Teaching for the Flourishing Future: Educational Policy and Political Education following Chile's Democratic Transition

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Abstract: In 2011, a Chilean student strike rattled the country's political establishment in a way that no union has managed to do since the 1990 democratic transition. On-the-ground consequences of macro-changes to public education in recent decades frame pervasive disappointment in forms of political participation accorded to citizens. I explore here student, teacher and parent experiences with underfunded rural schools as a means of uncovering important temporal and affective politics structuring formal schooling in Chile today. It is no accident that the state's progressive retraction from funding public education coincides with growing interest among multinational investors to sponsor children in need.

Keywords: Chile, education policy, development, privatization, memory, expert knowledge

Résumé : En 2011, une grève des étudiants chiliens a secoué l'établissement politique du pays d'une manière dont aucun syndicat n'avait réussi à le faire depuis la transition démocratique des années 1990. Les conséquences des changements macro sur l'éducation publique dans les récentes décennies constituent le cadre d'une déception omniprésente à l'égard des formes de participation politique offertes aux citoyens. Dans le présent article, j'analyse l'expérience des étudiants, des enseignants, et des parents dans des écoles rurales sous-financées comme truchements pour révéler d'importantes politiques temporelles et affectives structurant les formes institutionnelles d'éducation dans le Chili d'aujourd'hui. Ce n'est pas par accident que le retrait progressif de l'État face au financement public de l'éducation coïncide avec un intérêt croissant des investisseurs multinationaux pour le parrainage d'enfants dans le besoin.

Mots-clés : Chili, politiques d'éducation, développement, privatisation, mémoire, savoir expert

Throughout 2011, Chilean youth were the principal force behind a student mobilization that instigated extended stoppages in at least 600 secondary schools and 17 major universities in the country. Over the entire academic year, students engaged in creative protests to pressure the government into genuine negotiation and were often met with police aggression and political scorn. Public support for the mobilization doubled to over 70 per cent of popular opinion between June and December and major unions representing teachers, miners and public servants backed the students' cause. More than any other union since the 1990 democratic transition, this movement rattled a political establishment that to this day is heavily structured by a constitution and more than a dozen organic constitutional laws[1] set forth by the Pinochet regime (1973–1990). Compelling as student mobilizations have been, these have met near refusal on the part of state agents to engage seriously with student demands. While recent civic unrest suggests disapproval for transformations to public education since the 1980s, more than two decades after the return to democracy, agitation also signals a setback in attempts by the country's recent democratic administrations to overcome the contentious nature of Chile's political transition.

From the perspective of underfunded rural schools, I observe here ways in which local knowledge about national history and the nature of civic organization have in the recent two decades become the target for bureaucratic correction. Highlighting on-the-ground consequences of enduring Pinochet-era reforms to state-funded schooling, I elaborate on ways in which educational policy established in the 1980s still significantly constrains the civic and political engagement of citizens. I begin by first outlining transformations in schooling in the past two decades as these were perceived and expressed to me, primarily by teachers in two towns and their surrounding countryside in the southern province of Valdivia. I propose that the ongoing social impacts of

transformations in schooling discussed here are most evident in a model of aid increasingly penetrating poor communities affected by large-scale industrial developments. Especially in outlying areas where multinational investors seek to sponsor underfunded public services—as compensation to residents for the impacts of industrial interventions in the landscape—we find an antiquated form of social development taking the form of charity rather than citizens' rights. By suppressing the circulation of critical memories of widespread social solidarity that flourished in Chile throughout the 20th century, education policy today helps reproduce exclusionary political practices that deny youth—and the poor more broadly—a voice in deliberative democratic processes.

For ten months in 2009, I worked in the only municipal school of the pre-cordillera town of Neltume as a language teacher for 15 hours a week, an experience in participant observation that contextualizes the data presented here. Meanwhile, I conducted in-depth interviews with over a dozen teachers and pedagogy students in the province. In equal proportion, these respondents worked in that school or in schools in neighbouring districts, or they were affiliated with a teacher training university located more than 100 kilometres away in one of the nearest cities, Villarrica. Everyone I interviewed either lived or worked in the communes of Mariquina and Panguipulli, where I carried out 27 months of fieldwork between 2007 and 2010 for a wider investigation into the learning of civic behaviour among Chile's youngest political generation.

Throughout that wider study, I was struck by how, for company officials seeking to settle impact-benefit agreements with communities affected by industrial developments, spaces of formal schooling figured prominently as strategic sites of interaction with local residents. In San José de la Mariquina and Neltume, representatives of a pulp mill and a hydroelectric company expanding operations in these areas[2] keenly proposed to sponsor school expenses and infrastructure (e.g., scholarships, uniforms, sports teams, wood-burning stoves and notebooks). I also noted that the public discourse of state actors drew heavily on the purported virtues of expanded markets; it seemed there was a collective effort to validate the role of corporations as bearers of social development. In media coverage addressing confrontations between police and those who protest the rapid expansion of forestry and hydroelectric industries in the region, it seemed that bureaucrats invariably cast the state's function as ensuring social stability through the protection of economic security. Meanwhile, in public consultations between corporations and affected residents, I found that speeches by social assistants and executives working for these multinational investors frequently disregarded local expressions of well-being vested in the quality of relationships with land and community. Instead, these professionals promoted a vision of social improvement defined exclusively by macroeconomic growth.

In the uneven encounter between corporate promises and local hopes for greater community well-being, what role do time and technical expertise play in state efforts to teach poor southerners about their possibilities for political participation? As I elaborate below, when expertise in international development supplants local perspectives on well-being, it does much more than merely forecast social improvement through speculated economic gains. Corporate-sponsored aid—heralded by government and social development contractors—conjures a promised security and future prosperity for people at the margins of the Chilean nation, those typically hard-pressed to finance private schooling for their children. One significant, though understated, effect of such aid is that it comes to function as a technique for building local consent to large-scale industrial developments among residents affected by hydroelectric and other interventions near their homes. Importantly, the penetration of private interests into public education would not have been possible were it not for a series of reforms to education policy that, to this day, depend on the restriction of critical memory of Chile's contested past. As critical memory may inspire empirically informed alternatives to the prevailing system, its technical management is the focus of analysis here.

Background to Education Policy Reforms of the 1980s

Chile's *Organic Constitutional Law on Education*, known as the LOCE, was hurriedly promulgated on 7 March 1990, three days before the end of General Augusto Pinochet's 17-year military regime. Addressing elements in the Chilean Constitution relating to state responsibilities in the realm of education, the LOCE firmly entrenched into bureaucratic practice pro-market, neoliberal reforms carried out by the military regime. While other educational reforms occurred during the 1990s and 2000s, none fundamentally reversed those developed in the 1980s, including the introduction of a for-profit model to primary and secondary schooling. Historian Thomas Wright (2007:183) contends that Chile's organic constitutional laws have prevented governments following the transition from undoing undemocratic

features that have lingered in the political system since military rule. He supports this claim by noting that the constitution requires an exceptional majority of lawmakers to consent to any amendment to organic constitutional legislation: four-sevenths of the *full membership* of both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The LOCE was succeeded in 2009 by the General Education Law (LGE), which was negotiated following the Penguin Revolution of 2006. That movement was named after the masses of secondary students in school uniforms who took to the streets and barricaded their institutions for months on end. According to recent protestors, the new law makes few improvements on the system's main weaknesses, especially relating to the current reality of grossly unequal access to quality education. In 2013, students once again staged widespread protests, this time in anticipation of presidential elections, indicating that the new LGE had done little to appease core grievances.

Educational reforms of the 1980s that were protected in the LOCE and carried over into the LGE involve several transformations to the funding of schools and the teaching profession that remain troubling for those in public establishments today. These transformations, outlined in the next section, reach well beyond the core demands of current protesters, who follow more than a decade of parallel mobilizations by diverse affected groups, including the Penguin Revolution already mentioned. Led by secondary students, that mobilization instigated talks to draft the LGE. Other recent strikes include those by teachers, who throughout the first decade of the 21st century regularly staged work stoppages to dispute the impact of Pinochet-era reforms on their salaries, job security and credentials. In spite of public agitation against the now well-established 1980s reforms and in spite of strong sympathies between students and teachers, stoppages remained largely segmented until 2011. To better appreciate why diverse actors (i.e., teachers, students and parents) did not previously take up one another's causes, attention to daily relationships to schooling illuminates how the original reforms effectively dismantled horizontal alliances between diverse stakeholders.

The Consumption of Education

In pedagogical scholar Cristián Cox's (2003:24–32) assessment of educational reforms made during the 1980s, pro-market restructuring of the education system under Pinochet involved eight main areas. A brief summary of reforms relevant to this discussion follows, their relevance emerging in the diverse ways that, on the ground, they have functioned to relinquish the state from responsibility for the provision of educational services. First, before introducing the LOCE, Pinochet transferred management of primary and secondary establishments from centralized, ministerial management to control by decentralized, municipal governments. Second, his administration changed the financing of schools from money directed to educational establishments based on historically demonstrated need, to funds directed on a per-student basis adjusted to average monthly attendance rates. Regulation of the teaching profession was also liberalized and teachers were removed from the list of public servants, which effectively deregulated their salaries and eliminated universities as the sole institutions capable of credentialing educators. Universities have since returned to being the sole credentialing institutions for pedagogy, though the staggering proliferation of private post-secondary establishments in the past 20 years means that the cost of such an education has swelled far beyond the financial means of most teachers. Lastly, a national system for evaluating educational quality through standardized testing was also introduced, with an evident impact on local competition for limited state funds. In the southern schools in which those interviewed for this article worked, the effects of these reforms played out in both public and intensely personal ways. Much like regimes of anticipation described by Vincanne Adams, Michelle Murphy and Adele Clarke, the affective experience of these neoliberal reforms is felt as a general bankrupting of traditional public services, leaving "whole sectors of the population ... eradicated and evicted from public life" (2009:259).

Municipal Management

Putting municipal authorities in charge of public education was initially promoted as a means of fostering greater citizen participation through the local management of schooling. However, Cox (2003:24) highlights the empty intentions behind such reasoning given that, in the 1980s, municipalities were headed by mayors appointed by the armed forces, which were themselves apprehensive about opening up education to control by local citizens. Throughout my encounters with senior educators, I learned that, for many, the gravest impact of the so-called "municipalization" of schooling is that families in Chile have increasingly become incentive-driven consumers of education. This is because, at least in poor, rural areas, parents now register children in either public or private, subsidized institutions, both of which compete for the same state funds. The core

difference between public and private subsidized schools is that the former are subject to management by local government authorities, while their competitors operate without this added bureaucratic oversight. My colleagues repeatedly emphasized to me that while the country's education law formally promises equal access to quality education for all, in marginal areas dependent on state funds, equality is increasingly reduced to equal funding assigned per registered student. This neglects uneven costs in transportation, supplies and building upkeep that mark regional inequalities. For instance, in Neltume, where the temperature can hover between 0 and 5 degrees Celsius, with snow on the ground for several months each year, insufficient funding from the municipal authorities meant that heating was funded by parent associations that pooled money together to purchase the firewood necessary to heat their children's classrooms. In homerooms with a greater proportion of students coming from scarce resources, money was occasionally not even pooled at all when families without sufficient heating in their own homes opted not to contribute to such comforts for their children at school.

Similar stories characterized the selective funding of transportation offered to rural pupils, as municipal directors decided where to allocate funds among numerous schools in their communes. In 2008, I spoke with a teacher who had taught in a multi-grade, single classroom school in the countryside for several decades. Not long before, Don Emiliano had bought a yellow school van to pick up his students on his way to work. For several months he had paid the bill for fuel and repairs, at a cost of nearly a quarter of his salary. That year, the municipality had withdrawn funding for his pupils' transportation, in what he believed was a ploy to encourage parents to transfer their children to a private, subsidized school being set up independently nearby. The promise of transportation was the competitive edge of the new school, which was set up temporarily in a country hall. Don Emiliano was set to retire the following year and, given that he was the only teacher in his school, he had long been classified as a principal. He insisted to me that it was no accident that this happened because it meant that his pension would begin at the lower status of a substitute teacher (the position he occupied in his last months of work) and that the municipality would enjoy the lightened burden of one less school to manage. That autumn, Don Emiliano's municipally managed school shut down, ostensibly due to low enrolment.

The Historic Debt

Lingering reforms of the 1980s also impact different generations of teachers in distinct ways. On the one hand, there are those who have practiced the profession since and even before the 1980s; many of them are approaching retirement today, and their pensions have been rendered uncertain by the frequently unreliable municipal management of payouts and benefits, as occurred before Don Emiliano's retirement. On the other hand, there are those who, trained in recent decades (often in newly established private universities), have little possibility of paying off heavy student loans without severe restrictions on their mobility and employment options. It is worth noting here that government-subsidized student loans for post-secondary education today involve the highest interest rates in the country. This led 2011 protestors to rally masses of supporters around the sound bite that it is cheaper to mortgage the family home than to finance a child's professional studies. Among educators I surveyed, members of this younger generation of teachers (generally under 45 years old) were more likely to work for lower wages in private schools, where it was believed that the most junior among these would be vulnerable to termination shortly before reaching permanent employment status. This would only take effect after five years of service in the same establishment, at which point one would qualify for greater medical and other employee benefits.

However, the job security that was widely perceived among teachers of all ages to come with working in a municipal school was by no means guaranteed. I observed this when a national teachers' strike was called in June 2009 and only three of 18 teachers at our school joined the month-long strike, these being the three most senior staff. School administrators pressured staff to continue working using the argument that funding for the school was endangered by the potential of frustrated parents transferring pupils to the town's other school, a private, subsidized Catholic institution that was not on strike. In their words, each student potentially lost would represent substantial reductions in the school's operating budget within the coming months. Though not opposed to the teachers' union or job action, younger colleagues did not stand in solidarity.

At the heart of demands during the 2009 teachers' strike were claims that during the 1980s, when the profession was liberalized, salaries were cut by as much as 75 per cent. At the time, those in government blamed a world recession. All the teachers with whom I spoke who had endured this pay cut understood they had been promised that, upon the return of national prosperity, their lost wages would be recovered. My colleagues who went on strike argued that no trickle-down of the country's relative economic stability was ever experienced. Salaries have since increased but still remain

well below the wages of similar professionals. For many senior teachers, their pay today sits as much as 200 per cent below what would be expected had cuts never occurred. By my deliberately conservative assessment, affected public teachers have each endured more than $50,000 CDN in lost wages from this historical debt. Throughout the early 2000s, almost annually, thousands of teachers went on strike, especially in urban areas. They demanded, among other things, state recognition of the historical debt toward an older generation of educators. Nevertheless, each of the 2010 presidential candidates denied its existence, leaving senior teachers particularly frustrated with their political options.

While most staff members in our school were not ideologically anti-labour, their vulnerability to the immediate impacts of extended yearly stoppages arrived via the pressure to pay credit cards and other consumer debts accrued with growing ease among the lower middle classes in recent decades (see also Han 2012). The irony that staff did not protest the state's debt toward teachers due to the potential consequences should one not attend to one's own personal debts crystallized for me in the story of one teacher who had recently been diagnosed with colon cancer. I interviewed him while he was on a one-year sick leave, during which time he managed to purchase a flat screen television in 24 monthly instalments. In spite of ample consumer credit, he could no longer secure a loan for his son to complete university studies so that the son could become a school teacher and help with the burden of staggering household debt that was exacerbated by rapidly mounting private healthcare bills.

Competence and Competition

Another factor in our public school that was feared to accelerate the transfer of pupils to private, subsidized schools involved poor performances on the standardized tests that had been introduced during the 1980s to rank the quality of education offered by public schools. The tests, known nationally as the SIMCE (an acronym for the Measurement System for Education Quality), are only conducted in municipal schools. Given that in the past two decades public institutions have gone from composing 100 per cent to less than 50 per cent of primary schools in the country, fewer than half of Chilean students are subject to this measurement tool. The SIMCE became the total priority in our school in the last months of the academic year. While only two of eight primary grades wrote the exams, for six weeks no photocopies could be made for other courses. All supplementary resources were directed to 40 students upon whom future funding as a "school of excellence" depended; I was told by administrators that, for the school to be able to break even financially, this standing offered a necessary bonus. Some teachers expressed dismay that in the long run their jobs were at stake, as disappointed parents could always remove their children en masse and register them in the Catholic school across the road, which as a private, subsidized school was not so publicly scrutinized.

Our school's yearly strategy of funnelling resources to support strong performances on the memorization-based exams undermined the externally funded second language program my colleagues and I were trying to implement. In addition to restricted photocopy privileges, students conditioned to excel in passive learning (memorization and recall) had not developed the skills to express themselves in creative and interactive situations like those proposed in English oral communication classes. This became evident in their frustration with new textbooks—designed following reforms in the 1990s—that aimed to render learning more active and inductive. While the presentation of material was meant to put greater responsibility on students' shoulders, with the lofty aim of inspiring student curiosity and a sense of ownership in the learning process, I found that it more often seemed to reinforce class inequalities. This was pronounced in English Second Language (ESL) programs, which were required for Chilean students as of the fifth grade. Students may or may not be exposed to English instruction before the fifth grade, depending on whether their schools secure special funds from outside donors (e.g., corporations, charitable foundations) to finance such instruction. When Neltume's public school initially secured sponsorship from an upscale tourism operation to host our ESL program, the principal joked to me that she had nearly donned a nun's habit to seek sponsors, a ploy to incite sympathy among wealthy neighbours to finance programs that she considered were necessary to remain competitive. I soon discovered that the new textbooks teachers were required to follow began at a level far more advanced than introductory English. For example, the textbook for the first level of ESL (Grade 5) began with reading comprehension tasks of full-page excerpts, as if with the will to succeed alone, students without prior exposure to any second language and with only modest literacy skills in their own language could guess their way to success.

Consequences of an approach to English acquisition that emphasized the student's responsibility in learning achievement were apparent in one of my high school classes. Students often insisted to me that they were

hard-wired to not master even basic language abilities, an affirmation of personal deficiency that, arguably, had been learned through repeated failure to comprehend material unsuitable for their knowledge level. For example, their ESL textbook included readings from Shakespeare, challenging material for even those whose first language is English. Meanwhile, as colleagues pointed out to me, tasks that failed to build logically on learner skills were not the only problems with textbook design. Compounding the ability of students to meaningfully engage with material was content referring mainly to urban contexts and concerns unfamiliar to youth in Neltume, several of whom had never travelled to the nearest regional capital. Teachers highlighted for me examples from the curriculum, such as activities requiring students to imagine manoeuvring stop lights while driving in their own vehicles (luxuries not even their parents enjoyed) and deciding on clothing to purchase or movies to view in the cinema. In the staff room in the weeks before the SIMCE exams, my colleagues wondered aloud about the fairness and even the objectivity of this form of standardized testing, especially since instructional resources consistently betrayed the uneven footing upon which the quality of education is evaluated nationally.

Textbook content also indicates other means by which those managing education in the country today attempt to convey the virtues of competition as a core competence. Shortly after completing my fieldwork, colleagues pursuing their teacher training sent me an image from a new textbook containing an advertisement for Watt's, the prominent juice company. It was accompanied by an activity on whether it was better to buy a larger or several smaller containers of that company's orange juice. In light of this development, it would seem that reductions in state funding for education have opened the door to private sector investments with unambiguously profit-driven motives for guiding the behaviour and tastes of young Chileans. In this context, school textbooks have become a new marketing frontier—youth whose parents can scarcely afford milk are pressured not only by popular media, but also by obligatory schooling systems, to satisfy daily needs with consumer products. While cast as economical, such goods involve silent costs all the same. In the case of opting for sweet juices and sodas above the less affordable options of milk or bottled water, one might argue that silent costs appear in reduced dental and general health, social costs not required of students to calculate in textbook activities.

Encountering the State's "Managed Retreat"

Attention to daily relationships to underfunded rural schools exposes the state's deliberate retraction, since the 1980s, from the provision of basic educational services. Also addressing the Chilean context, Veronica Schild (1998) describes this as the managed retreat of the state. Meanwhile, scholars of international development highlight that, globally, state retraction from public service provision in recent decades has involved an elaborate shift in the purpose of government itself, the result of which is that the role of social planners (read here, policy-makers) is "no longer to plan but to enable, animate and facilitate" (Murray Li 2011:59) improved versions of community. We glimpse this shift in the early rationale for municipalizing public education—a development from the 1980s that Cox (2003:24) notes was dubiously defended for its possibility of fostering citizen participation. Signs of this shift also surface in the logic that competition between public and private schools will enable the most efficient use of state funds, as though competition will invariably motivate those in need to overcome their own marginality. As we have already seen, the drive by government to facilitate improved versions of the self permeates new textbooks, which expect students to discover their way to success, in spite of minimal instruction about how to do so. Turning now to development experts who work in the midst of this managed retreat of the state, we find material interests invested in this shift, as well as a particular future upon which such investments depend.

As multinational corporations in San José and Neltume seek to compensate residents for industrial interventions near their homes, we find sites of contention over the production and circulation of knowledge about the social and environmental impacts of such developments. On the one hand, I regularly encountered the experiential and narrative knowledge of local residents, who expressed to me their perspectives on development and community consensus in casual conversations and over family meals. These perspectives often proved inconvenient for instrumentalization by rational actors. On the other hand, are forms of knowledge espoused by technical experts, which model Kregg Hetherington's (2011:5) description of *information* as a commodifiable way of knowing the local population, sought in this case by corporate actors to be used, possessed, stored, shared or hidden. I saw such forms of information stir whenever corporate donations were delivered to underfunded schools, as well as to firehouses and community

associations. In efforts to expand the charitable operations of companies investing in the area, social assistants and communications officers for the companies invariably gathered signatures and social identification numbers from donation recipients. On one occasion, a Mapuche activist friend found that the identification information of recipients later appeared on a petition shown by company officials in a Santiago meeting, as if the signatures for having received aid supported Endesa's proposed 480MW hydroelectric facility that would divert Neltume's adjacent Fuy River. Carefully orchestrated photo opportunities were also common means by which corporate representatives extracted marketable information from schools; with each wood-burning stove or similar offer to a humble rural school, donors snapped photos of themselves in sharp-looking field jackets kneeling with smiling children. In glossy self-published newsletters and in the regional newspaper, multinational companies working in the south used such photos and "news stories" to celebrate their role as harbingers of development and social improvement.

Nevertheless, some professionals were excluded from the expertise affirmed by these company agents. Mapuche leaders with whom I spoke in communities near Neltume, indicated to me that three classes of people who were not generally employed by Endesa were prohibited from accompanying community members to meetings addressing impact-benefit agreements. These were lawyers, notary publics and anthropologists. Any of us would be well-positioned to dispute corporate tactics for guiding negotiations regarding compensation to affected residents. This exposes a fissure between two types of professionals dedicated to social development: those who consider themselves to be technical experts serving to facilitate improved communities and those, like me and most of the teachers with whom I worked, who attend to daily questions of social justice arising from the state's keen departure from social service provision. Literature on the anthropology of international development, produced by professionals who would generally fall into the latter group, offers clues as to the former's motivations.

Contributors to David Mosse's *Adventures in Aidland* (2011) highlight that development expertise is increasingly produced in contexts where aid is less concerned with the elimination of poverty than with creating conditions in which development may flourish. This recalls James Ferguson's (1994) observations that while the international development industry tends to be ineffectual at eradicating poverty, it does a rather good job of expanding bureaucratic state power. The temporal subtext to educational policy becomes increasingly evident here, as the growing need in public schools to secure private benefactors, conditions marginal communities to the possibilities of industrial development. Simone Abram and Gisa Weszkalnys note that this sort of social planning scenario involves a promise that must be concretized, institutionalized and implemented through "mechanisms to conjure worlds that are within its scope of action" (2011:10). One condition for such development that is of particular interest here is Chilean society's ability to overcome its contested past. Specifically, the challenge for corporate and government actors is for citizens to come to terms with the fact that most multinational industrial initiatives today were rendered possible, relatively recently, through the Pinochet regime's disarticulation of civil society (see Jelin 2003). After all, the overthrow of an elected socialist government and subsequent state repression enabled the privatization of natural resources and the sale of water, mineral and forest exploitation rights to foreign investors.

What, then, is the contested past to be overcome in the name of development?

A Troubled Transition

When I asked older teachers for their assessment of opportunities presented to today's youth compared to the opportunities they experienced in their youth, some 35 or more years ago, the response of retired teacher and former exile Don Tito was illuminating. Once a dedicated member of la Jota, Chile's Communist Youth, he recalled the volunteer work sponsored by the state during weekends and holidays during the Popular Unity presidency of Salvador Allende (1970–1973). In exchange for their work, youth were given a snack by regional authorities and sent into *poblaciones* (poor neighbourhoods; at the time, often squatter settlements) to clean up garbage and converse with the local people. As he recounted this work, I could hear singer-songwriter (and for some, national hero) Víctor Jara's tune in my head, "Qué lindo es ser voluntario," a song of the era that praises the building of a common destiny through volunteerism in raising bridges, constructing houses and fixing roads. Turning to the present, Don Tito spoke of a fear among youth today that he did not remember in his own generation. Himself a torture survivor, he was not speaking of fear entrained through immediate physical and psychological trauma. Today's youth were at most young children at the time of the transition to democracy; they personally experienced little of the nearly 17-year military regime. In Don Tito's view, their fear is of both past and future, achieved to

a great degree through a restrictive and increasingly privatized education system that discourages even his own children, who were in high school at the time of our interview, from imagining themselves as active participants in history.

Don Tito's memories of teaching in poor, rural communities in the 1960s contrast with the decentralized, indebted and competitive framework of education described earlier in this article, which has compelled recent demands for policy overhaul (personal communication, 8 February 2008):

> When I was trained to be a teacher, they prepared us to teach politics. They said to us: 'You are responsible for a society.' Today nobody says this to kids. Instead, they say: 'You need to go out and earn money.' And the kids respond wanting to study medicine or commercial engineering, saying that it's because they want to make money, not to do something social.... President Allende would say to us, 'Young people, you need to study, you need to work,' and he had a policy for youth so that we would open up our eyes. They used to teach politics to kids; today it's something *cupula* [elite]. Back then, almost all political leaders were at one time youth leaders, we became involved young. Now leaders come from the economic powers. I think youth are watching this and they too want to know about politics, but they don't have any idea where to start.

He continued, describing to me the historical perspective taught to his teenage children in the most reputable Catholic school in the region. Run by monks in San José de la Mariquina, the school is fully private and therefore not dependent on state funds. As a lifelong communist, a private Catholic education for his children was not exactly to Don Tito's liking, but he saw it as offering the greatest chance for his children to be able to eventually qualify for scholarships and pursue higher education. The year before our conversation, Don Tito had argued with his son's history teacher, for whom "being a communist was little more than the greatest ignorance out there" (personal communication, 8 February 2008). Don Tito told me that he retorted to that comment by insisting that Chilean communists can claim the great writers, poets and journalists—essentially the intellectual heart of the country (e.g., Nobel poet laureate Pablo Neruda and Víctor Jara). He lamented that for teachers like his son's, to speak of Allende in the classroom is often taken as wanting to return to the food lines, to having nothing to eat and to the CIA-sponsored chaos that stirred an artificial climate of civil war in the months before the coup. Within a few years of our conversation, his concerns would be enhanced when the country's current right-wing administration stirred controversy with a 2012 decision to expunge from school textbooks the term *dictatorship* in reference to the Pinochet regime, using instead *military government* (Webber 2012).

When Don Tito suggested to me that schooling today teaches that the purpose of life and work is to earn money, he lamented that unlike in the 1960s, today there is no policy for youth. However, education policy is arguably this very thing, posing to shape youth in specific ways and persisting in spite of more than a decade of significant protests. As such, this policy invites reflection on the type of actions that its advocates anticipate from youth. To paraphrase Abram and Weszkalnys (2011), what kind of world has been conjured by the LOCE (and subsequently the LGE) and, by association, the increasing penetration of private enterprise into primary and secondary schooling? In particular, what type of future is anticipated by those who brought such policies into being and who continue to defend them today?

One answer is in a narrative among international economic analysts that Chile is a free-market miracle.[3] Calling it an "economic jaguar," many have likened Chile's economy to the "Asian tigers" of the Pacific Rim and advertisers in its southern regions have played up its image as the Switzerland of South America (presumably a peace-loving and picturesque business haven). The problem with such discourse is that it deceptively distances Chile from the social and economic problems that plague other countries in the region today and naturalizes its relative stability (Cooper 2010). It also distorts the historic record by passing over the elite political strategies that orchestrated this so-called miracle, diverting attention away from those upon whom this stability most depends: the poor.

Chile enjoys a unique status as the only South American country admitted to the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-Operation (OECD), a network dedicated to promoting economic growth as a means of ensuring social stability. This is, in large part, thanks to the country's strong GDP, bolstered by competitive primary resource extraction and fuelled by efficient energy production. Throughout statements made by member states upon Chile's accession to the OECD, former president Michelle Bachelet was repeatedly congratulated for reductions in poverty from 40 per cent to 13 per cent, as well as efforts to curb corporate and government corruption. Notably absent from the OECD vision for Chile's future, as expressed by representatives of fellow member states upon its admission, is a notion of democracy that is accountable to the circumstances

by which current neoliberal economic and social policies came into being. While the role of public education in the OECD-envisioned future seems innocuous enough—to produce competitive citizens who will participate in this collective project of national betterment—this absence of accountability to the past heralds the contentious nature of educational policy today. As a result, student protestors critique an anticipated future that is taken by policy-makers to be inevitably cooperative, in spite of the nation's fragmented and silenced past.

Elements in OECD forecasting equate the Chilean state with a homogeneous national community, glossing over competing interests within the national public. This anticipatory framework resonates in the Swiss statement on Chile's admission, which implied that "OECD members [will] compete on an equal footing throughout the landscape of international organisations ... leaving old privileges behind once our level of development allows us to do so" (OECD 2009:11). In this perspective, the present serves as a mere staging ground for a harmonious future, and the past beyond the democratic transition goes entirely unmentioned. In the sense of Adams and colleagues' (2009) affective regimes, OECD forecasts are anticipatory in that they recast the present in terms expected of the future. Meanwhile, they reinforce a regime, in that this future is restrictive and acted upon as a fait accompli, excluding input from the very actors who are supposed to want to collaborate in its realization. These are Chile's working lower and middle classes, who are neither independently wealthy nor exceptionally impoverished (though today heavily indebted; see Han 2012) but whose consent through cheap and flexible labour is critical to economic growth. What spectres of the future are embedded in this growth?

Julia Paley (2001) poses that, after the departure of Pinochet as head of state, popular media battered Chileans with "illusions of choice." She observes that a rapid upsurge in opinion polls and market surveys during the 1990s characterized this new period—a period during which citizens encountered countless opportunities to express their positions on topics ranging from issues of political importance to household preferences for consumer goods. It was a time when more Chileans than ever before were invited to endlessly opine on items that many could scarcely ever afford. However, in spite of new measures for gauging public opinion, she cautions that citizens faced a relatively narrow framework of available choices for expressing their expectations of government. She finds this especially apparent with regard to critical memory, arguing that lack of control over the terms of public debate restricted the participation that working-class and peasant sectors have had in determining the accepted historical truth about the Pinochet regime. In Paley's words, "major elements of the Chilean political elite ... had reassessed the history leading up to the military coup and come to the conclusion that the dictatorship was an outcome of the extreme political and social polarization that had characterized Chilean society before 1973" (2001:152)—and not the product of the resistance of elite sectors to socialist reforms pursued by the popular classes. This has tended to cast the Popular Unity period as having failed on its own accord and as being irrelevant to current questions of governance. Paley is not alone in this assessment, as Lessie Jo Frazier notes, "Even sectors further on the Left that still hold those core principles (such as the state's responsibility for ensuring the equitable redistribution of resources) have found little space for their expression" (2007:191).

Hence, the upsurge of opinion polls during the 1990s was not actually a means for citizens to meaningfully participate in the policy-making process or in public debates. These developments had considerable consequences for how Chilean society would move forward following the dictatorship. From the perspective of former squatter settlements in Santiago, Paley (2001) relates that the political elite—those in office since the democratic transition—framed the issue of recovering a sense of national community in terms that presented social reconciliation with the military as the only desirable course of action, even as the armed forces had no obligation to participate in the truth and reconciliation processes. In her view, this subjected Chile's civil society to a state-sponsored discrediting of positive memories of the Popular Unity period, an era admittedly marked by social tension but also by unprecedented solidarity between discrete class and cultural groups. Today, continued efforts to discredit the Socialist aspirations of the Popular Unity period have been apparent in state reactions to recent student protests, especially in police treatment of congregations of youth as delinquents, communists and *violentistas*. In this active silencing of critical memory in both popular media and in truth commission processes, the past and future become deeply intertwined.

Today, the children of the urban working classes who grew up during the transition and have recently come of age politically bring to civic life expectations of participation cultivated in the post-dictatorship climate of mass choice-making. The discourse of centrist and right-wing leaders in power since the transition has long promised Chileans that inclusion is the fruit of the democratic order for which the parents of today's youth

struggled in the 1980s. The disappointed expectations among recent post-secondary protesters are not, therefore, very surprising. While, by and large, protesting students are not those most excluded by the current system—that is, those unable to even complete high school in the first place or the majority of post-secondary students in private establishments without student unions—they signal agitation among an until recently silent majority that has long awaited the realization of democracy's promise of economic security. At stake with current student protests is not, therefore, merely the quality of education or equal access to it, but also widespread complicity with a prevailing state project for neoliberal development that keeps the attention of Chileans focused on the flourishing future.

The Hidden Restoration of a Segmented Society

As the 2011 protests extended into months, thousands of university students on scholarship were compelled back to the classroom by threats that their funding would be withdrawn should their absences continue. The movement nevertheless garnered public interest well into the 2011–2012 summer months, when key spokesperson for the Confederation of Chilean Students and former president of the Universidad de Chile Student Federation, Camila Vallejo, toured the country to promote Vallejo's new book titled *Podemos cambiar el mundo* (*We Can Change the World*). Vallejo had just been elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Youth of Chile. While much media attention had been dedicated to her pretty face, more than stir admiration, her unrelenting opposition to privatized education stirred hostility among opponents. Under pressure to address the civic unrest, government spokespersons had already betrayed unsavoury judgments about the place of youth in spaces for deliberative democracy. Most telling was when, in early August 2011, the public caught wind that the executive secretary of the Council for Books and Reading had posted in the social media a comment directed at Vallejo to the effect of killing the bitch to disband the pack (Tatiana Acuña posted on Twitter, "*Se mata a la perra y se acaba la leva*," see Valdés 2011). This was a phrase used by Augusto Pinochet to refer to former president Salvador Allende. Geographer and director of Chile's Centre for the Study of Women's Development Ximena Valdés (2011) swiftly published a response, elaborating on the particular history of that phrase carried forward from the *hacienda* (large rural estate) era. In the 19th century, unmarried women in the countryside were seen to distract men from their work, much like female dogs in heat attract male interest. The implication was that, by removing the attractive woman from the scene, male instincts would calm and the marauding packs would disperse.

In Valdés's view, that an important government official related to education and culture referred to Camila Vallejo through the moral codes of 19th century hacienda relationships highlights a hidden authoritarian culture emerging with force today. The geographer is not alone in observing that this approach to politics is not only authoritarian but also rooted in an antiquated notion of the national order, in which the citizen is an *object* of gracious concessions and mercy on the part of the rich and powerful. Eminent Chilean anthropologist and historian José Bengoa (2006) argues that this is one of the gravest impacts of the Pinochet regime on Chilean society, as policies from that era have fostered a social order that predates the formation of the Chilean state itself. This order, he argues, is modelled on the primary space for socialization in the centuries prior to the formation of administrative and municipal structures of the Chilean state (2006:45). For Bengoa, the restoration of the sociocultural model of hacienda relations undermines all attempts to strengthen citizenship in the country, as this process negates civil society's foundation in citizen rights, which itself poses to limit the power of the state and wealthy classes. In this fashion, he highlights that policies toward the poor today have returned to being a question of generosity and good will on the part of the rich (2006:49), in stark contrast to the Popular Unity's vision of poverty as a social injustice and violation of citizen rights to work and education. To paraphrase Bengoa, Chilean society at the start of the 21st century more closely resembles social organization at the end of the 19th century than throughout the 20th, when it was (in his words) "obsessed with democracy and equality" (2006:152). The coup of 11 September 1973 was not, therefore, a rupture but, as he implies, a restorative project of social segmentation that remains beyond explication to most Chileans today.

In this light, recipients of corporate investments in schooling, healthcare and other social services are reduced to citizenship in name alone as, not unlike vassal subjects, they are denied freedom to participate in their own collective self-determination (2006:44). Applied to Don Tito's nostalgic memories described above, it would seem that current student protesters have a battle far greater than expanding access to quality public education. Most senior educators with whom I spoke agreed with Don Tito that Chile has not simply undergone political changes over the decades, from socialism to fascism

and from left- to right-leaning coalition governments; rather, it has undergone changes in the nature of its politics. More precisely, the country has endured a relapse in its political and citizen culture, and this has been orchestrated by the state's "managed retreat" from social services.

To return to my original question about the role of time and technical expertise in teaching Chileans about their possibilities for political participation, we find here that locally, the flourishing future advocated by national leaders and development experts has deep roots in Chile's conservative past. This reminds us that the "neo" in neoliberalism by no means signals a new philosophy of governance framing contemporary policy but more fittingly indicates a return to an earlier model for freeing the economy from local pressures. Much like Lessie Jo Frazier's (2007:26) critique of Chile's reputation as a democratic stronghold among Latin America countries, uncritical praise of the country's economic and political stability serves to whitewash a post-dictatorship scenario in which egalitarian reforms made during the 1960s and early 1970s have been reversed and in which control over natural resources is once again concentrated in the hands of an affluent few.

Conclusion

For Latin Americans of all political stripes who have survived military regimes and who now live in subsequent liberal democracies, memories of social confrontation, of intimidation by neighbours and in workplaces, and of overt state repression affect the extent to which citizens engage with social planning initiatives. Lindsay Dubois (2000) evokes this in her work on dissonant memories and silence in historical accounts of working-class Argentines, as do Leslie Villapolo Herrera (2003) and Patricia Foxen (2000) in their observations of civic and community withdrawal by indigenous actors affected by guerrilla conflicts in Peru and Guatemala, respectively. However, memory does not belong only to those with personal and familial experiences of torture and disappearance or to those with lingering psychological trauma. Anthropologists working throughout the region, among communities having historically encountered exploitation at the hands of outsiders, have noted that resilience often escapes rationalist frameworks for identifying the impacts of terror and healing (see Edelman 1994; Gordillo 2002; Nash 1993; Taussig 1980, 1987). Equally pressing areas of investigation suggested by the current schooling apparatus in Chile include the means by which, particularly in rural and semi-urban settings, control over the circulation of critical memory constrains the potential for "insurgent" (Holston 2009) and "self-help" citizenships (Goldstein 2005), which are significant responses to neoliberal policies throughout urban Latin America.

In sum, the Chilean state's retraction from formal schooling does not merely penalize poor children for their low social status. When by design the state fails to provide as expected, it intensifies local needs for services previously provided by the government; this results in a dearth of social programs that may then be charitably financed by private interests. As relations of patronage between the wealthy and the poor replace citizen rights to what were once basic public services such as child welfare, lower- and middle-class Chileans (children and adults alike) are taught that their political and civic involvement is out of place and disruptive to the democratic order. In this context, recent international development experts, who labour for the interests of a global neoliberal agenda, have not only become the new authorities on community well-being; their work also serves as a depoliticizing mechanism, silencing critical memory and delegitimizing imaginations of civic life not aligned with the rapid proliferation of resource extraction by foreign capital interests. Without diminishing horrors endured at the hands of military agents, who a generation ago reinforced elite economic interests via overt state terror, today we find that the mobilization of fear exerts political control over the working and rural poor nonetheless.

While schooling has functioned in recent decades as a mechanism through which elite political and economic interests pose to refashion the involvement of Chile's poor in decision-making processes, recent protests suggest that alternatives to the prevailing order are stirring. Allied with "horizontalist" movements (see Sitrin 2006) that have mobilized around the world since the 2011 Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street protests, in 2013, thousands of Chilean students once again took over their schools. Only this time they mobilized solidarity with sympathetic adults not on demands for inclusion in political decision-making processes but on a campaign to *not* vote, calling on the public to reject the prevailing system by refusing to cast ballots in schools (conventional voting stations) closed due to student strikes. At the time of press, following a 20 per cent voter turnout for the presidential primaries in June 2013, announcements on social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter stated that 80 per cent of Chileans had voted for genuine change. In effect, we learn from protesting youth that neither popular media (through television and a barrage of polls and marketing) nor public education (through the penetration of private enterprise into a basic public service) can merely instil conservative

values in people, wiping critical memory from future generations. Educational reforms of the 1980s have indeed conjured a world within the scope of expert development plans of action, but the institutionalization and implementation of that world must invariably contend with the contested past.

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Notes

1 An organic law pertains to the body of rules that lay out the foundations of a government, closely articulated with the constitution.

2 Respectively, these were the forestry company widely known in Chile as Celco Arauco, which was formed by privatized state forestry industries in the 1970s, and the former state electric company Endesa, which was privatized in 1989 in the last months of the Pinochet regime and is now a subsidiary of the Italian conglomerate Enel.

3 In 1982, American economist and Nobel laureate Milton Friedman was among the first to call the economic policy of the Pinochet regime a miracle. A professor at the University of Chicago, he trained over a half-dozen economic advisors to the dictatorship, his former students becoming a group of influential free market reformers known as the Chicago Boys.

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