

Educational Public Policies in Chile: The Student Revolution of 2011

1. Current context of Chile

Currently, Chile is experiencing a social revolution. Every week, university and high school students storm to the streets to march to demand a radical improvement in public education. College students associated with high school students, ask the government to ensure a free and quality education for all citizens, and the effective prohibition of profit in education. Since May this year, students have been mobilized as a measure of pressure on the government for it to yield to their demands, but so far they have not been successful. Today, in late October, some universities are just finishing the first semester, which normally ends in July, and many of them still do not start the second term. Many public schools also remain to this date without resuming regular classes, which probably will cause hundreds of young Chileans to lose the school year 2011.

The Chilean public education is in crisis. Despite its massive coverage, in secondary education it reached 95.9% in terms of enrollment in 2009, the government has failed to significantly correct the problems of quality, equity and segregation in education. Four years ago the OECD summary newsletter stated "The quality and equity of primary and secondary education [of Chile] require improvement. Despite impressive progress in terms of enrollment, much remains to be done to reach Chilean students the results of other OECD countries. It is essential to have better qualified teachers and improve their initial training." [1] Today the situation has not changed. As for higher education, the latest figures published by the OECD report "Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators" [2] indicate that the economic cost of higher education is mainly supported by the families of Chilean students, with a figure that is much higher than other OECD countries where the average borders the 30%. In fact, 80% of the financing of higher education lies with the families who enter the system without differentiation on their incomes. The report says "The educational system in Chile is the only one among OECD countries to rely heavily on private sources and has one of the largest private systems," adding that "2011 will be remembered as the year of student demonstrations."

This document describes the ongoing student revolution taking place in Chile, analyzing their causes and outcomes from the perspective of the author.

2. Chilean educational system: history and current situation

The evolution of public education policies has been determined by the country's political evolution. From the earliest years of the republic until 1973, specifically from the 1833 Constitution, the public education policies were aimed at ensuring the state's preferential treatment of public education. In 1842 the School of Preceptors of Santiago was opened, from which derived the Normal Schools, which were responsible for the training of primary teachers and were characterized for delivering a rigorous training. In fact, these institutions were later the basis of a solid state education driven by the center-left governments in the 1930s, which focused on the coverage of the school system. The 1925 Constitution reaffirmed the state's preferential attention on education and put the Ministry of Education in charge of coordinating and controlling it. However, in 1930 the illiteracy rate was 56% of the population. In this decade, public education was characterized by its excellence and the government promoted the development of private education as a measure to expand coverage, but public education was to set out the standards. The following educational reforms occurred during the government of Eduardo Frei (1964-1970). The government was concerned with expanding access to education and mandatory basic education increased from 6 to 8 years. This caused an increase in demand for teachers, forcing to accelerate their training which

inevitably resulted in an incomplete preparation. However, primary coverage reached almost 90% in 1970 and secondary education increased from 18% in the early 60's, up to 49% in 1970.

In 1970 the citizens democratically chose the first socialist president in Chile, Salvador Allende, whose government not only tried to socialize education, but struggled to impose broad social vision in all government decisions. However, the socialist dream would not last long and was truncated by the military coup of 1973. The arrival of Augusto Pinochet to office triggered a radical change in the economic model that guided the country. Pinochet, imposed by force the neoliberal capitalist model in the country, and that changed the course of educational policies.

2.1. Primary and secondary education

As for the primary and secondary education in 1981 began a gradual decentralization of public institutions (which ended in 1987), that meant that the administration of public elementary and secondary schools, originally held by the Ministry of Education, was gradually transferred to municipalities across the country with the aim of making schools responsive to local needs. This meant that the municipalities were responsible for managing staff and facilities, while the Ministry ensured the curriculum and pedagogical aspects. The 1980 constitution replaced the “preferential treatment by the state in education” by a “subsidiary state” with an emphasis on academic liberty and the free choice of schools by the parents. It introduced the new system of subsidy per student (voucher) and encouraged the entry of private providers competing for this tax subsidy. It was thought that competition between providers for students, and free entry and exit of establishments, would regulate both the problems of coverage and quality. The aim was to give greater freedom to consumers (parents and tutors), to decentralize the administration, and increase the efficiency and quality in the use of resources. Thus, a system was created that remains until today where three types of establishments coexist: public schools administrated by the municipalities, private-subsidized schools that are private managed and have state subsidy, and private fee-paying schools, which are the most expensive and elitist, and that do not receive any state support [3]. Today, according to the OECD in the primary and secondary education, 22% of the total spent on education comes from the private sector [2]. This is the highest of the 38 OECD countries where on average 9% of spending on primary and secondary education comes from privates.

While the reforms led to a massive increase in coverage (by the year 2003, basic education reached 99.7% and secondary education 87.7%), the decentralization policy only caused administrative deconcentration and decentralization [4]. The decision-making powers and responsibilities are dispersed in various actors who have never felt ultimately responsible or area held accountable for the quality of education. The logic of free choice has not operated as expected in terms of quality, primarily because they did not considered that [5]:

- i. The quality of teaching is not easy to gauge, so it is necessary to generate simple information that allows families to compare schools.
- ii. Families do not often choose among educational establishments by the quality of teaching but for other observable attributes such as home-proximity, values, infrastructure or diverse aspirations.
- iii. To promote competition, a basic requirement is that there are enough competitors; which is an issue in rural areas with little population.
- iv. There are large costs (political, monetary and psychological) associated with the closure of an establishment and a school exchanging, so bad schools can remain many years in the system before closing.

Between 1982 and 1990, public spending on education fell by 27% which, combined with the strong expansion of coverage, drastically reduced spending per student. The last day of military rule in 1990, was enacted the Organic Law of Education (LOCE, by its spanish abbreviation), designed to ensure the permanence of the changes introduced during the 80s [6].

As for primary and secondary teachers, the transfer to municipalities meant the loss of their status of public servants along with many work benefits. Wages and their bargaining power fell dramatically, and in 1974, the Normal Schools were dissolved. These measures directly affected the training of teachers, increasing the enrollment in education programs but reducing their quality and admission requirements. The consequence was the loss of social and professional status, and economic prejudice of teachers, an issue that still has not reversed [3].

After 17 years of dictatorship, the country returned to democracy in 1990. However, even though it was a center-left coalition which came to power, the neoliberal economic model established at the time of the military regime remained almost unchanged during its 20 years in office. Between 1990 and 1998, real spending on education increased by 143%. There were investments in infrastructure and the role of the state as primary educational advocate was stated [6], however, although there were changes that improved the educational system, subsequent democratic governments retained the organizational structure and funding designed by the military regime. Indeed, the working conditions of teachers improved and wages increased in real terms by 170%. In 1991 a new contract for teachers was legislated, called the Teachers' Statute, which regulates national collective wage and the basis of a precarious teaching career.

In 1996 a new curriculum reform was conducted and instituted full-day schooling in Chile. This was one of the government's response following the proposals of the National Commission for the Modernization of Education (called the Brunner Commission), inserted within a framework of agreements between government and opposition in order to give greater support to educational policy [5]. However, in 2000, the results of national measures (SIMCE) and international measurement (TIMSS) showed that government spending on education more than doubled, but the educational gap between the poorest quintile and the richest one worsened. The deficiency in quality, together with the permanence of the regulatory framework from the military regime, were the detonators of the social unrest of 2006, with the "Penguin's revolution" or "The march of the penguins" (named after the coloring of students uniforms). The tension broke out in one of the largest student demonstrations in recent decades in Chile [3].

i. The student movement of 2006

In 2006, during the government of President Michelle Bachelet came the first great revolution of education. Secondary students cloistered in public schools along the country to seek an urgent amendment to the LOCE. Demanding better quality for public education, greater equity and the decline of social segregation in schools, and called for the elimination of profit in education.

After months of mobilization, the government of President Bachelet promised in 2006 to change the LOCE and so it enacted the General Education Law (LGE for its Spanish abbreviation) in 2008 after months of negotiation. However, as cited in [3], "the most complex political issues were postponed again with the promise that they would be addressed in other bills."

With LGE it was promised the Law of Quality Assurance, which should create a Quality Agency and a Superintendent of Education, and the Law for Strengthening Public Education, both still pending. It also introduced a preferential subsidy for students most affected by socioeconomic

inequalities. But in practice, this contribution is still very modest and does not replace the inequalities of the system.

ii. Analysis of current situation

While the Chilean educational system has progressed in recent years, reforms have failed to significantly correct the problems of quality, equity and segregation in education. Progress was made in coverage but not in equity. Indeed, secondary education underwent a process of massification after 1990. According to the Ministry of Education, the gross coverage of secondary school enrollment went from 79.8% in 1990 to 95.9% in 2008 [7].

However, according to the study of the OECD PISA 2009, Chile has results far below the rest of the OECD countries [2]. In addition, the variance attributable to socioeconomic background of students and schools holds a value that is above the average of OECD countries, and in particular is much higher than the rate for Finland (the country with smallest value for this coefficient). See Table 1.

Pais	Reading Comprehension	Mathematics Competition	Scientific Competition	Total Average	Total Variance	Variance Attributable to Socioeconomic Background
Finland	536	541	554	510	7.7	1.8
OECD Average	493	496	501	497	41.7	23.8
Chile Total	449	421	447	439	56.5	38.9
Chile Private Schools	458	463	480	467	-	-
Chile Public Schools	423	398	425	415	-	-

Table 1: PISA results 2009. Source: OCDE 2011.

These figures are even more dramatic when contrasted with recent Chilean social indicators published by the OECD in 2011. The OECD figures indicate that in fact, income inequality in Chile is the highest in the OECD (Gini coefficient of 0.50), much higher than the OECD average of 0.31. At 18.9%, Chile has the third highest relative poverty rate in the OECD, and it is well above the OECD average of 11.1%. 38% of Chileans find it difficult or very difficult to live on their current income, well above the OECD average on 24% [8].

In the same data PISA clearly demonstrate the educational gap between the public and private education, as also shown in Table 1.

Although public spending on education increased considerably between 1990 and 2008 from 3.9% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 6.9%, spending on public education only rose from 1.5% to 2.7 % and the difference was absorbed by private education. This allowed to increase education coverage by promoting the creation of new schools, however this did not translate into improvements in the quality of education [7]. In 1990, 58.4% of students were in public municipal institutions, while 31.8% in subsidized private and 7.9% in private schools without state funding. In 2008, the figures show that 43.5% of students were enrolled in municipal schools, 48% attended subsidized schools and the remaining 8.5% attended private schools. The figures show an increase in subsidized schools during the 1990-2009 period, that doubled to 5,536 that year, while municipal establishments decreased in the same period from 6,286 to 5,829.

According to statistics from the Quality Measurement System of Education of Chile (SIMCE) published in 2007, the results of test taken to students in their 8th year reaffirm the existing basic education gap [9]. See Table 2.

Type of School	Spanish Language	Mathematics
Particular	299	312
Subsidized	260	263
Municipal	241	242
National Average	253	256

Table 2: SIMCE results 2008 for 8° grade. Source: Ministry of Education, Chile.

Considering these figures, it seems that the quality of education is closely related to the value of the tuition. However, the SIMCE measurement does not consider socio-economic differences between students and institutions. A study by the Center for Humanistic Studies revealed that in analyzing the results of the SIMCE by socioeconomic segment the results obtained by students in profiting subsidized-private schools are worse than those obtained by students in non-profiting subsidized-private schools, and worse than those obtained by students of municipal schools [10]. Table 3 shows the results of the study for the second year of secondary education and corresponds to SIMCE 2008. Segment A corresponds to establishments that have the greater number of students within the lowest quintile of socioeconomic index, followed by the other groups in increasing order.

Group	Municipal		Subsidized Nonprofit		Subsidized For-profit		Private	
	Lang.	Mat.	Lang.	Mat.	Lang.	Mat.	Lang.	Mat.
A	223.9	208.9	231.5	220.0	220.9	205.5	-	-
B	238.7	228.2	246.8	239.3	237.2	226.0	-	-
C	270.8	267.6	265.9	265.4	256.0	250.3	-	-
D	313.7	330.4	292.7	302.4	279.6	284.9	281.1	284.5
E	-	-	-	-	-	-	307.1	325.1
Total Students	104,079		42,915		60,732		16,642	

Table 3: SIMCE 2008 results by socioeconomic quintile. Source: [10].

In a recent IDB study important conjectures are proposed about the American educational reality, which are particularly well suited to the case of Chile [11]. Based on previous work, the authors note that:

- i. There is a strong correlation between social inequality, expressed as the Gini coefficient of monetary income, and educational inequality, expressed as the quality of education Gini coefficient. Indeed, although a correlation is not cause-effect relationships, social inequality is a source of difficulties in the educational process and, in turn, social inequality feeds educational inequality.
- ii. The number of years of schooling is less important for development and equity that the quality of education.
- iii. The lower the educational level of parents, the less concern about the quality of education for their children. This is entirely understandable. Probably for these parents, crime, drug addiction, unemployment, health and housing are more pressing problems that poor reading comprehension of children, who may read better than themselves. Many citizens, especially the poorest, cannot see the sophisticated correlations between Gini coefficients of income distribution and quality of education. Consequently, there is not a great public pressure and demands on the political elite in this area.

However, research conducted by [12] and [13] are give hope for the Chilean case. These clearly show that, after eliminating the effect of social background of students, both schools have very similar performance on average, especially in vulnerable schools. Nor school size nor school district influence, nor the amount that some municipalities contribute to education spending.

Moreover, the McKinsey report [14], comparing cases of successful countries in education, said that “the experiences of these successful educational systems emphasize the importance of three aspects: get the right people to become teachers; develop them into effective instructors, and ensure that the system is able to provide the best possible instruction to all children.

These systems demonstrate that best practices for achieving these three goals are not relevant to the culture in which they are applied. Likewise, also attest that significant improvements can be achieved in the short term results and that the universal application of these practices could have tremendous impact on improving deficient education systems, wherever they are.”

In 2010 a center-right coalition assumed the government of Chile. Among the new measures taken by the government of President Sebastián Piñera is an attempt to improve the teaching profession. In 2011 went into effect an improvement plan which aims to motivate excellence students to study pedagogy. A system of scholarships is provided for students who demonstrate consistent excellence, and the ensuring of better earnings upon graduation. It is hoped that this effort constitutes the first step in the vindication of the teaching profession and that this translates, in the long term, in an improvement of the quality of Chilean education.

2.2. Higher education

The higher education system in Chile was also designed primarily by the military dictatorship. There are three types of establishments, universities, technical training centers (CFT) and Professional Institutes (IP). With the 1981 reform, higher education was liberalized allowing the creation of private universities and stating that they must be nonprofit corporations, unlike IP and CFT. This created two types of universities that coexist until today, the so-called “traditional universities” which are state universities and those nonprofit private ones put in place prior to 1981, and the remaining “private universities”. While the law stipulated that the new private universities should be non-profit, only since 2011 a mechanism to control that status is being discussed. Today, it is clear that the legislation has not been fully met, and various legal subterfuges have been used to allow business to obtain profit [15-16].

Since the military government, no new public universities have been created in Chile. The “traditional universities” have been grouped in the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities (CRUCH) and funded through state allocations. In 2011, the CRUCH was composed of 16 state universities and 9 private ones (of which 6 are owned by the Catholic Church).

Students have free choice as to the institution in which they pursue their higher studies; however, their admission is subject to the requirements of each establishment and the ability to afford the fees. In the case of the 25 traditional institutions grouped in the CRUCH, college admissions are made through a national selection test, the University Selection Test (PSU).

Taking into account that in Chile the prices for coursing higher education are high (the monthly college’s fees are more expensive than the minimum wage), and considering the great inequality in income distribution, a student may apply for different grants or loans to finance their studies. This has provoked criticism of the system because the benefits are few and evaluation systems are very poor. Students from universities represented in the CRUCH can apply for the Solidarity Fund of

college credit, and other higher education students to state-endorsed credit (CAE). Of course, there are loans offered by private financial banking, but to qualify the student is required to have an endorser and of course have the ability to pay for what in the case of low-income students is impossible.

The Solidarity Fund is a college credit granted by the Chilean state to college students belonging to the 25 universities of the CRUCH, to pay all or part of duties of the career. It is targeted to low-income students wishing to study in higher education. Its existence dates from the period of military dictatorship in Chile. One of its main problems has been the scant coverage to the huge demand, in addition to a poor evaluation system. The CAE is a benefit created by the Chilean state, consisting of a credit from the financial system (banks) to students of institutions of higher education who attend a career in an accredited establishment belonging to the system of state-guaranteed loans in Chile. The benefit is intended for students with financial difficulties to finance their studies and who wish to enter or continue their higher education studies. This credit is not restricted to the 25 universities of the CRUCH. The CAE interest rate was 5.8% through August of this year, unlike the Solidarity Fund which is 2%.

i. Analysis of current situation

Statistics published by the National Commission on Higher Education (CES) [17], yield that there has been an expansion of coverage of higher education in Chile over the past two decades. In 1990, undergraduates were about 240,000, almost a quarter of the current figure. According to the Ministry of Education of Chile in 2008 it was estimated that coverage in the age range between 18-24 had increased from 16% to about 40% over the same period [18].

Establishment Type	Number of Establishments	Enrolled Students	Percentage of Enrollment	Type of Student Origin School			
				Municipal	Subsidized	Particular	Others
Traditional Universities	25	266,782	30%	33%	48%	17%	2%
Private Universities	34	295,801	33%	25%	40%	25%	10%
IP	43	217,867	24%	47%	37%	7%	9%
CFT	77	120,486	13%	53%	36%	4%	7%
Total	179	900,936	100%	37%	43%	16%	4%

Table 4: Higher education statistics in Chile. Source: CES 2011.

However, in the same figures published by the ESC is seen that in 2010 there were 634.154 (70%) students enrolled in private higher education. This means that their only chance of financing was applying for CAE or a regular bank loan. Of these students, 482.510 (76%) came from municipal schools and subsidized schools. This, coupled with the almost total lack of scholarships and the poor coverage of the Solidarity Fund, caused the indebtedness of Chilean families.

It is important to note that since 2004, a process for certifying the quality of Chilean higher education started through the National Commission for Undergraduate Accreditation. Establishing a national system of quality assurance in higher education that included universities, CFT, and IP, which was in charge of the National Accreditation Commission. Its main objectives are institutional accreditation and accreditation of courses and programs of higher education. However, as Weissbluth described [20], dozens of universities, IP and CFT were created without any regulation between 1981 and 2004. Today in Chile, according to the CES, of 7,092 courses offered at any

institution of higher education, only 996 are accredited. In particular, 407 of these accredited courses correspond to programs offered by universities CRUCH.

The neoliberal model, caused the same effect on basic and secondary education in Chile, and higher education; coverage increased but the quality is not regulated. This is mainly due to the great social inequality in the Chilean community. However, as also cites Waissbluth in [19], unlike school education that is largely funded by the state, higher education is funded 80% by the families. This was established on the assumption that obtaining a degree would translate into higher incomes for professionals allowing them to pay debts incurred during college. However, students entering higher education, approximately 40% dropped out for academic or economic reasons and will be indebted. Of the 60% that achieves graduation, half will be unemployed or achieve a lousy job because of the poor academic training received, so they end up paying their high debt in 20 to 30 years. OECD [2] also recognizes the higher education coverage, which reaches 47%, however notes that despite the high investment, "getting more education does not necessarily protects against unemployment." And then points out that college graduates have 78% chance of finding a job, while the OECD average is 83.6%.

3. Why does Chile do not advance in public education and educational equity?

Primarily by the distribution of state powers inherited from the dictatorship. Indeed, at the end of the military rule constitutional provisions were taken with the intention of preventing changes in legislation in the coming times of democracy. Within the defined policies there was a binomial electoral political system, which virtually guarantees until today that the parliament holds a similar number of members of the coalition of center-right and center-left. With this, any modifications to essential educational reforms of the military government (or the system itself) requires a strong parliamentary majority, which has been and will be very difficult to achieve. This is the basic explanation as to why the alliance of center-left "Concertación" has been a continuator of the macro policies of the military government and why significant reforms such as increasing the budget for public education or ending profit in education have not been made.

Although there have been some initiatives, there has been no radical change aiming to ensure free public education and quality education for all Chileans. Perhaps for merely ideological reason, the center-right has not given the benefit of the students' demands. The funny thing is that even when several members of the left support the proposal of a socialist character education in Chile, there are many other leftists who do not add to that proposal. Perhaps because several members of the parliament and current government have been pointed out for profiting from education.

Perhaps a system as the binomial would work in an ideal environment in which legislators accept the reality of the figures, particularly the fact that the free market failed to regulate the quality of education and/or put aside their personal interests and prioritize the people. However, in practice, personal interests take priority and ordinary people are postponed. MPs are continuously being elected, in part because the binomial system allows election without a single electoral majority, and partly because the population of Chile, mostly naive and uninformed, still believes in false promises impossible to fulfill.

Since the binomial political system makes radical change in the formal institutions of education highly unlikely, it seems that the only solution to implement a radical change is to change the constitution itself, since the current law does not allow major changes and the country remains stagnant in terms of social inequality. This is why the student movement raises as an alternative

solution the performance of a national referendum to change laws that prevent the existence of public schools offering a free and quality education, or to change the constitution.

4. Why the student revolution is taking place now?

This movement did not emerge overnight, but might have occurred at any time. Some minimal factors were required along with some detonator, as the fuel (the people's discontent) has accumulated over the years.

It could have been at any time. Conscious concern has been present in a few for years, and perhaps unconsciously in many people, as evidenced by the facts. The problems of quality and equity in education have even been part of government proposals of a couple of non-elected presidential candidates. When people are unhappy, it is only a matter of time before this discontent is manifested. The problem is that even when mass discontent is present, we need leaders capable of channeling that discontent, and people committed to follow them and fight for their convictions. Disgruntled leaders have existed in universities, colleges and schools in recent years, moreover, quite frequently renewed. However, the committed mass had been scarce so far. The university students have been marching for years, they have seized buildings and have suspended classes demanding an improvement in the quality of education, but little progress has been made mainly by small adhesion and the lack of commitment. While there were those willing to put off for the cause, they were not the majority and that weakened the previous movements. Mass discontent had installed in the youth of Chile after the dictatorship, and most of the youth had no interest in politics. The youth was unhappy but marginalized from the system. The enrollment of youth in the electoral rolls had dropped dramatically. The Library of Congress published in 2008 that at the beginning of the decade (2000) 55.3% of young people of voting age were registered, while this year only 27.2% of this age segment has made this process [20]. According to figures from the Electoral Service, only 62% of those over 18 years were enrolled and, worse, people under 30 accounted for only 7.6%. At the time of the plebiscite of 1988, nearly 95% of eligible voters were registered. In 2008, estimates show that for every 100 Chileans between 18 and 24 years, only seven exercised their right to vote. The lack of interest is patent throughout the country and also in local universities and student directives where participation was negligible.

This year the scenario was different. As before, the leaders were unhappy and, as ever, had the overwhelming support of the masses dissatisfied. They were the former Penguins, now university students, the same ones that raised a mass revolution in 2006, and that were deceived by false promises of the government of that time. It's people that know that revolutions can bring about change, and do not fear losing their own immediate benefits towards achieving consequential benefits for future generations. It could have been before, could have been later, but the fact is that this year all the factors to trigger the social revolution were present; disgruntled leaders and a mass of outraged youth willing to follow and fight for educational change.

The Chilean educational inequality is so obvious that in recent times, as never before, in right-wing sectors leftist leaders began to emerge and reached support. That is the case of Giorgio Jackson, president of the Student Federation of the Catholic University of Chile, whose conglomerate was reelected again for 2012. Or the case of the University of Concepcion, where the Federation of Student 2011 is in the hands of the left extremists who replaced right-wing leaders that had long received the most votes.

What is the difference between the generation of ex penguins and other youth? Why do they believe in the social revolution unlike previous generations? What was the main trigger for the

revolution? Probably the reasons are several, as said in the theory of complex systems. However, some possible causes are listed below that might explain, together or separately, why the revolution broke out now.

- i. Young people were motivated because of the particular charisma of leaders, including Camila Vallejo.
- ii. Perhaps the universe of students is children of a generation that had more access to education in the days of President Frei Montalva.
- iii. Current generations of students have lived coincidentally in full democracy throughout their entire lives, which has allowed them to be fully aware of their rights and irregularities in the system. It is possible that the investments in education made since 1990 have resulted in students better educated and more informed.
- iv. The protesters are the first generation that faces the dilemma of the payment of CAE (enough indebted students have accumulated since 2006 to date) that, let me remember, has an interest rate of 5.8%.
- v. In recent years many institutions of higher education have been created and career offering has grown rapidly. This has resulted in an increase in the supply of professionals in the market which in turn has generated a rise in unemployment and the corresponding decrease in wages due to the high bid.
- vi. Perhaps, during the dictatorship the poor quality of education was justified (to which you could not do anything), but after 20 years of democracy the youth got tired of further delaying the problems of the education system.
- vii. Perhaps the increasing globalization and global unrest motivated young people to claim their rights.

The truth is that the movement caused many young people and citizens in general to get involved in politics. In fact, in August 2011 entries in electoral rolls had increased by 40% over the previous year and is expected to continue rising. It is imperative to ensure that the Chilean electorate pool stops aging.

5. The student movement

The student movement began in April 2011. The Student Federation of Chile (CONFECH), an organization that brings together the student associations of the universities that make up the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities, the so called “traditional universities,” convened nationwide demonstrations to demand the government a radical improvement in the educational system. Increasingly, high school students joined the protests and began to seize their schools, repeating the actions of the Penguin Revolution. Representing the middle school students is the National Coordinator of Secondary Students (CONES) and the Coordinating Assembly of Secondary Students (ACES). As the movement grew, for the first time paid private school students, CFT students, IP students and private universities students incorporated to the rallies, namely the members of almost all the Chilean educational system.

The aim of the movement, as published in an official statement, is to build a constitutionally guaranteed education project as a universal social right at all levels, based on a quality system of public education that is democratic, pluralistic and free, oriented to knowledge production to full and equal development and to meeting the needs of Chile and its people.

The main spokeswoman of the student movement has been Camila Vallejo, president of the Federation of Students of the University of Chile (FECH) and Giorgio Jackson, president of the

Student Federation of the Catholic University of Chile (FEUC). These correspond to the two main universities in the country.

The movement was characterized by a massive grip. From April, there have been mass demonstrations across the country. Students have paralyzed class attendance and have taken control over college campuses. In October this year, the universities recently agreed to end the first semester, which usually ends no later than July. Many colleges, including the University of Chile, remain without starting the second semester than at regular times begins in August. As for secondary education establishments, many also have been taken by the students causing the delay of academic programs because of the suspension of classes. High school students have carried prolonged hunger strikes and walks of over 400 miles from one city to another. Students have also jointly organized protests characterized by alternative art exhibitions, cultural events and family activities with massive grip across the country. The movement has spread in social networks and has been characterized by a deep cyber activism.

The movement has been endorsed by major social and trade union organizations nationwide, who have called strikes and protests in support of the student demands, including the College of Teachers, the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities and the National Association of Public Employees, the Confederation of Copper Workers, the Unitary Confederation of Workers in Chile and other 42 organizations [21].

Early in the demonstrations, the Minister of Education was Joaquin Lavin, who was harshly criticized by students when he was accused of profiting at the expense of education. On July 18 President Piñera held a cabinet reshuffle which affected the student participants in the conflict. Joaquin Lavin left the education portfolio and took over the Ministry of Planning. Up to then Justice Minister Felipe Bulnes, was appointed Minister of Education and holds the office until now. Lavin's departure was welcomed by students who, through their spokeswoman Camila Vallejo said "is a breakthrough and responds to a necessity." [22]

The social movement is supported internationally by Chilean and foreign communities in different countries. There have been protests in several countries like Argentina, Spain, France and the US. The reputation of the movement has transcended borders and the reason for the protests in Chile has been published throughout the world [23-25]. The New York Times reported in August "With Kiss-Ins and Dances, Young Chileans Push for Reform" [26], the daily El Pais from Spain in August also published "The "student winter" shakes Chile, Chileans are rebelling against a educational model classist and deficient -education is still the remaining challenge, despite the economic boom." [27] The French magazine Courrier International dedicated its September 15 cover to the social unrest that has erupted around the world and have characterized this 2011, showing a picture of the spokesperson and leader Camila Vallejo [28]. The BBC World [29-30] and the British newspaper The Guardian [31] have also given coverage to the movement. Surprising is that there is no international questioning of the student demands. On the contrary, all mass media cites the sad reality of the Chilean middle and low class families, and describe the massive movement and its demands.

Many of the demonstrations in cities across the country have resulted in vandalism and looting. In response, the government has reacted with deep political repression. Chilean police agency is the organization in charge of the contention, and depends of the home office. The police repression has left a toll of hundreds of students injured during the dissolution of the protests and violent evictions of the taken institutions. Even, a policeman caused the death of a young man of 16 years on August 4 in the context of the dissolution of the protests. The Human Rights Commission

announced through a statement, his concern for what happened on August 4, due to the way the State of Chile has restricted certain fundamental rights such as speech, assembly and demonstration. According to the organism: “The use of force in public demonstrations must be exceptional and strictly necessary in circumstances in accordance with internationally recognized principles.” [31]

The well-known Chilean historian Gabriel Salazar, who was awarded with the National Prize for History in 2006 in Chile, argues in its many conferences that vandalism and looting are not made by students, but by social outcasts who adhere to the marches because deep discontent and are precisely the product of the system. However, the vandalism has been the focus of the coverage of the media, which have been harshly criticized by students who claim that the broadcasts focuses on the vandalism of a few and not on the massiveness of the peaceful protests or the students’ demands [33].

The center-right coalition has relentlessly criticized the movement, however, public opinion supports the cause. According to survey results Adimark-GfK [34] which takes place monthly, in September 1, 79% of respondents said they “agree” with the demands of students. In this survey, only 21% approve the government’s handling of the conflict while 73% reject it. The National Public Opinion Survey Center for Public Studies (CEP) conducted between June and July revealed that 73% of respondents believe that in the last ten years the quality of education in Chile has remained the same or has deteriorated. Also, 80% disagrees with profit-making universities and schools [35].

Students have gathered to talk with the government on four occasions that have been unsuccessful. In early October, the dialogue between students and the government broke, and the talks have not resumed yet. The student said the government is unwilling to access the basic demands. The main leaders of the movement, including Jackson and Vallejo, traveled to Europe in October to solicit support from international organizations. They met with the Commission on Higher Education of UNESCO, OECD, also with the Human Rights Commission of the UN and MEPs.

After six months of fighting, the historian Gabriel Salazar said on an important radio station that “The student movement has not lost its massiveness.” [36]

6. The student request

The request of the student movement is made by the demands of higher education students and high school students. While leaders have said that the movement will not stop until the government meets their demands, they have also indicated that they do not expect any measures proposed by the government in response to the request to be instituted abruptly but expect them to develop a working plan to schedule the application of measures to ensure a change in national educational policies for equity and quality.

6.1. College students

The petition of the higher education students, which has been published through their institution CONFECH [37], is summarized in the points listed below.

- i. *Increase funding on education as percentage of GDP. This includes the injection of capital to the fund for education of elementary, secondary and higher education.*

- Increased state support for public universities, not associated with performance agreements, to ensure the providing of free education, to end the self-financing and fund the actual costs and the development of traditional universities.
 - Creating a National State Technical Education Network.
 - A free-disposition Revitalization Fund for Traditional Universities.
 - Comprehensive restructuring of the system of student grants and their amounts, coverage and application conditions.
 - Remove the CAE and create a unique system of Solidarity Fund for all institutions that in practice do not profit and eliminate the banking from the financing system.
- ii. *Democratization and regulation of the Public Education system.*
- Modification of the education laws to effectively ban the profit in education.
 - Certify the quality of training offered by universities through a new state accreditation system mandatory for all institutions of higher education, with rigorous evaluation criteria.
 - Ensure the participation of academics, students and staff in decision making of institutions of higher education.
 - Constitutional guarantee of the right to education under international treaties ratified by Chile that are in force.
- iii. *Access to an equitable education system, with quality, integration and social heterogeneity in enrollment, eliminating discriminatory disparities in the system.*
- The students manifest a rejection of the current selection system (PSU) and demand the creation of new complementary mechanisms of access to higher education to consider leveling and maintenance (academic and economic).
 - It is claimed also to ensure access to higher education and adequate study conditions for people with special educational needs.

6.2. High school students

Among the points required by middle school students are [38]:

- i. Constitutional reform aimed at establishing the right to education over academic freedom, and to ensure an equal quality education, secular and free for all establishments in the country.
- ii. Repeal of the current LGE law, changing the institutional framework of public education.
- iii. De-municipalization and nationalization of education in general, with the non-profit privates as an alternative.
- iv. A standardized curriculum for all state schools in the country.
- v. Plan for the reconstruction of facilities damaged by the earthquake of 2010.
- vi. Improvements for the technical professional schools, giving students greater protection and control during their internships.

6.3. The student proposal

The students have argued that they believe that changes in the educational system are possible, particularly in the public system, since Chile has sufficient natural resources to fund its gratuity. They propose a tax reform, which has been repeatedly proposed by the citizens and by

left-wing presidential candidates. This reform should be focused in a modification to the mining royalty and a change in income taxes levied from the business sector.

The government argues that free public education for Chile is unfeasible, as well as claims that it is financially impossible to meet the demands of the movement. The main spokeswoman of the student movement, Camila Vallejo, told that "...it is logical that education cannot be free, because someone has to pay for it, but it should be paid through general and specific taxes that must be levied, the State must finance education through productivity gains and income earned mainly of large companies, i.e., through progressive taxation transferred to public institutions through the national budget." [39]

The tax reform proposed by the students seems like a plausible and timely solution, considering the high rates of inequality in Chile and taking into account that the richest 10% gets about 50% of the revenue of the country and accounts for about 60% of consumption (in industrialized countries that figure drops to 15%). This figure is supported by national and international studies [40].

7. The government's position

The government of President Piñera has not yielded to social demands. The billionaire Sebastian Pinera belongs to the center-right coalition that rules the country after 20 years of center-left government. The study by the Center for Public Studies (CEP) conducted between June and July [35], showed an approval rating of President Sebastián Piñera of only 26%, becoming the worst evaluated president after the return to democracy. Adimark survey [34] granted a 27% support in August (the lowest of his term) and 30% in September.

As for the student movement, the extreme right criticized the government for its lack of authoritarianism, and the extreme left complains about the failure to ensure equity in a cross-cutting issue such as the right for education. At 6 months of mobilization, the government has agreed to give only the points listed below [41]:

- i. De-municipalization of public education.
- ii. Reformulation of the system of grants and loans for higher education.
- iii. Creating a Higher Education Superintendence to oversee that universities do not profit.
- iv. Rescheduling of existing loans to solve the problem of student debt and reduce the interest rate of the CAE from 5.8% to 2%.
- v. Amendment to the Constitution establishing the right to a quality education.

The government's proposals have been massively rejected by the students because they do not commit public funds or public policies that guarantee a quality public education. Neither is guaranteed the indebtedness of the neediest students and the profit is not prohibited in professional and technical institutes, and private subsidized schools. Camila Vallejo said on the matter that "it is not possible to claim to improve higher education by keeping the lucrative interest. For higher returns, educational institutions leave the provinces and move to central regions seeking greater demand, they extend the careers and expand the enrollment to generate higher profits and profitability in the short term. To capture more students, they invest in advertising more than they invest in scholarships and educational quality." [42]

The big problem is the ideological conflict between students and government. Despite all the cited figures, the ruling political class, true to the capitalist neo-liberal economic model, argues that the free market will regulate the quality of the educational system. Students clamor for them to

compromise their ideology in a cross-cutting issue such as education. Claudio Weissbluth, leader of the 2020 Education summed up the conflict: “The students this time took to the streets, not to ask for the 80s model of education to be improved, but radically changed. Apart from a few extremists, the students are not asking for a *soviet* educational model of the 70's, but an approach to the educational model of the OECD, where public education is the majority, not totalitarian, with higher levels of gratuity and less segregation. The problem is that the government, rather than accepting to discuss the model, up to now has only taken refuge in their ideological convictions of the 80s and has responded firmly that the model itself can be repainted and repaired, but its market core, profit and competition remain unchanged.” [19]

International treaties to which Chile subscribes state that quality education, free and unattached are the inalienable right of children and adolescents. However, the President stated publicly a few weeks ago that “education is a commodity”. By contrast, in volume 3 of the magazine “Challenges” published in 2006 by ECLAC and UNICEF, organizations that Chile adheres, is quoted that “The right to education is inscribed within the framework of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and subscribes to the principles and goals set by the major summits and conventions. Is prescribed that all children are entitled to free and quality education, and that States are responsible for ensuring education over all stages of the children's life, in its various forms -right to schooling, to a quality education and fair treatment in schools.” [43]

It seems difficult to achieve a radical change in the mandate of a center-right government that clings to neoliberal capitalist economic model and believe in it blindly. The scenario becomes more difficult when many of these business leaders have profited from the educational system and moreover when many government officials and parliament are engaged in the business. Arise in this manner the so called conflicts of interest that throughout history have greatly damaged the developing countries, which are naively choosing as governors and legislators the magnates of his land. Nowadays, uneducated people make the mistake of concentrating political and economic power in the same people.

8. From a student movement to a citizen movement

The movement is no longer just a student movement. For months, also housewives and ordinary people joined the movement in the famous “pot-banging.” The “cacerolazos” emerged in Chile in the decade of the 70-80s in protest and consist of going out with a pan or pot and beat to the sound of slogans. It is a form of protest that seeks to incorporate new adherents to the movement. The Chilean historian Gabriel Salazar emphasized in a popular radio station in the country “all of that sets up a social movement that affects not only students, it affects the residents, regional communities and the middle class, it is all the citizenship and that is why the 80 percent are supporting the student movement”. This is supported by the massive public endorsement showed by the above mentioned surveys. The movement has transformed, it has become a social movement, a common cause of the people, by the people and for the people.

There are other actors in Chile that also work to improve the country's education system. It is the case of motion Education 2020 [44]. This citizens' movement was born in September 2008 and seeks to promote public policy changes in the Chilean educational system, their idea is that in 2020 Chile must have an equitable quality education system for all. The leader and founder of the movement is Mario Weissbluth, academic at the University of Chile, who is recognized nationally for his commitment to the educational cause and which is why he is repeatedly integrated into educational roundtables. Education 2020 work focuses on the pressure for policy change at the level of authorities and stakeholders, but also by mobilizing and empowering citizens to demand

this change. Education 2020 is now legally a foundation and is funded by private contributions and ordinary citizens who are committed to the cause. This movement has proposed measures of change in the educational system, which, although not as radical as those of the students, agrees in their basic approaches. Education 2020 today has more than 80,000 Chilean adherents. The existence of this movement and its massive public support, and the figures already cited, make evident that the Chilean population recognizes the educational problem and agrees to that an impending change is essential.

9. Possible outcomes

Considering the current situation, the development of events in recent months and the background obtained from the author's perspective, the following possible outcomes to the conflict are visualized:

- i. The government yields its neoliberal ideology in the educational issue and agrees that the model did not work and negotiates with the students the implementation of new educational policies that in fact ensure the quality and equity in the Chilean educational system. This implies that the ruling coalition of center-right agrees that education is a cross cutting issue which can mean an exception to its neoliberal ideology. If the government agrees to this option, the educational legislation should bypass the possible disadvantages associated with the binomial system described above.
- ii. The government does not give up and students become tired of struggling. This is a frequent outcome of social movements in the world. So, sadly, the policy change would be postponed until a new government of another ideology, or a new revolution or just the current scenario never changes.
- iii. A great social revolution breaks out, much more massive and violent than the actual movement product of the great unrest. This is not as improbable, as the people of Chile, due to the social and economic expansion experienced in recent times, has become more aware of their rights and gradually learns how to wield its power in a democracy. This is demonstrated by the massive adhesion to the student movement and the sudden surge in enrollment in the electoral registers. The people of Chile are beginning to understand that it is the government that must govern according to public sentiment and not the people who should fear and blindly obey their governments.

10. Conclusion

It is clear that the Chilean educational system is in crisis. This is supported by the figures and recognized by the students, the Chilean population in general, the different political sectors in Chile, the government, the international press and the foreign community in general. Moreover, President Piñera denounced in the annual accounts of May 21, 2010, the scandalous segregation of the school system, describing it as "the true and greatest scandal of Chilean society." In response to the profound inequalities of the system, a social movement has raised led by college and high school students in Chile, which demands a radical change in the educational policies of the country. The movement demands the right to ensure education for all Chileans through a system of free public quality education. Although the government has proposed some measures to resolve the conflict, students have rejected them since they do not represent a real change in current policies that govern the system and do not meet the demands presented. After six months of protests, the movement has not lost public support and massiveness. The end of the conflict seems remote because it implies an ideological conflict between those who advocate a free market education system and its purported ability to self-regulation, and those who believe that the State should

provide an equitable and quality education for all citizens. The truth is that free-market model of education has not effectively guaranteed the right to quality education to Chilean students. For now, students continue marching with hope. They cling to the words spoken by President Piñera in the General Assembly of the United Nations that took place in late September this year, “the cause of youth is noble and beautiful,” and they expect him to act accordingly.

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