>
<th>Average # years of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC1*</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>$3400-7000 or more</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>$1200-2400</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>$800-1000</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>$400-600</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>$320 or less</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This category could be divided into two groups: AB and C1. However, AB takes up only about 2.5% of the entire population and it is often difficult to gain accurate census data, especially in terms of income, due to its elite status.


Shower, color TV, refrigerator, hot water heater, cable/satellite TV, washing machine, microwave, car, computer and internet access.
Table 3.2. Percentages of GSE by comuna of Santiago, ordered by ABC1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comunas of Greater Santiago</th>
<th>ABC1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vitacura</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Condes</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lo Barnechea</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Reina</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providencia</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ñuñoa</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Miguel</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macul</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Florida</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peñalolén</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huechuraba</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Cisterna</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maipú</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independencia</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estación Central</td>
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<td>19.2</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilicura</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerrillos</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puente Alto</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Bernardo</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Joaquín</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinta Normal</td>
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<td>16.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recoleta</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudahuel</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Bosque</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conchalí</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.A. Cerda</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lo Prado</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Granja</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Ramón</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renca</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lo Espe o</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerro Navia</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Pintana</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The GSE are calculated differently from income quintiles that are often used in statistical analysis. Income quintiles are calculated by ranking households of two persons or more in order from lowest to highest by their earned income and then arranging the ranked families into five
equal-numbered groups, or *quintiles*. Given the fact that each income quintile must have the same number of households in it, these five groups are more socio-economically diverse than the GSE, which divides households in terms of economic status, each group representing a different percentage of the population. Table 3.3 shows the average income for each income quintile in Santiago for 2003. Looking at data for all of Chile, Quintile I is composed of households from ABC1 and C2, Quintile II of households from C2 and C3, Quintile III of households from C3 and D, Quintile IV of households from D and E and Quintile V is the most homogenous with only households from group E. As noted in Table 1, the GSE ABC1 is already very heterogeneous, so therefore Quintile I, including ABC1 plus some households from C2, is the most diverse quintile, including households that earn from around $2000 a month to the richest household in Chile. As will be explored later through an analysis of Chile’s GINI coefficient, a large part of Chile’s income disparity is found within the richest 20% of income earners, meaning that being part of Chile’s richest quintile does not in and of itself guarantee economic security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quintile of Autonomous Income</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Autonomous Income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>$148.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>335.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>512.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>805.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>2210.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>802.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is starkly obvious that today Chile is an unequal society. But has this always been the case? From colonial times to the beginning of the twentieth century, like the vast majority of Latin American countries, Chile was economically controlled by a small landed oligarchy. Its economy was based on commodity exports from both the mining and agricultural sector. After Chile’s victory in the 1879 War of the Pacific, it gained large nitrate deposits from land formerly

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92 Author’s own elaboration using GSE data and methodology for calculating income quintiles.
part of Bolivia and Peru. Until the 1930s, nitrates would be Chile’s number one export and allowed sustained economic growth. Despite the creation of a large demand for labor in the mining sector, Chile remained a socio-economically unequal society. At the onset of WWI, synthetic fertilizer was invented causing the nitrate export industry to seriously suffer and ultimately cease to exist. By 1920, this set off economic crisis in Chile with large sectors of the population unemployed. This same year, Arturo Alessandri of the Liberal Party was elected president on the platform of social reform to give into labor demands partially due to fear of a working class uprising in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia three years prior. However, by 1924, few changes had been instituted to relieve the economic depression due to divisions between the President and a Conservative Parliament that prevented the passing of social reforms. Chile at this time was characterized by sharp divisions, both political and economic, between the working and upper classes. In a move that would be repeated approximately fifty years later, the military intervened on 8 September 1924, demanding that the Parliament pass a budget bill. However, unlike the events in 1973, this military intervention was peaceful. It was in response to a budget crisis that was preventing public servants (such as members of the military) from being paid. During military control, a labor code and income tax bill were passed, and a sense of order restored. More importantly, the 1924 military action spurred the drafting of a new constitution in 1925.

The 1925 Constitution established a populist form of state and adopted the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) model of economic development. The period 1925-1964 was characterized by the emergence of an urban middle class along with policies of protected industrialization, expansion of public education, distributive policies that favored the working

94 Ibid, 13,16.
and middle class and significant state involvement in the economy. However, these policies had a dark side. Silvia Borzutzky notes that “few economies in the world were studied as much as the Chilean economy” during this time due to “its poor performance and often contradictory problems...such as inflation, low rate of economic growth, low rate of capital accumulation, dependency on copper, dependency on foreign capital and unequal distribution of income.” Inflation was perhaps the most debilitating problem, but no anti-inflationary measures were taken during this time. There are many explanations as to why both inflation and poor economic performance in general characterized this period, but here the important point is that despite policies in favor of the working and middle class, economic inequalities were actually augmented during this period instead of reduced.

By the early 1960s, Chile was again facing a crisis due to exhaustion of the political and economic model. In 1964, Eduardo Frei Montalva of the Christian Democratic Party was elected and essentially dismantled the populist state in favor of an Estado Comunitario (Communitarian State). Frei and the Christian Democrats sought to narrow socioeconomic differences by integrating the rural peasantry and urban poor into the political system, revise the import substitution model to reflect the current economic situation and expand the social function of the state. As noted in the Chapter One, part of Frei’s social policy included the expansion of public education with the construction of many new schools throughout the country. Frei’s vision of transforming Chile both politically and socially by incorporating marginalized sectors of the economy eventually failed, inequality worsened as the GINI coefficient rose from .48 (1957-1963) to .51 (1964-1969). Borzutzky argues that this was due to the fact that the left perceived

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95 Borzutzky, 31.
96 See Borzutzky, Chapter 2 for various theories regarding poor economic performance during this period.
Frei’s policies as too moderate, and therefore did not support them, while the right saw them as too revolutionary, and refused to lend him the resources to carry them out. This three-way split was clear in the 1970 election, as the right, center and leftist candidates each received approximately one third of the vote. Socialist Salvador Allende won the election with a plurality of 36.2%, with the right and center parties receiving 34.9% and 27.8%, respectively.

Allende’s administration tightened the state’s grip on the economy, nationalized the already state-owned copper companies and the banking sector, instituted price controls and established high tariffs and other protectionist measures. To address inequality, Allende carried out extensive rural land reform. He also increased wages and expanded government social programs. The results were positive, but fleeting. At first, the policies produced jumps in growth rates, a decline in unemployment and lower inflation. However, soon the country experienced extremely high inflation, fiscal and trade deficits, and shortages on goods that created long lines at markets and provoked upper and middle class housewives to protest in the streets by banging their empty pots and pans. Gains in terms of wages for the working class were driven down to only 75% of their 1970 level after having originally risen 39% in real terms. The inflation especially negated any attempts at increasing the poorest quintile’s share of national income. Although the Gini coefficient did fall from nearly .5 to around .475, Allende’s program did not change the pattern of inequality that had, and continues to, plague Chilean society.

September 11, 1973 brought to a bitter end Allende’s socialist experiment when the military violently took over the government. As discussed in detail in Chapter One, after the coup General Augusto Pinochet liberalized and privatized the economy under the tutelage of the Chicago Boys, dramatically transforming it by undoing decades of state control and ownership.

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98 Borutzky, 96.
99 Ibid.
100 Scott and Leight, 3
Although after the 1982 financial crisis economic planning strayed from the neoliberal model, Chile kept a free-market oriented economy during the economic readjustment period. Throughout the dictatorship, social spending was never a priority, but cuts were especially severe after the 1982 crisis as part of the conditionality for receiving an IMF loan.

During the entire authoritarian period, income inequality went from bad to worse. From the period 1974 to 1990, the GINI coefficient rose from .53 to a historic high of almost .6. This can be attributed to two main factors: the original harsh structural adjustment carried out in the early years of the dictatorship and the protracted process of adjustment after the devastating 1982 crisis that disproportionately affected the lower quintiles. During the first part of the dictatorship, the real wage dropped more than 30% in the two years following the coup, due to the elimination of price controls. At the same time, strikes and collective bargaining were outlawed and prominent labor leaders were killed or exiled. Wages would not recover the 1970 levels until 1992. In rural sectors, Allende’s land reform was reversed and land became concentrated in the hands of medium-sized export-oriented farms, forcing out smaller landholders from the agricultural market. After 1982, the government was willing to intervene to provide subsidies for failing banks and financial groups so that they could pay off their foreign debt, but did next to nothing for the struggling poor, cutting spending on social services by 20% per capita. By the end of the decade, despite recovered economic growth after the crisis, unemployment rates had reached 24%, with over half belonging to the poorest quintile, and 38.6% of households fell below the poverty line, compared to 17% in 1970. ¹⁰¹

As shown, Chile has demonstrated few improvements in terms of socioeconomic inequality throughout its history. However, up until 1990, this inequality had almost always been accompanied by either poor economic performance or in the case of the dictatorship, the harsh

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 8-9.
effects of neoliberal structural adjustment that blatantly favored the upper classes over the suffering poor, without the aid of social programs to alleviate some of the harsh consequences of the its economic policies. The democratic governments after the transition inherited a social crisis that required immediate attention.

Inequality is not perfectly correlated with poverty rates. In 1990, 38.6% of Chile's population was classified as poor and 12.9% were indigent. By 2003, these figures had fallen to 18.8% and 4.7%, respectively, demonstrating a notable reduction in poverty by the democratic governance of the Concertación. Usually this reduction in poverty is contributed to the high growth rates during this period. Growth reached an annual average of 7.7% until the 1997 East Asian crisis and subsequent devaluation in Brazil in 1999, during which growth fell to 2.5%, eventually recovering to 5.2% by 2005.102 Kurt Weyland and Mauricio Olavarria-Gambi both criticize the notion that poverty reduction is solely due to GDP growth, noting that an increase in social spending to improve human capital has also contributed to the decrease in poverty levels, due to the importance of an educated and healthy labor force. Olavarria-Gambi argues that in the Chilean case, poverty was reduced due to both fast economic growth and comparatively high human capital accumulation as a result of social spending.103

As noted in the previous chapter, social spending, including education spending, increased throughout the 1990s. Despite this accomplishment, there were no significant improvements in inequality throughout this period. In 1990 the GINI coefficient was .58, and it is currently .57. Chilean economist Dante Contreras argues that since a reduction in poverty occurred simultaneously with no improvements in inequality, this has left “everyone better off,”

meaning that both rich and poor have improved their socio-economic status. Nevertheless, the poor in Chile continue to live in very precarious conditions—over 20% of the population lives on less than $320 a month.

Marcus Taylor adds several factors to the causes of perpetual inequality in Chilean society. First of all, despite tax reform in the early 1990s, the tax structure still remains highly regressive, with the top 10% of income earners paying 11.8% of their income in taxes, while the poorest 10% pay 14.4%. He also argues that despite increases in social spending, these funds have not been actively redistributed to the lower quintiles. Although the bottom three quintiles do use proportionately more public spending, this is due to the dual public-private nature of the major social institutions, including education, health care, and social security. This in turn has created a system of differential access to these institutions. Those who can afford it use the superior private services, while the poor are financially forced into the public sector. This only serves to further deepen inequalities, a theme that will be touched upon in the context of education in the next section.

Taylor also notes that instead of coming from tax revenue, social spending is mainly dependent on copper revenue from state-owned CODELCO (Corporación Nacional de Cobre, Chile) that is highly dependent on the maintenance of a labor system that keeps wages down and job security low. This strategy is vulnerable to fluctuations in the international economy, which may seriously threaten funds for social spending in the future. It is also contradictory because the funds for social spending that in theory should go towards the lessening of socioeconomic

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inequalities in fact come from a sector of the economy that, according to Taylor, perpetuates inequality.\textsuperscript{106}

Throughout its history, wide gaps consistently existed between the rich and the poor in Chile. Despite high growth rates, macro-economic stability, increased spending on social institutions and vast reductions in poverty and indigence levels, inequality continued to exist throughout the 1990s up to present day. Although Taylor provides some explanations as to why vast income disparities still plague Chilean society, one more factor will be discussed in the next section, providing an explanation as to why inequality was such a prominent theme during the 2006 high school protests.

3.2 Links between socioeconomic inequality and education

Harald Beyer, Chilean economist, argues that the direct source of inequality in Chile is differences in wage earnings among workers. Unlike the past, inequality is not solely based on a small oligarchy controlling the majority of the capital of the country. It is instead found in the sharp differences in wages earned between the top 10\% of the population and the bottom 90\%. Beyer shows how inequality in Chile is the product of the elevated participation of the top decile in the national revenue. This can be illustrated by tweaking the GINI coefficient data. In 1998 Chile's GINI coefficient was approximately .57. However, by excluding the richest 10\% Chile's recalculated GINI coefficient would be around .28, in line with some of the most egalitarian countries in the world such as Germany.\textsuperscript{107} To compare, if this same exercise was done to the GINI coefficient of the United States, it would only drop from .38 to .34. These calculations also show that in Chile, the top 10\% of the population is very heterogeneous in terms of its income earnings, a factor that is often overlooked. People tend to assume that the rich are homogenously

\textsuperscript{106} Taylor, 196
wealthy, when in reality the top 2% of the population controls much more wealth (almost 40% of the assets of Quintile V representing 20% of the entire population’s wealth). While inequality is usually thought of as the differences between the rich and the poor, or between the upper and lower classes, in Chile’s case, much inequality lies in the difference between the extremely rich and the middle class, or using the analysis in the previous section, the disparity between those that belong to GSE ABC1 and those belonging to GSE C2 that fit into the same income quintile.

How is it then that 10% of the population is able to control the majority of national income if its wealth is not necessarily based on owning capital? The answer, in Chile’s case, is directly linked to education. This is because in Chile, a university education gives extremely high returns compared to the low returns of primary school and high school education. This is to say that adding an additional year of primary or secondary education has very marginal effects on work earnings, whereas an additional year of higher education significantly increases potential earnings. Figure 3.1 illustrates this. The returns start to rise around 12-14 years of education, and significantly increase after 16-17 years of education, representing the completion of four to five years of post-secondary education. Table 3.4 illustrates the average years per income quintile, showing an obvious pattern of more years of schooling in the higher quintiles. Beyer argues that this proves that “the marked difference in earnings of people according to their level of education, especially between those that have higher education and those that do not have it translates into economic segmentation that clearly is defined by education.”

Of course, it is logical to assume that someone with higher education will earn more than someone with less education. In Chile this relationship is augmented. Beyer illustrates this by calculating the ratio between salaried workers who have finished primary school and salaried

108 See Beyer, Cuadro No. 2, 102.
109 Beyer, 110.
workers who have a degree in higher education. On average, a Chilean male who works full time with a university degree earns 5.26 times more than a Chilean male full-time worker who has only finished primary school. To compare, in the United States, this ratio is only 2.54. Beyer calls this phenomenon “the great prize” of a university education. Chilean economist Alejandra Mizala, member of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Education, confirmed Beyer’s analysis, contending that, “salaries are so linked to the education that you receive, to the studies that you undertake...therefore the difference between the rate of return of people who have higher education in Chile versus people that only have secondary education is enormous.”

Harald Beyer, “Educación y desigualdad de ingresos: una nueva mirada,” 109

Table 3.4. Average years of schooling based on quintile of earnings (1=low, 5=high)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Quintile</th>
<th>Average years of schooling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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109 Graph based on CASEN results from 1994, measured men who work in Santiago, work full time (40 hours or more per week) and are between 25 and 54 years old. Results for women were similar.

111 Alejandra Mizala (Associate Professor of Economics, Faculty of Industrial Engineering, University of Chile and member of Presidential Advisory Committee on Education) in discussion with author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
argues that the current education system is impeding social mobility, simply due to the fact that not enough students have access to higher education. Mizala classifies higher education not only as university studies, but also as high quality technical education. She believes that education can be a vehicle for social mobility and a way to decrease societal inequalities. She argues that if “you move a lot of people into higher education...you will in general have better salaries, and therefore will generate a process of more equal yields and better social mobility.”

From Beyer’s and Mizala’s analysis, one can conclude that higher education, whether it is university or technical school, is integral to be able to earn a decent salary. To be able to study in a university in Chile, it is imperative that students receive high quality primary and secondary education, something currently only available to a small percentage of students. As of 2003, 37.6% of all students continued on to some form of higher education, while only 14.6% of students from the lowest income quintile received higher education, compared to 73.6% in the highest quintile. Leaders in the student movement recognize and understand this unequal access to higher education. Sebastián Vielmas and María José Sanhueza both described the system as one that prepares the vast majority of students to be laborers, while only a small percentage receives a high quality university education and are thereby groomed to be bosses. The essence of these students’ analysis is true. The system is set up so that only a privileged minority has access to higher education.

Rather than lessening inequalities, the current education system reproduces them in Chilean society, due to the unequal access to higher education. This limited access has roots in

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112 Ibid.
114 María Jesús Sanhueza (Former Spokesperson, ACES) and Sebastián Vielmas (Former President, Student Center, Liceo de Aplicación) in discussion with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
both the primary and secondary education system as well as the system of higher education in Chile, themes that will be analyzed below.

3.3 Inequality in the Education System: Why more students can’t go to college

Inequality in the education system is a reflection of the socioeconomic inequality in the Chilean population. Additionally, the system serves to maintain and perpetuate disparities by not imparting a high quality education to all students and failing to create the opportunity for all via higher education. The vicious cycle of inequality is not only the fault of the primary and secondary education systems, but is also due to the way in which higher education is organized in Chile, as well as the process and cost of admittance. Both of these themes will be analyzed in this section to construct a better understanding of the phenomenon of socioeconomic inequality in Chile.

Cristián Cox defines equality as having three spheres when it comes to education: equity in opportunity of access and permanency, equity in educational processes and equity in results, summarized in Table 3.5. In terms of the first category, there is no doubt that the reforms of the 90s improved access to education for lower socio-economic levels. Mizala noted that “educational coverage ceased to be a problem a long time ago.” In terms of access to high-school education, the difference between the lowest and highest income quintiles decreased from 20 percentage points (74% vs. 94%) in 1990 to 16 percentage points (83% vs. 99%) in 2000. Access to primary education also increased for those from the lowest quintiles, from 94% in

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1990 to almost 98% in 2000. Change among the highest quintile was less than 1% (98% to 99%).

Table 3.5 Summary of Three Spheres of Inequality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Sphere</th>
<th>2nd Sphere</th>
<th>3rd Sphere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equity in Opportunity of Access and Permanency</td>
<td>Equity in Educational Processes</td>
<td>Equity in Learning Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reforms of the 1990s improved access to primary and secondary education among lower quintiles</td>
<td>The shared funding law of 1993 exacerbated the division of schools along socioeconomic lines (educational apartheid)</td>
<td>After initial success of Improvement Programs in early 1990s, there was no sustained improvement in test scores between socioeconomic groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is in the second and third spheres of educational equality where the current problems lie. The second sphere of equality, relating to educational processes, has deteriorated over the course of the 1990s. Schools have become even more divided along socio-economic lines. This is a consequence of the 1993 shared funding law that made the majority of subsidized private schools out of financial reach for many poor families as discussed in Chapter One. As shown in Table 3.6, students from the lowest income deciles are concentrated in public municipal schools while those from the highest income deciles are concentrated in unsubsidized private schools. In other words, students attend schools with peers from the same socio-economic level. This has important implications in terms of educational outputs; results from the PISA test, an international standardized test administered by OECD (Chile started to participate in 2006) show that the educational systems with the best results are those that have classrooms with students from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. This type of classroom make-up is a rare occurrence in Chile, where schools are largely divided among socio-economic lines. Not only are lower income students receiving sub-par education, but socioeconomic segregation decreases the quality of education as a whole.

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117 Cox, 95; Cristián Belleï, “¿Ha tenido impacto la reforma educativa chilena?” in Cox, Ed 131.
118 Cox, 104.
Table 3.6. Enrollment in School Type by Income Quintile, 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Quintile</th>
<th>Municipal</th>
<th>Subsidized Private</th>
<th>Unsubsidized Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (low)</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (high)</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alejandra Mizala, based on CASEN 2000, obtained from discussion with author.

In terms of equity in learning results, SIMCE results demonstrate that the 15% of poorest students who benefited from the P-900 programs described in Chapter One have improved their performance in terms of other more privileged students. However, as Beller observes, these improvements were more profound during the first part of the 1990s, and then leveled off, demonstrating the failure of the reforms to consistently improve results. When SIMCE results from the entire student population are analyzed, comparing 1998 to 2003, the differences in scoring between socioeconomic levels remain statistically constant.\(^{119}\) As shown in Table 3.7, the disparity between the SIMCE scores between the richest and poorest students is more than seventy points. These data come from the 1999 SIMCE for fourth grade students, but data from 2006 for fourth grade students show almost no variation, neither in the test scores themselves nor the disparity between socioeconomic groups. Despite Cox’s optimism regarding an initial decrease in inequality of results, much needs to be done to improve this poor performance and the large disparity.

Table 3.7. SIMCE Scores for 1999 Fourth Graders by Income Decile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' Socio-economic Decile</th>
<th>Math Scores</th>
<th>Language Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (L)</td>
<td>223.7</td>
<td>222.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>229.4</td>
<td>228.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>232.7</td>
<td>232.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>237.7</td>
<td>236.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>242.6</td>
<td>242.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>250.1</td>
<td>250.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>256.4</td>
<td>257.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>265.1</td>
<td>266.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>275.8</td>
<td>277.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (H)</td>
<td>295.2</td>
<td>295.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mizala, calculations based on SIMCE 1999, obtained from discussion with author.

The system of higher education in Chile also contributes to socioeconomic inequalities, perpetuating disparities initially formed at the primary and secondary levels. Ann Matear notes that “university study can no longer be viewed as a luxury for developing countries, and... improving the quality of educational provision at primary and secondary levels is an essential pre-condition for promoting more equitable access to higher education.”\(^{120}\) Given this, the characteristics of the higher education system add yet another part to the vicious cycle of educational and socioeconomic inequality in Chile. The main problem lies in unequal access to the system by students from lower income families. The lack of adequate financial aid and low incentives for universities to extend what aid exists to those in need closes the door to many students.

The roots of the modern higher education system extend from 1981, when along with his complete structural reorganization of the primary and secondary education system, General Augusto Pinochet also drastically changed the system of higher education by enacting the General Law of Universities that privatized and reduced state funding for previously public universities. From 1981 to 1990, funding for higher education was cut by 40%. Prior to this law, public higher education was free, but access was limited due to spaces available (there were only eight universities) and thus restricted to a small, elite and homogenous group of students. The 1981 law encouraged entrepreneurs to open small private institutions of higher education, spurring the founding of many private universities, and re-organized the “traditional

universities,” creating twenty-five state-funded institutions belonging to the Council of University Rectors. The law also encouraged the opening of private Professional Institutes and Technical Training Centers. In addition to the traditional universities, there currently exist forty private universities, sixty-five Professional Institutes and 120 Technical Training Centers.\textsuperscript{121}

Oscar Espinoza explains that the expansion of private higher education in Chile has produced a double injustice for poorer students. In Chile traditional universities have a better reputation and more rigorous academic standards, whereas private institutions are considered low quality—usually the only requisite for admission is the ability to pay.\textsuperscript{122} The most privileged high school graduates, usually from unsubsidized private schools, move on to the higher quality “traditional” universities that in general have lower tuition and more access to scholarships and loans. In contrast, less privileged students receive a lower quality secondary education, preventing their admission into more prestigious universities and leaves them with the often impossible option to pay for private institutions of inferior quality.\textsuperscript{123} As Matear notes, the quality of university education affects future earnings and perpetuates the cycle of inequality.

Throughout the 1980s, enrollment in higher education doubled as an effect of the opening of private universities, but increases occurred mainly within the upper-middle and upper classes. As of 1998, students from the top two income quintiles made up over 60% of university enrollment, and students from the lowest quintile only composed 7%.\textsuperscript{124} Despite the fact that by 1990 the state only funded 27% of the cost of higher education and all schools charged tuition payments, higher education reforms throughout the decade and into the twenty-first century sought to make student loans and scholarships more accessible. However, universities

\textsuperscript{121} Matear, “Barriers...”, 36.
\textsuperscript{122} This has very recently begun to change. Certain private schools are gaining a better reputation but the general rule still applies.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, Table 5, 279.
themselves are in charge of distributing, managing and recollecting student loans, causing a disincentive to provide loans to lower income students who have a higher risk of default. Another source of state funding rewards schools that recruit students who scored well on the PSU (the university admissions test). This creates fierce competition for students, and in turn causes universities to redistribute this funding through grants or fee reductions to these students. This promotes inequality, for as shown above, students who do well in school are more likely to be from richer families. In fact, out of those who scored above 600 on the PSU, 47% were from private schools, even though they only represented 19% of those who took the test.125

University admissions policies also further inequalities. Until 2004, universities belonging to the Council of University Rectors had some flexibility when it came to their admissions practices and could favor students from lower income levels by giving weighted advantages to high performing students from poor backgrounds. Though practiced by very few universities, in 2004 this ability was relinquished in favor of a process solely based on a weighted average of high school grades (10-30% depending on the university) and the PSU (70-90%).126 This disfavors students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who receive lower quality education and therefore inevitably have lower grades and lower scores on the PSU than their peers in the upper income quintiles. If students from the upper quintiles, despite receiving a better education, still do not perform well enough to gain admission to a traditional university, they will likely still be able to attend a private university because they can pay, increasing their prospects for earnings over lower income students who cannot afford to pay tuition to a private university.127

125 Matear, “Barriers...”, 43-44.
126 Espinoza, 274.
127 Fernando Guerrero (College Student, DuocUC) in discussion with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
Access to higher education in Chile is integral for social mobility due to the high returns of a college education. Unequal access to this "prize" has its roots in primary and secondary education, where students both attend schools and perform based on their socioeconomic level. Due to higher education funding and university admissions policies, disparities are deepened because lower income students are not able to gain admission to the higher quality and more prestigious traditional universities, and are left to attend lower quality private universities, if they are able to go at all. Despite the fact that current Chilean educational policy states that higher education should be accessible to all those that could benefit academically, and that admission should be based only on academic performance, the existence of a large private sector and tuition payments inevitably introduce financial considerations as well. Additionally, even if admissions procedures were solely based on academics, the majority of lower income students would still be negatively discriminated against, due to lower on average academic performance.

3.4 Conclusion: The emergence of a new discourse on inequality

Prior to the presidential elections of 2005, inequality was not part of political or societal discourse; throughout the 1990s inequality was a taboo subject. To talk about socioeconomic disparities was equivalent to criticizing Chile’s economic successes in terms of growth and poverty reduction. Despite a lack of “official discourse” regarding socioeconomic inequality, a public opinion study conducted in 1994 revealed that the majority of Chileans believed that inequality was a “structural” phenomenon due to the fact that economic development had only benefited a small minority. The idea that inequality was caused by an individual’s unwillingness to find work was widely rejected, although discourses on the subject reflected that Chileans believed that the situation inherited by individuals or groups determined ones destiny. This rejects the idea of social mobility and reflects fatality when it came to prospects for improving

Chilean socioeconomic inequality. Chileans in this survey also fully recognized that they were living in a classist and materialistic society. In this authors’ recent experience, these attitudes are confirmed, but there exists little willingness to change the situation—inequality is seen as an obstacle to Chilean economic development, yet it is also seen as something endemic and systemic. Chileans tend to blame the State, the Parliament and large corporations for inequality therefore placing it in a context in which individuals have little power to instill change.

However, in 2005, the official political discourse on inequality began to change, and for the first time, presidential candidates from both sides began to address the issue of inequality in their campaigns. Upon election, President Bachelet admitted that “inequality is the principal obstacle that we confront to make Chile a developed country” and promised to aggressively address the issue during her tenure as president. Around the same time, the elite class began to worry that social tensions caused by inequality would explode into crisis and admitted their role in blocking reforms that would create a more equal society. It is debatable whether the Right used this same discourse purely to gain votes, but the important point is that for the first time, the government, the Right wing opposition and the elite economic class acknowledged that the economic system has a role to play in correcting inequality that may impede economic growth and threaten political stability.

The issue of inequality became a central theme during the student movement. In a break from the past, students were motivated to change a problem that was seen as endemic by the general population. Some popular slogans used on student blogs and scrawled on buildings included: “Our motivation to keep struggling: future, equality, effort and union!”; “Michelle, you

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130 Quoted in Scott and Leight, 14.
131 Scott and Leight, 14-15.
left us to the luck of the market”; “Dignified and equal education for all!” One slogan, purposefully misspelled, read “Dizculpem, soi municipal.” Its underlying message translates to mean “excuse my lack of education, I’m educated at a municipal school,” showing how students perceived the low quality education given by municipal schools.\textsuperscript{132} Their demands also reflected the preoccupation with equality. Students wanted the PSU to be free to equalize access to this essential step in the admissions process. The students believed that an end to municipalization and subsequent centralization of public school administration would improve equality.

Additionally, conversations with students revealed that they identified one of the major faults with the current education system as its inherent inequality. They described it as a “system of classes” in which a small group of elite receive a higher quality education and the vast majority who attend state funded schools do not.\textsuperscript{133} Members of the teachers’ union also said that due to its organization, the system separates the rich from the poor. Luis Vicencio, teacher and union leader, explained that the Colegio de Profesores (Teachers’ Union) had tried to call attention to the debilitating inequality in the education system years ago (an official report by the Colegio was published in 1997) but it was not until the student protest that the government showed interest in trying to resolve the issue. One student suggested that the reason the protests emerged when they did was due to the election of Michelle Bachelet— students’ perceived that due to her campaign promises and leadership style she would be more sensitive to their demands than former president Ricardo Lagos.\textsuperscript{134} Indeed, at the time of her election, Bachelet seemed to represent a change from the traditional party politics of the past, though her current low approval ratings demonstrated that most of the population no longer believes this.

\textsuperscript{132} Taken from the Instituto Nacional’s fotolog, www.fotolog.com/institutos and slogans written on Liceo de Aplicación in Santiago, Chile.
\textsuperscript{133} Sanhueza, Vielmas, Nicolás Vicente (Former student leader, Liceo Agusto D’Halmar de Ñuñoa) and Tatiana Castillo (Current High School Student) in discussions with the author, Santiago, Chile, January 2008.
\textsuperscript{134} Alvaro Fuenzalida (former student and current fotolog administrator, Instituto Nacional) in discussion with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
Students were likely to be aware of the changing political discourse regarding inequality during the 2005 presidential campaign, and therefore sought to challenge Bachelet's administration to act on campaign promises to improve socio-economic inequality. In fact, many slogans during the protests addressed the president directly, including “Deliver, Michelle!”; “We don’t want more band aids, Bachelet” and outside of her Alma Matter, Liceo No. 1 Para Niñas Javiera Carrera, one read: “Don’t forget that you too were a Javierina, Bachelet. Are you with me?” Both students and teachers have been aware of educational inequality and its links to socioeconomic disparities for years, but the year 2006 presented itself as a good opportunity to mobilize due to the changing political discourse and new leadership who the pingüinos could challenge to deliver her campaign promises.

This chapter has explained the links between educational and socioeconomic inequality and demonstrated that this issue was central to student demands during the Revolución Pingüina. It also provided an explanation as to why the protests emerged in 2006 and not before, due to Bachelet’s election and the changing political discourse concerning inequality. The next chapter will analyze the method—popular protest—employed by the students to enact political change due to the perceived futility of other types of political participation resulting from a changing political atmosphere following the democratic transition.

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135 From the Instituto Nacional’s fotolog.
Chapter Four
Popular Protest and Political Attitudes

"I believe that the protests were necessary," asserted Vania Gonzalez, twelfth grade student at Liceo No. 1 Para Niñas, an emblematic high school in Santiago, "they were necessary because we as Chilean citizens were in a certain way exercising the power that belongs to us. We passed through dictatorship and entered into democracy...but the social base in general feels exploited and in disagreement with the government, but it doesn't manifest it...we have a society that is asleep."\textsuperscript{136} María Jesús Sanhueza echoed Gonzalez's sentiment about the effects of the dictatorship on Chilean society:

The daily life of the people here in Chile is low quality. Despite the precarious conditions in which they live, people are unable form a level of solidarity with their neighbor that is probably living in the same conditions. And this is not because people are so-called “bad,” it's because there was a dictatorship and when there were more than two people meeting they arrived and they assassinated them. And this generated a huge level of terror...This generated an environment of fear, and a rejection of organization, even a rejection of conversation that today makes daily life unconnected.\textsuperscript{137}

The participants in the Revolución Pingüina represent the first generation of students to not grow up under dictatorship. Chilean youth are stereotyped as being ambivalent towards politics, but this new generation staged one of the largest student protests of the last thirty years in Chile. They put tremendous pressure on the current political system, demanding true reform instead of just another compromise.

In general, this chapter will focus on the political aspects of the 2006 mobilizations. First it will first explore popular protest in Chile under the dictatorship, analyze how the National Days of Protest contributed to political change, and draw parallels between these protests and the

\textsuperscript{136} Vania Gonzalez (Current Student, Liceo No. 1 Para Niñas) in discussion with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
\textsuperscript{137} María Jesús Sanhueza (Former Spokesperson, ACES) in discussion with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
Revolución Pingüina. Secondly I will briefly describe the democratic transition and show the ways in which policy decisions and law making have been constrained due to authoritarian enclaves and the desire to maintain macroeconomic stability and growth. Third, I will evaluate political apathy, especially among students, as it relates to the dynamics of the transition period. Finally, I will analyze the political outcome of the Revolución, and argue that although the mobilizations seemed to have raised consciousness about educational topics among the Chilean public, the response of the governing coalition seems to be yet another compromise, especially in the eyes of student leaders. It will depend on whether there is another major protest in 2008 (as student leaders and teachers have suggested) to pressure the government to take more action, or if the division of the student movement due to politicization will prevent this from being realized. Additionally, very recent (April 2008) developments in Chile have changed the political landscape to one unfavorable for the student movement. The implication of these events will be considered.

4.1 Popular protest under Pinochet and other historical influences

The surfacing of major opposition to the Pinochet regime emerged in 1982, in response to the collapse of the “Chilean economic miracle” that had “provided the Pinochet government with a certain amount of social support.”138 The neoliberal restructuring of the economy by the Chicago Boys produced significant growth, but was by no means immune to the financial and economic crisis that hit Latin America at the beginning of the 1980s, and was especially hard on the working class, with unemployment levels reaching 20%. The crisis even affected the middle and professional classes, and therefore caused those who had originally supported the regime to

begin to criticize government policies. 139 This economic crisis provided the impetus for the emergence of a vociferous political opposition and fourteen days of national protest that took place between May of 1983 and August 1986. Mark Ensalaco argues that although this “crisis” had economic causes, it was primarily political, providing an opportunity to challenge the regime and call for democratization. 140

An important element of the emergence of the opposition during this period was protest from the “popular sectors” of Chilean society. Philip Oxhorn acknowledges that “ambiguity and lack of clarity” surround “the concept of popular in the social science literature.” 141 He defines the notion of popular sectors as referring to “disadvantaged” groups in a society that is highly segmented and unequal, like that of Chile. The popular sector is a heterogeneous group that includes organized labor, workers that lack class organization in the formal economy, the unemployed, workers in the informal economy, and the peasantry. Oxhorn also includes women and youth in this category. I argue that the 2006 student protest represented a popular protest for two reasons—the participants were young and the majority came from municipal schools whose parents would most likely be part of the “popular sector.”

After violently taking power in 1973, Pinochet outlawed all political parties. In the wake of the 1982 economic crisis, the regime was unable to eradicate the cause of discontent through traditional methods of repression, and therefore provided an opening for political opposition to reemerge. Because political parties were still illegal, Pinochet’s rivals initially formed “non-partisan” groups such as PRODEN (Project for National Development). When the dictatorship,

139 Ibid, 19, 24.
distracted by the economic situation, did not crush groups like this, more opposition groups began to resurface, such as the *Alianza Democrática*.\(^{142}\)

The wave of popular protest staged by the opposition under the Pinochet Regime began on May 11, 1983, when the new president of the Copper Miner Workers Confederation, Rodolfo Seguel, coordinated with newly emerged opposition groups for the first National Day of Protest. They asked Chileans to leave jobs early, refrain from sending their children to school, abstain from purchasing anything, and most importantly, bang pots and pans at 8:00 pm in the streets, harking back to the protests by middle and upper class housewives against Allende. That night, the protests started with the solitary sound of a wooden spoon against a pot and escalated. People in the lower class neighborhoods erected fire barricades on the street. Police arrested 600 people and killed two people by shooting indiscriminately into crowds of protestors.\(^{143}\)

Despite this state repression, another protest was planned for June. Seguel was arrested during this manifestation, which in turn sparked another one in July. In August the bloodiest protest yet was held; twenty-six were killed and the armed forces were called in to man posts around the city. After the July protest, the opposition had formally united to form *Alianza Democrática* (Democratic Alliance), composed of the Christian Democrats, moderate sectors of the Socialist Party and the Radical Party. After the August protest, the Alianza met with Sergio Jarpa, Pinochet’s new Interior Minister to try to “defuse tensions that threatened to tear the country apart.”\(^{144}\) However, talks were interrupted when members of armed opposition group MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement) attempted to assassinate General Carlos Usenza and heavy

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\(^{143}\) Ibid., 187-188.

\(^{144}\) Ibid., 191.
police brutality was used to break up the September protest, in spite of a previous agreement by both the opposition and government to conduct a peaceful demonstration.

In October, the Communist Party decided to begin participating in the National Protests, and together with the MIR and radical sectors of the Socialist Party formed the opposition group MDP (Popular Democratic Movement). Despite the fact that Pinochet explicitly declared this type of organization illegal, the MDP continued to function because its ultimate goal was the violent overthrow of the Pinochet regime. The MDP and the Alianza differed in their means of bringing about a change in administration, especially in their opinions about armed struggle. This prevented the two groups from presenting a strongly unified opposition to the Pinochet dictatorship. The state also upped its repressive tactics. Pinochet declared a State of Siege 1984, authorizing the armed forces to conduct raids on areas of potential opposition, targeting mainly the poor poblaciones.

The period of national protest continued until 1986, characterized by periodic popular manifestations calling for the restoration of democracy and attempts by the opposition to unite against Pinochet. Though during the time it appeared that the dictatorship was losing some of its control, due to both domestic demands and international pressure to end Human Rights abuses from the United States and United Nations, Pinochet was able to maintain his hold on power for three more years. Brian Loveman attributes the failure of the opposition to unite and bring about political change to “the persistent lack of consensus and intense polarization which had preceded the military coup in 1973, combined with the repression of the regime” as well as “the inability of the opposition to resolve the differences (historical, personal, and ideological) which divide[d]...
them from one another." It was not until 1988 when the opposition successfully united. It formed a coalition to back the “no” vote on the plebiscite that was to decide whether Pinochet would stay in power for eight more years. The Coalition for the No did not use popular protest to advance its agenda, probably due to the lack of success earlier in the decade. However, Spooner argues that the period of National Protest was “undoubtedly a useful political exercise that would serve the same politicians well in planning their strategy for the 1988 presidential plebiscite” and “irrevocably changed Chile’s political climate.”

Popular protest was utilized as a tool to express political discontent under Pinochet with little immediate success, due to a fractured opposition and repression from an authoritarian government. Student protesters in 2006 used similar tactics to demand changes to the education system. Despite an extremely different political environment, certain parallels can be drawn between the two movements. Oxhorn notes that because political parties were outlawed during the dictatorship, political activity shifted outside formal politics where it was more difficult to repress. This can also be seen in the 2006 mobilizations, but for different reasons. The leadership and impetus did not come from political parties, but rather from a group of students from varying political backgrounds. Despite political diversity, the pingüinos in 2006 were initially more united behind their cause than the opposition groups in the 1980s; similar problems, however eventually arose due to disagreements over tactics and alleged politicization of the movement. Students of the movement attempted systemic reform in 2006, while in 1980 the opposition attempted the transformation of the entire form of governance to democracy, an extremely difficult task given the repressive tactics used by the autocratic regime as well as its

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148 Spooner, 203, 209
support from the powerful business sector. Despite these vast differences, the methods used to instigate political change were similar, and for this reason it is worth noting this period as one of the historical antecedents to the 2006 mobilizations.

Another important historical predecessor to the Revolución is student protest in Chile. In general, university students have overwhelmingly dominated these mobilizations, demonstrating discontent over university policy as well as political events in general. Loveman argues that although during the dictatorship the university system was purged of faculty and student opposition to the regime, “groups of intellectuals, students and professionals stubbornly and courageously refused to submit to the military dictatorship, thereby offering technical, political and moral critiques which undermined General Pinochet’s credibility.” Throughout the twentieth century, Loveman notes that student movements “have played a colorful and vital role in Chilean politics,” demanding university, social and political reform. In 1931, university protesters contributed to the general strike that ousted General Carlos Ibáñez. Starting in 1992, a main topic of university student demonstrations was lack of funding for higher education, especially financial aid and loans for lower income students. In 1997 and 1999 there were large protests that eventually led to the democratization of the governing structures of many universities. In 1999, the context of the manifestations was framed around Pinochet’s trial in London and the international financial crisis; students argued that there was money for Pinochet’s defense but not for higher education. University students also protested policies outside of the education system. In 2004 a McDonald’s restaurant in Santiago was destroyed during a mobilization demanding shorter prison sentences for political prisoners. University

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150 Loveman, 10.
151 Ibid., 9
students also heavily protested President George W. Bush's visit to the capital city that same year. According to Nicolás Vicente student leaders of the Revolución were inspired to take over their schools because this tactic had been successfully employed during university protests since 1992.¹⁵⁴

As noted in Chapter Two, the Revolución was not a spontaneous protest that emerged out of thin air in May 2006. Rather, these four weeks represented the loud, public stage, or “effervescence” of a serious movement led serious student leaders dedicated to educational reform, as Juan Carlos Herrera, one of the spokespeople of ACES, put it.¹⁵⁵ Not only were the 2006 mobilizations the results of prior organization by student leaders, but they were not the first high school student protests in Chilean history. In 1957, high school students in the port city of Valparaiso protested a rise in the price of public transport alongside workers and political party members. Under the Allende administration in 1972, secondary students protested the proposed National Unified School, a movement directed by the Minister of Education. High school students also participated in the National Days of Protest in the 1980s, calling for the democratization of their high schools in the framework of the larger protests demanding the democratization of the entire political system. Though secondary students participated in all of the above protests, it would not be until 2001 when they would really take the reins and be the protagonists calling for reform.¹⁵⁶

Oscar Aguilera, et al. characterize the decade following the transition as one in which the student movement disintegrated and there was a complete lack of interest in political participation. Nevertheless, in 2001, the student movement had a reawakening and a protest

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¹⁵⁴ Nicolás Vicente (Former student leader, Liceo Agusto D’Halmar de Ñuñoa) in discussion with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
emerged called the *Mochilazo*, whose name stems from the word for backpack (mochila) and the suffix “azo” denoting a strong blow. Thousands of students protested in the street against the high cost of the student transport pass. The government refused to negotiate with the students unless they had a formal student organization; the ACES was therefore formed and it was successfully able to bargain with the government to bring control of the student pass from private companies back to the hands of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and reduce the cost. Aguilera, et al. judges the *Mochilazo* to be the most important antecedent to the 2006 mobilizations, given that it was the first time that high school students, purely on their own initiative, took to the streets to demand change.\textsuperscript{157}

The Chilean media has tried to connect the student protesters to another group of protesters: hooded delinquents (*encapuchados*) that traditionally protest every year on 29 March and 11 September, important dates in the political memory of the dictatorship.\textsuperscript{158} The common perception in Chile is that the majority of youth that biannually destroy property and ransack businesses were not even alive to experience or remember the dictatorship. According to *El Mercurio*, Chile’s largest and very conservative newspaper, they use these dates to demonstrate a broadly defined discontent with the government, or are linked to narco-trafficking and take advantage of the confusion to rob and kill.\textsuperscript{159} *El Mercurio* and other mainstream media, especially at the beginning of the 2006 protests, described student protesters in similar terms, highlighting the movements’ violent aspects, using headlines that focused on how many students were arrested instead of the reasons they were mobilizing. The students were aware of the misrepresentation of their movement, and as Alarcón Ferrari notes, they were able to create and

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{158} 29 March is The Day of the Young Combatant and commemorates the assassination of two young brothers from the poblaciones in 1985 by the military regime. 11 September remembers the day 1973 coup.
\textsuperscript{159} González, Cristian M. “¿Quiénes son los que generan la violencia?” *El Mercurio* 14 Sept., 2007 http://diario.elmercurio.com/2007/09/14/vida_y_salud/sociedad/noticias
appropriate means of alternative communication through the use of technologies such as text and instant messaging and blogs to avoid reliance on mainstream media. They also changed tactics and began taking over schools instead of protesting in the street so as to not be associated with the enapuchados.\(^{160}\)

This section focused on three main historical antecedents to the 2006 protests: the Days of National Protest during the 1980s, university student protests and high school student protest, especially the Mochilazo. The next section will explain how the transition to democracy changed the nature of politics in Chile, leading to disappointment with the ruling political coalitions among the general population.

4.2 Authoritarian enclaves and the compromises of the Concertación

Towards the end of June 2006, the student leadership of the movement broke apart. Participants in the protests, as well as the media, attribute this break up to a number of factors, including the politicization of the movement, academic pressure and ideological differences. However, at the initial stages of organization, the group of student leaders was characterized as apolitical without affiliation to any party. In this section, I argue that one of the main reasons that students organized in this way is because they do not identify with political parties. The current political party system fails to represent its constituents and enact reform, stemming from the transition period’s authoritarian enclaves and limitations imposed by the maintenance of the neoliberal economic model that favors elite interests disconnected with the average Chilean’s reality. This section will evaluate how authoritarian enclaves and the system of political party coalitions have made overturning policies enacted by the authoritarian regime a long and difficult process, characterized by compromise and a strengthening of moderate positions within

the Concertación. In turn, this has caused a distancing of select political party members from their social bases, opening up spaces for independent movement such as the Revolución.

Rosalind Bresnahan provides a very succinct definition of the Concertación, the political coalition that has ruled Chile since the transition in 1990:

the Concertación is the direct successor of the Coalition for the No, created to unify the opposition to Pinochet for the 1988 plebiscite...[it is] an unprecedented but tension-ridden political alliance of former adversaries drawn together by political necessity as much as by ideological affinity...today it consists of the four major parties of the center-left.⁶¹

The political necessity that drew together the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), the Socialist Party (PS), the Party for Democracy (PPD), the Social Democrat Radical Party (PRSD) and twelve other parties in the late 1980s was the plebiscite. According to the scheduled transition laid out in the 1980 Constitution, this round of voting would determine whether Pinochet would remain in power for eight more years or if democratic elections would be held. To Pinochet’s dismay, the formula for transition had the unintended affect of causing the opposition to set aside its prominent differences that had prevented unity in the early 1980s to defeat Pinochet in 1988.⁶²

Despite the opposition’s success in the plebiscite, it quickly faced many restraints from a variety of sources. First of all, the Coalition for the No did not win by a landslide; Pinochet received 43% of the vote. This meant that more than anything, maintaining a united front was crucial. To appeal to a wider variety of constituents, especially the all important business class that had traditionally been staunch supporters of Pinochet due to his economic model, the newly formed Concertación moderated its positions and settled for very minimal reforms to the 1980

Constitution. Most importantly, it maintained the neoliberal economic structure. This strategy proved effective and its presidential candidate, Patricio Aylwin, won the 1990 election.

After 1990, the Concertación was severely limited by the institutional structure acquired from the authoritarian regime. These so-called authoritarian enclaves affected the electoral system, social policies (including education, as discussed in Chapter One), the Armed Forces, the state apparatus, the legislative branch and local politics. Notably, the Senate was dominated by the Right, due both to the electoral laws and the presence of nine senators appointed by Pinochet before leaving office. The binomial electoral system virtually guaranteed that one representative from the Left and one from the Right would win each district. Many binding laws (leyes de amarre) established by the authoritarian regime, such as the LOCE, could only be overthrown by a two-thirds vote in Parliament. This meant that the Concertación was forced to bargain and compromise with the right wing parties (Renovación Nacional, RN and Union Democrática Independienta, UDI)\(^{163}\) to bring about any major structural changes. Thus, the new democratic regime came to be known as the “democracy by agreements” (democracia de los acuerdos).\(^ {164}\)

The overall strategy adopted by the Concertación alienated it from its bases of support, especially among the popular sectors. Though in some ways its strategy was dictated by the authoritarian enclaves and desires to cater to business interests, the Concertación’s goal was to maintain macroeconomic stability and the neoliberal economic model because it came to believe that this was the best option for Chile. Admittedly the Concertación has tried to alleviate the social cost of this type of policy through increased social spending throughout 1990s that along with positive growth helped poverty dramatically decrease. However, the overall strategy has

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\(^{163}\) These two parties have been part of coalitions under various names since 1989. Since 2000, they have been united under the Alliance for Chile (Alianza por Chile).

favored “accumulation over inclusion and distribution and the interests of business over those of labor” and has failed to address socio-economic inequality.\textsuperscript{165} This has left many disillusioned with the \textit{Concertación}, chiefly those in the popular sectors who have continued to suffer economically under the democratic regime. Especially at the beginning of the transition period, many shantytown dwellers were disappointed with the slow pace of reform and lack of changes in their day to day lives, and felt that the \textit{Concertación} was catering to business interests instead of paying attention to their needs.\textsuperscript{166} However, these people did not turn to right wing parties because of their historic association with Pinochet. The General maintained power as head of the armed forces until 1997, and then was sworn in as a senator for life until his indictment by a Spanish court in 1999 for human rights abuses. It was not until the late 90s that the right wing parties tried to distance themselves from Pinochet to try to appeal to a broader popular base. In the 1999 elections, right-wing candidate Joaquín Lavin decided to cut ties with the General, promising that the former dictator would be tried for human rights abuses if elected.\textsuperscript{167}

The transition marked a new style of party politics for both the \textit{Concertación} and right-wing parties, centering on large national electoral campaigns once every couple of years. In between elections, parties mainly focus on elite decision-making, which Oxhorn argues opens up political space for movements independent of political parties. This contrasts with the years prior to the coup, in which political party leadership was often the force behind social organization. Movements such as the Revolución can be directly linked to compromises made by the \textit{Concertación} and its inability to connect with the popular sectors such as students. A resident of a población summarized this view, saying “the role of politicians is different than it was before 1973. Then, they made the demands of the people their own. Now, they are very technical, very

\textsuperscript{165} Barrett, 17.
\textsuperscript{166} Oxhorn “Understanding...”, 754.
far from the demands of the people.”\textsuperscript{168} Luis Vicencio, member of the Chilean Teachers’ Union, points out what he sees as the contradictory actions of a “leftist” coalition:

Today we [Chile] publicly appear to have a democratic government from the left [but]...the truth is that here is where it is clearest that neoliberalism is working...social contradictions are advancing to the point where we have an economy that ensures that the large national companies and oligarchic groups keep getting richer at the same time that there is a huge poverty problem.\textsuperscript{169}

The divide between the population and political parties has caused disillusionment towards the government and politics. As shown in Chapter Three and reflected by Vicencio’s comment, the Concertación’s continued commitment to business interests and macroeconomic growth has failed to address Chile’s persistent and serious socio-economic inequality. Politicians have not connected with the general public, and this is clearly reflected by public opinion as well as participation in elections. A series of polls conducted by the Center for Public Studies (Centro de Estudios Públicos, CEP) from November 1994 to November 2007 show that the percentage of people that do not sympathize with either the Concertación or the right wing alliance has risen from 19% in 1994 to a high of 47% in 2007, with an average of around 35%. Support for both the Concertación and opposition coalitions have subsequently dropped over this period.\textsuperscript{170}

In Chile, once registered to vote, one is obligated by law to cast a ballot. Table 4.1 shows that after 1989, not only did the percentage of registered voters who actually voted decrease, but the total percentage of those that did not vote (including those not registered) increased from 12.75% to 34.23%. As the voting population increased, the number of total voters stayed relatively constant, meaning that new voter registration increased at a much slower rate, demonstrating decreased interest in political participation. In a public opinion poll conducted

\textsuperscript{168} Oxhorn, “Understanding...”, 750.  
\textsuperscript{169} Luis Vicencio (Professor and member of Colegio de Profesores, AG) in discussion with the author, Santiago, Chile, January 2008.  
after the parliamentary elections in December 2001, of those who were not registered to vote, 37% said that the reason they weren’t registered is because they did not have an interest in politics, and 61% said they would not register to vote for the next presidential election. In 2003, only 20% of those polled had a lot or enough confidence in Congress as an institution, and a mere 8% had a lot or enough confidence in political parties.

Table 4.1 Comparative Participation in Elections

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. Registered Voters</th>
<th>Total Votes</th>
<th>% of reg. voters that voted</th>
<th>Total voting age pop.</th>
<th>% did not vote</th>
<th>% blank/null ballot</th>
<th>% did not vote + blank/null</th>
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<td>7,557,537</td>
<td>7,158,727</td>
<td>94.72</td>
<td>8,204,844</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>15.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989 L</td>
<td>7,557,537</td>
<td>7,158,727</td>
<td>94.72</td>
<td>8,204,844</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>18.30</td>
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<td>1993 P</td>
<td>8,085,439</td>
<td>7,376,691</td>
<td>91.23</td>
<td>8,900,887</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>22.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 L</td>
<td>8,085,439</td>
<td>7,385,016</td>
<td>91.34</td>
<td>8,900,887</td>
<td>17.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997 L</td>
<td>8,069,624</td>
<td>7,046,351</td>
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<td>9,614,341</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>44.46</td>
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<td>1999 P I</td>
<td>8,084,476</td>
<td>7,271,572</td>
<td>89.94</td>
<td>9,978,828</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>30.11</td>
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<td>1999 P II</td>
<td>8,084,476</td>
<td>7,326,753</td>
<td>90.63</td>
<td>9,978,828</td>
<td>26.6</td>
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<td>2001 L</td>
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<td>7,034,292</td>
<td>87.11</td>
<td>10,562,000</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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<td>8,220,897</td>
<td>7,207,278</td>
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<td>10,958,265</td>
<td>34.2</td>
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</table>

P=Presidential Elections L=Legislative Elections


After the transition to democracy, the failure of political parties to connect with their bases of support due to a different style of party politics has caused disillusion and apathy with politics in general in Chile, reflected in voting patterns and public opinion polls. The emergence of the Revolución de los Pingüinos can be interpreted as filling a political void left by political parties no longer having consistent contact with their bases, especially in the popular sectors. The

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Concertación, the ruling coalition since the transition, has been limited by authoritarian enclaves and forced to be a democracy by agreements, sacrificing political positions of the member parties in favor of maintaining macroeconomic stability and business sector support. The decline in voter participation can be linked to fewer younger people being politically active, a topic that will be addressed in the following section.

4.3 Student attitudes towards politics: “No estoy ni ahí?”

As shown, political participation, measured by voting patterns, decreased from 1989 to 2005 among the general population. During the same time period, Chilean youth were characterized as being politically apathetic—instead of appreciating and participating in the democracy that their parents worked so hard to rebuild, they cared more about material possessions. This belief was reflected in the phrase “No estoy ni ahí,” which roughly translates to “I’m not here nor there” and denotes indifference and a lack of interest. Emerging into democracy after a decade of turbulent political opposition that worked to overcome an authoritarian regime, the political disinterest of Chilean youth was surprising and disheartening to many in Chilean society. However, this trend was by no means confined to Chile alone. It was observed in Latin America as well as worldwide. Through the examination of international, regional and national opinion studies, this section will analyze the notion of political apathy among students in Chile, and explain how the Revolución Pingüina challenges what society believed was generation of youth disconnected from and apathetic towards political change.

In 1994 the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) decided to undertake a two phase study on civic knowledge and attitudes towards democracy and government among youth. The first phase surveyed over 90,000 fourteen year olds in 28 countries. The second phase included 50,000 students in upper secondary school from
sixteen countries, ranging in age from sixteen to nineteen. Chile participated in both phases and the results not only reveal trends in comparison with other countries, but also have been analyzed by Alejandro Carrasco Rozas to identify a political culture among Chilean students. In this section, only the survey attitudes toward democracy and politics will be analyzed focusing on the upper age group. Chilean twelfth grade students scored lower than the international average on all three sections of the Civic Knowledge part of the study.\textsuperscript{173}

The results of the IEA Civic Education survey can be useful in comparing Chilean students’ attitudes towards politics, democracy and government with those of other countries and the international average. More importantly, they also reveal that political apathy is not as simplistic as society may think. Despite the fact that Chilean students may not be interested in formal politics and have little trust in government related institutions, this does not preclude them from having ideas about how a “good” government should act, what being a “good” citizen means, or even prevent them from wanting to participate. Chileans even scored slightly above the international average when asked if they agreed with the statement “I am interested in politics.” However, the international average was only 49% and Chile’s students showed 54% interest, by no means showing an overwhelming attraction to the subject.\textsuperscript{174}

When asked questions about what they expected of their governments, Chilean students scored above the international average on both the society-related and economic Government Responsibilities Scale. On the society-related side, Chilean students are likely to endorse a government that provides health care, education and care for the elderly, as well as protects the environment, ensures political opportunities for women, guarantees order and promotes moral


\textsuperscript{174} Other countries that participated in the upper secondary study included: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Israel, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland (German speaking areas); Amadeo et al, 108.
behavior. On the economic side, Chilean students value a government that guarantees jobs, controls prices, supports industry, provides for the unemployed and reduces income inequalities. Similarly, questions relating to students' perceptions of good citizenship revealed higher than average tendencies towards valuing conventional as well as social-movement related citizenship activities.¹⁷⁵

In regards to their personal future political participation, Chilean students showed a below average likelihood to vote—79% compared to 85% international average—but compared to other countries were more likely to politically participate in other conventional ways such as joining a political party, writing a letter to the newspaper, or being a candidate. They also scored higher than the average on social movement related political activities such as participating in a peaceful protest or collecting signatures for a petition.¹⁷⁶ These results contradict data collected from the Fourth National Youth Survey, conducted by the National Institute for Youth (INJUV) in 2003. This survey had a much broader age range (15-29) and asked a wider variety of questions, not limited to attitudes towards politics. Therefore, the two sets of results can not be perfectly compared. Nevertheless, the INJUV results show that of the youth over the age of 18, only 27% were registered to vote, and of the vast majority that were not registered, only 28% were willing to register.¹⁷⁷ Because the INJUV findings represent a larger sector of the youth population in Chile, it probably more accurately represents youth attitudes towards voting. The incongruence could also be explained by the age differences. Perhaps younger students are more idealistic and express a willingness that is never realized when voting age is reached.

¹⁷⁵ Amadeo, et al., 80-81, 85-86.
¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 116.
The one area where Chilean students scored significantly below the international average on the IEA test was in trust for the government. They only trust the national government 40% of the time, compared to the international average of 44%.\textsuperscript{178} Broken down into various institutions, students had least trust in political parties—they report only trusting them 11.6% of the time, compared to the international average of 20%. Students had the most trust for the police, but still below the international average. These results are fairly closely mirrored in the INJUV survey. However, the question was framed differently, asking the level of confidence youth had in various institutions (including non-political entities such as the family, school and church) instead of how often they trusted them. The greatest difference was in trust for the Congress—the IEA test showed 41.6% of the time students trusted it, while the INJUV survey showed only 18.2% level of support. This placed the Congress near the bottom of the institutions youth trusted, while it placed it almost at the top of the list of political institution that students trusted in the IEA test. Despite this difference, the rest of the results lined up—political parties were at the bottom of the list, and police near the top.\textsuperscript{179}

Students mistrust for political parties is further demonstrated in the INJUV study. Only 12.3% of respondents agreed with the statement that “political parties represent me and my interests,” while 78.5% disagreed. Similarly, 73.7% of respondents did not identify with any of the main political coalitions. The INJUV study notes that although these results show a negative attitude towards political parties and politicians (respondents only had 7.7% confidence in politicians and 12.4% confidence in senators and deputies), this does not mean that they believe that democracy is a bad thing. In fact, 75% of respondents agreed that democracy is useful for young people, and 72.5% preferred democracy over any other system of governance.

\textsuperscript{178} Amadeo et al., 92-93.
\textsuperscript{179}INJUV, 4.
Alejandro Carrasco Rozas analyzed the Chilean results from the IEA Civic Education Survey to try to identify a “political culture” among twelfth grade Chilean students. He evaluated the degree to which certain values were present in student political culture. His main conclusion was that “the majority of Chilean youth are democratic, but politically passive and with scarce reasoning skills.” In general, Chilean students are conscious of their democratic rights and civic obligations, but this does not necessarily translate into political participation. Therefore, he concludes that Chilean youth have a “semi-liberal democratic political culture.”

The analysis of both national and international surveys on youth attitudes towards politics show that “apathy” among Chilean youth is not as simple as commonly perceived. The 2007 World Youth Report by the UN analyzes results from the 2004 Latinobarómetro survey, concluding that the political fervor that in the past characterized many Latin American societies has diminished. However, it attributes this trend more to the changing nature of politics and the “absence of an enabling environment” than political apathy. Many of the political ideologies that once dominated in Latin America have diminished in importance, which is especially seen in the Chilean case. The center-left Concertación, including the Socialist party, has moved to the center, leaving behind ideologies from before 1973, demonstrated in its adhesion to the neoliberal economic model and abandoned critique of capitalism. As discussed in the previous section, this has caused disillusionment with political parties, reflected among youth in the surveys analyzed above. The UN report contributes the growing lack of confidence in political parties to an “anti-political attitude among many citizens, including youth.”

Though it may seem difficult to rationalize a mass mobilization of politically apathetic students, it is necessary to highlight that their demands were not inherently political, and focused specifically on education. They wanted a state system that would provide a high quality education to all students, regardless of socio-economic level. Beyond that, the movement did not have a political agenda. In fact, the ACES prided itself as incorporating a wide variety of political views, and emphasized not getting caught up in partisan issues. It is possible, however, to interpret the Revolución Pingüina in the framework of the changing nature of politics following the democratic transition. The low level of faith that students have with political parties and government institutions caused them to choose protest as a method to bring about reforms, especially after their 2005 petition to dialogue with MINEDUC was ignored.

Even though students used protests and took over buildings, they were not delinquents simply protesting against a policy they did not agree with. Instead, they protested for reforms. Carrasco Rozas evaluates students’ propensity towards subpolitics, or forms of politics outside and beyond the representative institutions of the political system of nation-states—protests, building occupations and graffiti—that provoke and alter the functioning of institutions or the social order.\(^{182}\) At first glance the Revolución Pingüina would seem to fall into this category, given the tactics used by the students. However, according to Carrasco Rozas’ analysis, these concepts have not been strongly incorporated into the political culture of Chilean youth—only 17% had a high tendency to integrate these ideas into their political culture and 44% had medium tendencies.\(^{183}\) Additionally, upon closer examination, it becomes harder to characterize Revolución in this manner. First of all, to hold a protest in Santiago it is necessary to gain permission from the municipality of Santiago—mobilizations are only allowed in the centro and


\(^{183}\) Carrasco Rozas, 97.
are limited to certain streets. For the most part, students obtained the necessary permits when large street protests were scheduled. Secondly, in most cases school administrators were supportive of, or at least tolerated, the tomas. Instead of being a forceful protest against the schools’ themselves, the tomas were meant to paralyze the education system and send a message to the government that the students wanted a better education. So although students utilized methods that could be characterized as subpolitics, they did so within the framework of political institutions. Their intent in using street protests and tomas was to eventually spur negotiation with government officials to arrive at a favorable outcome, not to destroy or harm government infrastructure.

Participation in the Revolución Pingüina does not mean that students are any more interested in formal politics. Very few leaders of the student movement desire to get actively involved in Chilean politics, at least in the traditional sense. Most emphasized that they did not belong to any party and many voiced a disinterest or disappointment with the political party system because it did not represent them or their interests. Sebastian Vielmas, one student leader who happened to also be a leader in the Socialist Youth, admitted that his conventional political participation was rare, and also hinted that he might leave his position within the organization due to disillusionment with the Socialist Party. Given that the political outcomes of the protests (discussed in the next section) did not address some of the most important student demands, it is no wonder that participants are not willing to participate politically. They do not view institutions such as political parties as able or willing to represent their needs, and furthermore do not believe that their involvement in formal politics will bring about any true change.

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184 Conversations with the author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile; Tamara Gutiérrez Portillo and Cristina Caviedes Reyes, Revolución Pingüina: La Primera Gran Movilización del Siglo XXI en Chile, (Santiago: Editorial Ayun, 2006).
Despite this, the Revolución did demonstrate that Chilean students are more than materialistic youth that “aren’t here or there” with anything. They care about something—getting a high quality education. The opinion surveys showed that students value a government that provides social services and redistributes wealth. The stark inequalities that persist in Chilean society, reproduced by the education system, demonstrate that the Chilean government has not done enough in this respect. Harkening back to the quote that opened this chapter, the changing nature of conventional political participation in Chile made popular protests a viable way for students to voice their discontent, but without demonstrating a propensity towards traditional forms of political participation.

The 2006 student movement certainly caused society to reexamine, if only temporarily, the way people thought about Chilean youth. Rodrigo Cornejo of the Chilean Observatory of Educational Policy at the University of Chile noted that “a lot of people though the young people were simply individualistic, selfish consumers. But the long-term changes the students were pressing for this year weren’t going to directly benefit them—it was for their younger brothers and sisters.”\textsuperscript{185} What sort of long term changes did the students achieve? What was the political outcome of this protest that challenged the stereotype of political apathy? These questions and more will be addressed below.

4.4 Outcomes: The Political Response to the 2006 Mobilizations

On 9 April 2008, the Education Commission of the Chilean House of Deputies unanimously passed the New General Education Law (\textit{Ley General de Educación}, LGE). It is expected that it will soon pass after a general vote in the House. This \textit{proyecto de ley} (proposed law, similar to a bill in the US system), introduced by President Michelle Bachelet in April 2007, will repeal the LOCE if passed. It not only promises to increase the quality of education for all

students, but represents an important step in dismantling authoritarian enclaves. To think that the Revolución Pingüina was the catalyst for this new law suggests that the political outcome of the student protests will be important and have a lasting effect on the education system. Why, then, are student leaders and their supporters disappointed? This section will explore what major changes the new law puts forward and how well they reflect the proposals of the students. It will also explore the aftermath of the student movement itself and especially take a look at internal politicization. Finally, it will conclude by examining the effect of protests on Chilean society.

The process undertaken to arrive at the LGE was not an easy one, characterized by a high degree of debate, both between the two political coalitions and within the educational community. The concepts in the proyecto de ley were based on a report generated by the Presidential Advisory Committee for Educational Quality (Consejo Asesor Presidencial Para La Calidad de la Educación, CAPCE), formed at the beginning of June 2006 in direct response to the protests. It was composed of approximately eighty members, including teachers, professors, school administrators, educational policy makers, academics, religious representatives, members of indigenous communities, six university students and six secondary students. As noted in Chapter Two, student leaders wanted at least 50% student representation on the committee. On 11 June 2006, the ACES ratified the creation of the CAPCE, but this did not signal an end to their dissatisfaction. Students continued to protest and occupy schools until November 2006, mainly in response to a preliminary report released in September by the Advisory Committee. The students, supported by the Teachers’ Union, deemed its findings “unsatisfactory.” This time

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the protests failed to garner the widespread response as they had in May, and most tomas ended when police forced students to vacate the school buildings.\textsuperscript{187}

In addition to the creation of the CAPCE, President Bachelet promised some immediate concessions to the students in June 2006. She pledged to increase the quantity of free school lunches provided to students—200,000 more in 2006 and 300,000 more in 2007, and announced that the school transport pass could be used 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the school year, and would be free for all students that demonstrated need. The scholarship to cover the cost of the PSU would be extended to more students, and a program was announced to increase the infrastructure of 520 schools around the country.\textsuperscript{188} For the most part, these promises have been carried out. Maria Jesús Sanhueza highlighted these changes as one of the main positive outcomes of the protests, because it improves the daily lives of students and helps alleviate the economic pressure of many families.\textsuperscript{189} However, these changes represented the “short-term” demands of the students. The “long-term” structural changes were investigated by the Advisory Committee and some eventually formed the new LGE introduced to the House of Deputies.

The final report published by the CAPCE in December 2006 made a number of recommendations. Being a large and diverse group, it was impossible to come to a consensus on all issues. The report reflects this, and on many topics provides more than one proposal for change. The committee had five commissions that worked on the following areas: Regulatory Framework, Institutional Structure, Educational Quality, Teachers and Higher Education. Most recommendations made by the commissions, except for those on Teachers and Higher Education, were included to some extent in the LGE. The Committee acknowledged that it was necessary to

\textsuperscript{187} Gutiérrez Portillo and Caviedes Reyes, 120-125.
\textsuperscript{189} Sanhueza in conversation with the author, Santiago, Chile, January 2008.
change the LOCE and the system's regulatory framework to correct the lack of democratic legitimacy and to ensure that the state guarantees not only educational freedom, but the right to a high quality public education.

After President Bachelet introduced the law in April 2007, discussion ensued between the two political coalitions until an historic agreement was reached in November 2007. This agreement was necessary because the LGE represented a constitutional change (as explained in Section 1.1). One Chilean newspaper summarized why they were able to finally agree: "For the Concertación, it signals the end of the last 'binding law' of the dictatorship [and] they are smiling in the Alianza because the law will move forward without touching the freedom of education." On the road to approval, two issues were very controversial: student selection and the requirement that subsidized schools be run solely by non-profit organizations. The former remained in the proposed law, prohibiting the selection of students from schools with state funding for any criteria until eighth grade. The latter, however, was eventually removed from the proposed law when it became clear that the Alianza would not agree to it if this statute remained. Despite this, the proposed law demands that the only line of business for corporations running schools with state vouchers be education. In other words, a company that also dedicates itself to bread making can not administer a school that receives state funding, but it can make all the profit it wants.

The greatest achievement of the LGE is that it will replace the LOCE, in theory representing a great political gain for the student movement. In practice its value lies in the symbolism of revoking one of the last binding laws. The LGE represents many important

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191 The only exception is parochial schools, which may select based on conformance with their "educational project." Schools may also give preference to students whose siblings already attend the school or whose parents are employed at the school.

192 Rodriguez, “Gobierno...”
changes to the LOCE. It establishes that every student has the right to a high quality public education, despite the fact that it does this while maintaining the open market principle of "freedom to education." It establishes stricter requirements for individuals, foundations or corporations owning and administering schools with state funding. Two other proposed laws, the Law of the Superintendency and the Subsidy Law, will establish an Office of the Superintendent to regulate the education system and increase the state educational subsidy by 15%, respectively. The Office of the Superintendent will serve to evaluate and audit the educational establishments recognized by the state, to make sure that they are effectively spending the state subsidy, and ensure the quality of education through the evaluation of students and teachers. These proposed laws emphasize accountability on the part of schools to provide a high quality education, something that the LOCE lacked, signaling an important gain for the Chilean education system.

The proposed regulation of subsidy money is especially crucial given that Minister of Education, Yasna Provoste, was impeached on 16 April 2008 after an audit discovered irregularities amounting to approximately $500 million in the educational subsidy budget. Though not personally responsible, the Senate voted to impeach the ex-Minister for failing to correct these grave infractions.\(^{193}\)

The LGE has received heavy criticism from student leaders and professors, especially those from the Teachers' Union. They argue that the law gets rid of the LOCE in name without significantly changing the model, simply providing more regulation. Sanhueza summed up this view, saying "[the proposed law] will bring about a better quality education, but it will not give

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us the education to which we aspire."\(^{194}\) The LGE does ignore important issues, such as municipalization and the JEC, in spite being principal demands of the students. These two topics were addressed in the Advisory Committee. Regarding municipalization, it stated that “the system of municipal administration presents serious problems, putting at risk the population that assists these schools, mainly the poor,"\(^{195}\) and proposed four alternatives to the municipal model. The Advisory Committee also affirmed that the JEC had many glitches, and recommended specific courses of action, such as guaranteeing a more balanced curriculum and providing more resources for infrastructure improvements. There was also discontent about the elimination of the non-profit clause. For Sebastián Vielmas, the fact that the Concertación did not press more to eliminate the ability to profit demonstrated “timidity” and made him lose faith in the ability of the Concertación to bring about true change. He sees this law as “changing a few little things so that the big picture doesn’t change at all;" in other words, just another compromise.\(^{196}\)

Students and the Teachers’ Union were also unhappy about the policy of student selection, sustaining that the conditions were not strict enough. Juan Eduardo García-Huidobro, the head of the CAPCE, wrote an editorial showing his support for the policy in theory, but arguing that it was arbitrary to prohibit selection only until eighth grade. He notes that it would be logical either to forbid it until tenth grade, when “general formation” ends or until twelfth grade, when obligatory education ends.\(^{197}\) He also criticizes the fact that the proposed law does not get rid of the shared funding policy that allows some subsidized private schools to charge an additional fee to parents. He argues that this is essentially “financial selection.” Around one third

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\(^{195}\) García-Huidobro and Medrano, 11, 26.

\(^{196}\) Sebastián Vielmas (Former President, Student Center, Liceo de Aplicación) in discussion with the author, Santiago, Chile, January 2008.

\(^{197}\) In Chile, “general formation” refers to 1\(^{st}\)-10\(^{th}\) grade, when a general integrated curriculum is followed. In 11\(^{th}\)-12\(^{th}\) grade, students chose whether to specialize in Scientific-Humanistic or Technical education.
of subsidized schools (both municipal and private) charge an additional fee, meaning that if the parents cannot afford to pay, their children will not be able to attend these schools. The proposed law states that the "selection process can in no way consider the economic or social situation of the applicant" yet charging a fee does exactly that. This limits access to a large portion of publicly-funded schools based on the ability to pay, failing to adequately address the problem of socio-economic segmentation in the education system. In fact, students had demanded a complete renovation to the system of financing. Though the per-student voucher will increase if the new Subsidy Law passes, the demand-side approach of funding through vouchers will remain.

In stark contrast to student leaders, Professor Alejandra Mizala, member of the CAPCE, touted the LGE, especially the new regulatory aspects. Although she recognized that the work of the Advisory Committee was difficult due to differing points of view and political beliefs, she believed that the new law did a good job including the majority of the CAPCE's recommendations. She blamed discontent on "ideologies" that prevented students and teachers from seeing that the ability of subsidized private schools to profit would not negatively affect quality as long as the schools were properly audited, as proposed under the Superintendency Law. Mizala was convinced that unlike the past, the new regulatory framework would effectively prevent the misuse of funds and increase the quality of publicly-funded education.

The students, however, disagree.

199 Mensaje de S.E. La Presidenta de la República con el que inicia un proyecto de ley que establece la Ley General de Educación, Mensaje No. 55-355, Santiago, 9 April 2007, párrafo 2, artículo 11, p. 30.
200 Alejandra Mizala (Associate Professor of Economics, Faculty of Industrial Engineering, University of Chile and member of Presidential Advisory Committee on Education) in discussion with author, January 2008, Santiago, Chile.
When asked what the greatest achievement of the Revolución Pingüina was, student leaders and members of the Teachers' Union do not point to the LGE. Vielmas went so far as to say that the proposed law was not even a true outcome of the Revolución, contending that the Concertación “appropriated” the movement for their own political gains instead of giving the students the changes they demanded. Sanhueza and other student leaders talked a lot about the fact that the movement raised consciousness, both among the students themselves and in the population in general. Sanhueza contended that now there are Student Centers at more schools, and students are more aware of their rights regarding education. Luis Vicencio and Jaime Gajardo of the Teachers’ Union pointed out that politically, education is now a hot topic, and that it would undoubtedly play a role in the presidential election slated for 2009. Sanhueza along with Vania Gonzalez also contended that the Revolución Pingüina had an effect on the outcome of other social movements, including favorable results for striking copper workers in November 2006, and higher public support for the Mapuche movement, especially a hunger strike waged by activist Patricia Troncoso that ended in January 2008. More research is necessary to corroborate whether or not the Revolución Pingüina indeed had these effects. However, it shows how these students place their movement within the broader social context of Chilean social protest.

Vielmas and Nicolas Vicente blame the fact that the movement did not gain more in terms of the LGE on the weakening and politicization of the movement during key junctures in the negotiating process. In June 2006, Karina Delfino and Cesar Valenzuela stepped down as spokespeople for the ACES, citing exhaustion and the need to focus on their academics. Many other students also cited academic pressures for their decreased participation in the movement, while others believed that differing political ideologies and the influence of political parties

201 Jaime Gajardo (President, Colegio de Profesores, AG), Gonzalez, Sanhueza, Luis Vicencio (Teacher and Member, Colegio de Profesores, AG) and Vielmas in conversations with the author, Santiago, Chile, January 2008.
202 Gutiérrez Portillo and Caviedes Reyes, 82.
eventually played a role in weakening the movement. At its beginnings the movement was characterized as being apolitical, but during the negotiating process with the government this broke down. Vielmas blames the infiltration of political parties, who offered students jobs or other benefits within the party if they would support the party position during the negotiations. Whatever the true reason, in October 2006 when the debate over profit making was at its peak, students failed to organize themselves to the extent they had in June. Nicolás Vicente claims that students have no right to complain about the outcome, because when it was most important they failed to demonstrate a united front to the decision makers as it had in June, resulting in the creation of the CAPCE and other favorable concessions.\textsuperscript{203}

For the student leaders of the movement, the political outcomes were mixed. While it was obviously a great accomplishment to repeal the LOCE and institute more strict regulation of the educational system, students do not find these legislative advancements sufficient to give them the type of education they demand. They concede that important advancements have been made, especially in terms of the short term goals of the protest, but find the true success in the consciousness they have raised among students and within society—something that is intangible and hard to measure. The future of the movement is unclear. The year 2007 was fairly quiet in terms of protests and tomas, but both student leaders and the Teacher’s Union promised that 2008 would have more action. On 9 April 2008, the same day the LGE was approved in the House of Deputies by the Education Commission, a peaceful march of 1,200 demonstrators organized by the newly formed National Assembly for the Right to Education (ANDE) protested profiting from education. ANDE, composed by familiar organizations such as the ACES, the Teachers’ Union, plus many more, is trying to ignite the flame for further protest against the

\textsuperscript{203} Vicente in discussion with the author, January 2008.
outcome that they have deemed unsatisfactory. On 24 April, thousands of students in Santiago and the regions of Chile protested the LGE by marching in the streets. Students continue to be organized, and the will to demand more change is starkly apparent.

Conclusion
Implications for the Future

This paper has described and analyzed the various conditions that led up to the emergence of a powerful student movement that shook Santiago and the regions of Chile for four weeks in 2006. The demands for change in the education system can not be explained by a single discipline; for this reason this paper places the movement within an historical, economic and political framework. The roots of the penguins' plight lie in the educational system that they inherited from Augusto Pinochet, whose dictatorship they fortunately did not have to grow up under. This market-based, semi-privatized system was immortalized with the signing of the Constitutional Organic Law of Education (LOCE) in 1990, one day before Pinochet left power. Throughout the 1990s, the democratic administrations of the Concertación sought to “pay back the social debt” by enacting reforms to the system, but without making any structural changes. In 2006, the education system was in crisis. National and international standardized test scores showed that the 1990s reforms had not helped significantly improve the overall quality of education, and vast performance disparities existed between socioeconomic groups.

A number of factors that contributed to the emergence of the student movement in Chile have been explained. Students who lived for sixteen years under democracy with strong macroeconomic performance wondered why stark socio-economic inequalities still existed. They could see this reflected in their schools and knew that access to high quality primary and secondary education that would eventually lead to higher education was the only way to achieve social mobility. However, this way was blocked to many of them by the fact that only the richest sectors of the population could afford the kind of primary and secondary education necessary to go to college. Chilean students used popular protest to demand reform to the education system, at the same time challenging perceptions about their “apathy” while proving that participation in
this movement would not cause them to participate in or care about formal politics in the future. The movement filled an opening offered by the changing political environment in which political parties were more disconnected from their popular bases of support. Secondary students sent a powerful message to the Chilean government, and elicited a response, deemed precedent-setting by politicians and policy-makers, but insufficient by students.

Throughout this paper I have tried to present a comprehensive analysis of the emergence of the Revolución Pingüína, but obviously there is room for more exploration, especially as time passes and the effects of the proposed General Education Law (LGE) are played out. Now that the LOCE, one of the last “binding laws” left by the authoritarian regime has been overturned, will the Concertación still be limited in terms of carrying out social policy? Perhaps now the limits come from a different source—the desire to maintain macroeconomic stability and growth through the neoliberal economic model. Conceivably, as some authors have suggested, President Bachelet’s administration does signal the beginning of the “post-post authoritarian period,” not only because Pinochet died in 2006, but because instead of being limited by laws enacted under the dictatorship, Chilean politicians and policy makers have now chosen to limit their social policy options to privilege the elite economic class, mainly in the export sector. The LGE will not get rid of the “freedom to education,” otherwise known as a market-based education model that the Chicago Boys dreamed up in the 1980s. Though it undeniably changes the role that the state plays in guaranteeing the right to a high-quality education, many are not convinced that the new regulatory structure will be sufficient to fix serious educational inequality that only serves to worsen societal inequality.

The Revolución Pingüína was important, mostly because it showed that marginalized actors, such as students, who for the most part did not even have the power to vote, could
instigate a political response. Though this response is not what they wanted, it shows that these types of actors still have a say. In an era where control seems to increasingly be in the hands of the economic elite, the power of masses of disenfranchised youth to cause a president to create a new law is noteworthy. This time, the law may not fix all of the problems, but students and teachers seem willing to try again. However, recent political developments in Chile do not bode well for the Concertación or the student movement. On 18 April 2008, Yasna Provoste was the first Minister to be impeached since the transition to democracy in 1990. During the proceedings, two independent senators who had previously voted with the Concertación sided with the opposition, tipping the vote in favor of impeachment. The emergence of this “new majority” in the Senate threatens the Concertación’s ability to implement its legislative agenda, notably the creation of the Superintendency of Education, a law that would address exactly the problem for which ex-Minister Provoste was impeached. Though the LGE and education reform in general has bipartisan support, it “will need careful steering through Congress” to prevent detrimental changes by the opposition.205 Given that the student movement was disappointed with the reforms proposed by the Concertación, increased opposition power in Congress does not bode well for further reforms. At this point another large mobilization on education may further weaken the Concertación and the “new majority” will be less receptive to the more radical structural changes that students demand. However, on 24 April students demonstrated that they have not yet tired of challenging Bachelet’s administration to carry out the reforms that they wanted.

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