

Honors Capstone

Chile: Youth within Post-Pinochet Educational Structures

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In recent years, conflict-affected youth have received increasing attention as subjects worthy of study. Nevertheless, youth in post-conflict environments are not as widely studied as perhaps they should be, especially when the conflict did not occur during their lifetimes. The youth in Chile today is one such example. A large discourse surrounds the effects of the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet and how its remnants continue to affect Chilean life. While the legacy of Pinochet and his effects on various social structures is a focus of extensive discussion, an analysis of the impacts upon the youth (both past and present) does not exist. Although this is not a country submerged in violent conflict, it does have a violent past and sense of conflict that is perpetuated by the dominance and impunity of the military as well as continued repressive policies in a weak political environment (and so it should be included in the youth and conflict discussion). As I will demonstrate, much research addresses privatization and neoliberal policies' effects on education, but none of it takes it a step further and answers the essential question of what this means for the students, the youth. This new generation is the first to be "free of the heavy burden of the Pinochet dictatorship" and practically no one has taken the initiative to discover what this means for both the youth and the nation as a whole (Saunois 2006). It is important to understand what this means for the youth as they are the future of this country and the manner in which they are socialized in the post-Pinochet era will impact Chile far beyond the scope of Pinochet's seventeen years in power.

In order to unpack this subject, it is necessary to first understand Pinochet's general policies as well as their results and then examine the effects these policies still have on Chilean society. I will focus upon the education system for its profound impacts

on the lives of youth. Young people were the greatest casualty of the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s as economic reforms required a drastic cut in public expenditures, and, thus, a cut in the resources, such as education, provided to youth (22). The UNDP report states,

The decade of the 1980s meant...the death of the dream of education for all. Since then, education in most parts of the world has become a highly valued, scarce commodity—and its unequal distribution has emerged as a source of friction among groups. (23)

Several researchers agree that youth's exclusion from such structures creates an environment that stimulates conflict as their needs continue to be unmet: "a lack of education and unemployment...appear at the top of the list of youth grievances, and are singled out by most scholars focusing on youth crisis" (23). As will be observed in the case of Chile, pertinent questions to ask about education are whether it proposes an egalitarian model or "simply replicate[s] the inequalities of society" and, furthermore, the manners in which it socializes youth (23).

Acknowledging the weight of education within Chilean society, Aedo-Richmond and Richmond note, "educational controversy, after all, had played a not-inconsiderable role in the destabilization and eventual downfall of the Popular Unity [of Salvador Allende] government in 1973." Through the lens of education and collected perceptions of individual Chileans, I hope to reveal the meaning of Pinochet's violent regime for today's youth who lived very little, if any of their lives, beneath it. Pinochet's neoliberal policies, such as privatization of the education sector, as well as their harsh application, as seen in the purges of the universities, have resulted in complicated consequences for youth today as they live in an apathetic political environment and face increasing socioeconomic disparities that the educational sector in its present state is incapable of

shifting. In this paper, I do not claim to give voice to the youth of Chile, but rather I explore the space which the youth voice is given in the context of Chilean society as well as how that context is believed to influence them. My1 Q contribution will be examining the effects of Pinochet's policies through the lens of education and what that means to Chilean society today.

In order to thoroughly examine this question, this paper will first give a brief overview of Pinochet's transformation of Chile, especially his educational policies, as well as the immediate aftereffect of his policies. Following a study of Chile's transition to democracy (in spite of Pinochet's continued legacy of impunity,) the nation's political environment and state of democracy is crucial to understanding the context of present-day education that the youth are currently experiencing. Through a culmination of this research, the significance for today's youth of the sum of the political, social, and educational context in the post-Pinochet era will be better understood. Throughout the academic research will be woven Chilean's completion of a survey that attempts to capture the first-person perspective of the Chilean people. Out of these responses arose strands of arguments, such as Chile's schizophrenia as a nation, that were not necessarily prominent in the academic research but were important to citizens of this nation. By following this "road map," further insight will be gained about the state of Chile and its youth.

Survey Methodology

As I reviewed the existing literature, it seemed to miss the voice of today's Chilean people. There has been an intense academic discussion about the social structures and the changes made under Pinochet as well as theoretical postulates about

what they have meant for the Chilean people. A gap in the research appeared as the perspective of Chileans "on the ground" in Chile today took a backseat to the study of the social structures. The researchers have had the opportunity to make their statement about the significance of Pinochet's legacy and how it has affected the educational structure, but what have Pinochet's changes meant for the average Chilean citizen? Do they believe that future generations will be molded in a different way because of Pinochet's legacy, especially as it plays out in education?

In order to add this human element to the puzzle, in spite of my inability to return to Chile,¹ I conducted surveys of Chileans via e-mail. Given the circumstances, I determined that a survey of open-ended questions would be the best way to extract the Chilean perspective. The survey was intended to capture the Chilean point of view on today's youth and education in the aftermath of Pinochet's rule as well as what Pinochet has meant to them personally. The survey asked Chileans to evaluate the current academic research as well as my argument through personal evidence and stories. My argument as stated in the survey is as follows: Although today's youth are the first generation to be "free of the heavy burden of the Pinochet dictatorship," they still must cope with the consequences of his policies. Because of this, I argue that Pinochet's neo-liberal education policies still have an impact on youth today. In particular, they are affected by the privatization of the education sector as well as the dismissal of university professors under his leadership. I believe this has had complicated consequences, such as an apathetic political environment, for youth today. Below I will briefly describe the

¹ I studied abroad in Chile from August to December 2007.

specific elements of the survey for a better understanding of its intended purpose as well as how the responses will be utilized throughout the paper.²

The survey first opened with a summary of my argument. As found above, it briefly elaborated the argument I had developed from my research thus far so that the participants could compare their realities to it. I included my argument in the opening so as to provide the participants with the context of the survey and to help them focus their answers in a manner that would be useful to me. For instance, since I wanted to capture their experiences in the education system, I did not want to generally ask, "Can you provide any personal stories about your experience in education?" If I had asked such a question, I assume that I would have received a wide range of responses, from specific experiences with teachers to field trips. I was attempting to capture a narrowed focus that related to how they saw Pinochet's policies influencing their own personal education.

To continue, the survey's first question asked the participant if they agreed with the argument and to provide reasons why they did or did not as well as any personal stories that could support this opinion. The survey went on to ask what the participant perceived to be the biggest issue facing Chilean youth today and whether they would select a private or public school for their children (either in reality or hypothetically). The survey also probed into how the participant perceived Pinochet's changes of the educational system as well as what his legacy has meant in their personal lives. The final section of the survey asked the participant several demographic questions, such as their age and education, so that I could attempt to draw conclusions about how these factors may have influenced their responses as well as the kind of population being surveyed.

² Please see Appendix A for a copy of the actual survey that was distributed. See Appendix B for a copy of the survey in English.

The survey was conducted in Spanish. This was to ensure that the survey's language would not determine the sector of the population that would be able to answer. Typically, Chileans do not have a complete understanding of English unless they come from the upper class. The choice of Spanish has meant the involvement of extensive translation between Spanish and English.³ In order to ensure that the participants' answers are true to their essence, the Spanish response will be included when the English was incapable of capturing the fullness of the statement. Lastly, due to the sensitivity of the subject still present in Chile, participants will remain anonymous. This was reiterated throughout the survey so that participants would not feel restrained in their answers.

The distribution of the survey was another challenge as I wanted to gain a true sense of the entire population. Over ten e-mails were sent out to over fifty Chilean contacts (whom I met while living in Santiago) at various times over a three month span. The first distribution received little response; however, after making contact with several Chileans living in the United States, I was able to network and receive more completed surveys. In the introduction of the survey, the participant was asked to pass along the survey to Chilean family and friends. I believe this was effective as I received responses from many Chileans to whom I had not sent the email originally. If more time had been available, I would have liked to continue networking as it seems more difficult to get a response via email as the survey loses the sense of urgency that can be present when conducted in-person. Lamentably, the Chilean day of independence took place during the three month span so that many Chileans were on vacation for weeks at a time, delaying the survey process. Regardless, sixteen total survey responses were completed.

³ I'd like to thank Issel Masses for her extensive assistance and support in the translation of the survey from English to Spanish as well as the translation of the survey's responses from Spanish to English.

Limitations

As mentioned above, time constraint was the biggest obstacle faced. By utilizing e-mail, the survey population was already limited to those with access to a computer and the internet. In Chile, computer access is widespread in the city, but further outside, it is less common. Even in the cities, the upper and middle classes are the most likely to have access. Furthermore, since education is under discussion, certain schools (typically the private) can provide computer access to their students while the poorer municipality schools are less likely to be able to provide such services, signifying a glaring limitation in the information, such as this survey, they can access. In addition, younger generations are generally more skillful at using the computer than the older generations. Thus, the voice of older Chileans may have been excluded simply by the manner of the survey's distribution.

Also, since it was a survey and not an interview, it required initiative on the part of the participant. Because of this, the study was probably slightly biased (as noted by several respondents) because the only Chileans that would answer would be those on the extremes of the issue, pro or anti-Pinochet. Thus, the reality of a Chilean indifferent to these issues was probably not captured here. Of course, translation must also be kept in mind as I may have used wordings of the questions that were sensible to me, but may not have been able to take into account the connotations and nuances that could influence the participant.

Since I made connections with Chileans in the United States, the survey's demographic information is incomplete as it does not ask the participants where they currently reside. Because of this, many of the surveys may have been conducted of a

particular group of Chileans, those currently residing in the United States, which would signify a slant in the research. Unfortunately, it is unknown if this is true, but this should be taken into consideration in the future.

Controversy over the Survey

Before proceeding forward, it is important to insert the opinions expressed by some of the respondents in regards to the survey. As mentioned above, the survey may have inadvertently included biases as the translation from English to Spanish was difficult. Also, there seemed to be some confusion over the purpose of the survey which was reflected in its structure. I'd like to include a few of the participants' opinions on such issues so that the survey can be modified and adapted in the future to accommodate these discrepancies.

As mentioned above, several believed that the survey was biased because the argument was exposed from the beginning: "In order for you to make an impartial questionnaire you should abstain yourself from exposing your argument. Your questions, however, are well established and developed" #6.⁴ Furthermore, it was determined that "You [the researcher] have a very distinct and definite opinion on Pinochet. It is hard to give an answer to someone that already has her own" #6.

Others felt that because of this perceived bias, the average Chilean's voice would not be reached:

You assume that I, as a typical Chilean, have antecedents to be able to have an opinion about the consequences of Pinochet's policies in education. Even though I don't have specific data, my view is that during the democratic period a lot of changes have been done, implying that any impression without data and facts about the impact in education is just a

⁴ Each of the numbers correspond to a completed survey response so that they can be easily referenced. Please see Appendix A for the original survey responses in Spanish; see Appendix B for the surveys translated to English.

speculation. Your thesis does not match with your declared purposes, because you will only receive opinions of pro- and anti-Pinochetistas [supporters of Pinochet], leaving little space for those typical neutral Chileans to answer #7.

Furthermore, this assignment "lack[ed] scientific and professional facts and standards" #7.

Unfortunately, I don't believe that this respondent understood that I was not looking for academic research and statistics, but the human experience of Chileans within these figures and structures. Regardless, these are valuable opinions because they reflect the issues that may have prevented Chileans from responding and also suggest ways in which the material could have been presented differently. All the same, I do have a distinct take on the question, and to present myself as objective would have been misleading.

Furthermore, the responses demonstrate how explosive the topic still is.

Demographics of Survey Participants

As mentioned above, it is critical to understand the demographics of the survey participants as it could provide essential information about the population surveyed. Age, education attainment and gender could prove to be influential factors. For instance, the age of the participant could determine their perspective of Pinochet, whether they lived under his rule, and how they could relate with today's youth. Educational attainment is also a factor as success in education could skew one's perspective of the subject. The researcher also believes that sex is a factor as Chile still has strong remnants of sexism that determine one's place in society.

Thirteen of the sixteen participants completed the "Demographics" portion of the survey. Nine males and four females completed the survey. One participant was currently in undergraduate studies, while ten had completed their undergraduate degrees and two had finished postgraduate work. The ages ranged from twenty to forty-seven.

The mean age was twenty-five and a half years old with four of the participants being thirty-two years old. From these results, it can be concluded that the participants are highly educated and young, so that several were under ten years old when Pinochet was replaced by the democratic Concertación government in 1990.

Since the definition of "youth," varies among societies, I would like to note that the span of "youth" in Chile extends later in life than it traditionally does in the United States. The thirty-two year old participants were probably pushing the upper limits of their "youthhood." Thus, I am not claiming to capture the voice of the youth as a whole, but it should be remembered that overall, the survey respondents are a younger population and the opinions of those over fifty are not found here. Also, this is not the voice of the youth in its entirety as the participants are considered highly educated, which means the exclusion of a significant portion of youth who happen to be less-educated.

Additional Research

Beyond the surveys, more research was conducted as I intended to obtain as many first hand Chilean accounts as possible. It seemed necessary to attempt to interview Chileans living in the United States as well. Unlike a survey, an interview allows for follow up questions and elaborations so that the researcher can develop an even better understanding of the participants' perspective. Furthermore, an interview does not require the participant to write and allows for more information to surface during the flow of conversation. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I was only able to interview one Chilean who grew up in Chile, but currently resides in the United States. She returns to Chile each year and many of her family and friends still reside there so that although she no longer lives in the country, she has a strong sense and tie to what is occurring. The

information obtained in this interview will also be thread throughout the paper to facilitate the argument's development.⁵

To further add to my research, I also attended the book launch for Heraldito Muñoz's *The Dictator's Shadow: Life Under Augusto Pinochet* at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. on Friday, September 12, 2008. A panel was held to introduce and discuss the book and related topics with the author, Ambassador Muñoz, and José Miguel Insulza, Secretary-General of Organization of American States, both Chileans that lived under Pinochet. This experience was extremely useful as much of my argument was confirmed by these Chileans and their experiences. This information will also be used throughout the paper.

The Use of Primary Research

The research collected through the above methods (surveys, interviews, conference attendance) can be found in vignettes throughout the paper. Through a review of the literature, particular themes emerged which were then inserted into the survey questions. The survey was a result of the research and arguments developed from this information. In order to effectively analyze the surveys, the themes of the academic research are overlaid upon the raw data collected. In order to avoid confusion that may develop if the raw data is simply inserted into the academic research, vignettes of data analysis are placed after reviewing each theme in the academic context. Thus, the academic argument is laid out and then the reality of the Chileans confirms or denies these arguments. Since the themes are thoroughly enmeshed with each other, the vignettes have been placed where they seem most pertinent to the understanding of the

⁵The interviewee's quotes are those without numbers or any other sort of reference.

theme. For instance, since "fear" is an element in almost every discussion, it will be discussed early on so that it is kept in mind throughout the paper.

Pinochet's Transformation of Chile

On September 11, 1973, the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende was overthrown by a violent military coup under the direction of General Augusto Pinochet. There has been much scholarly literature documenting the effects. (For a proper overview, see Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva, 2005, Hojman, 1990, and Brunner 1981.) The coup in itself had a dramatic and everlasting impact upon Chilean society as the nation "had no experience with this kind of violence; it had enjoyed 160 years of peaceful democratic rule" (Klein 76). However, the coup was only the beginning of the repression that would overtake the country for the next seventeen years as the citizens quickly learned that resistance was deadly (77). In order to make sense of Pinochet's reign, it is necessary to understand the role of neoliberalism as well as the repression that accompanied its imposition.

After taking power, Pinochet immediately enacted a neoliberal economic policy that permitted the full reign of the free market and capitalism since "the market was [considered] the best resource allocator and, thus, individual freedom to choose was the main requirement needed for the market to prompt competition" (Castiglioni 56). Creating a reversal of the socialism that had taken hold under the previous administration, "Chile's military government replaced the country's universalistic social policy system with a set of market-oriented social policies" (37).

Neoliberalism

Since neoliberalism is a critical element to the story of Chile (considered "the first experiment with neoliberal state formation"), it is important to have an understanding of its central tenets and what typically accompanies it (Harvey 4). As described by David Harvey,

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedom and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices...State interventions in markets (once created [by the state]) must be kept to a bare minimum. (2)

Hence, the theory of neoliberalism finds that the state only encumbers the success of the markets and thus, the state must maintain an environment that is friendly to enterprise (such as providing the legal structures that protect private property), but should not participate in any other manner. Neoliberalism places the individual at the center and is seen as the source of success, not the group as a whole. Thus, deregulation, privatization, and "withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision" accompany the implementation of neoliberalism (Harvey 3).

Since the 1970s, many key institutions have embraced neoliberalism and have developed their policies accordingly. For example, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, which have considerable international influence, use their provisions of loans to push the neoliberal agenda, so that a country may only receive money if they follow the principals (typically neoliberal) of that organization. Here, I would like to note that neoliberalism is not a phenomenon specific to Chile. Although it was the experimental nation of the neoliberalism's implementation, the theory of neoliberalism

has become an international force. Since these international organizations were pushing for this agenda, Pinochet simply may have been following global trends.

However, the important point is that Pinochet's policies flew completely in the face of democratically-elected Salvador Allende's government. It should be noted that when Allende was overthrown, Chile's economy was not necessarily in the best of places. Throughout his rule, Allende faced opposition and controversy as he attempted to implement dramatic reforms without a national consensus, fostering intense instability throughout the country (Muir and Angell 739). Discontent became widespread as Allende's socialist economic policies, including the nationalization of major industries, failed, leading to intense inflation, unemployment, and scarcity of goods as well the overthrow of Allende (737). Thus, it is not that neoliberalism is a crime, but the fact that the Chilean people never had an opportunity to determine if this was an economic policy they wanted because it was implemented by a dictator who gained power through a coup.

Neoliberal thought perceives the market as the best manner in which to complete transactions among humans. Accordingly, the market exchange is "capable of acting as a guide to all human action" (Harvey 3). Those that created neoliberal thought "took political ideals of human dignity and individual freedom as fundamental," consequently substituting "collective judgments for those of individuals free to choose" (4).

Due to these changes in the role of the state (which also indicates a change in the role of the people in a democracy), a culture must develop to support such a theory. For instance, neoliberalism is typically accompanied by individualism since the individual's freedom of choice is essential for the market. In the market, individuals make choices according to his/her own beliefs. For Chile (and many other countries), the consumerism

resulting from free market forces has signified the commodification of almost every aspect of life "as more and more previously prohibited areas are opened up to the profit motive" (Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva "Part II" 57). In neoliberalism, people "vote according to their dollar" by choosing which company and product they will buy. Thus, neoliberalism acquiesces the language of democracy and makes it its own. Once again, we must remember that these trends do not only occur in Chile, but that neoliberalism has taken root and continues to grow throughout the world.

Many other elements, both positive and negative, result from the implementation of neoliberalism; this is critical to keep in mind as we study this model within the context of Chile. Throughout the paper, references will be made to neoliberalism, but this paper should be situated within the vast amounts of literature about the social effects of neoliberalism. Here, neoliberalism is being studied within the context of Chile and thus, the particulars of neoliberalism can be found in the ways that they manifest themselves within this nation. The intent is not to argue whether individualism is connected with neoliberalism, but rather what that individualism which did accompany neoliberalism in Chile has meant for that state.

Upon Pinochet's taking of power, the group of economists known as "the Chicago boys" were summoned to Chile to restructure the economy along neoliberal tenets. The Chicago boys were students of Milton Friedman (a proponent of neoliberalism) at the University of Chicago. There was also an exchange of training Chileans in the United States while sending American economists to teach at Chilean universities about the ways of neoliberalism in order to "counteract left-wing tendencies in Latin America" during the Cold War (Harvey 8).

Before undertaking a thorough review of Pinochet's educational policies, it should be noted that, "Education, health care, and social security reforms were guided by the same market-oriented principle—reducing state intervention, strengthening the private sector, adopting free-market and stabilization policies, and privatization" (Castiglioni 55). Hence, a study of the educational structure not only serves to examine the educational system and its youth but also to shed light upon Pinochet's impact on other social services in Chile. Furthermore, implementation of these radical changes can be explained by "the breadth of power concentration enjoyed by the president, General Augusto Pinochet, and his economic team, the ideological positions of the policy makers, and the role of veto players" (38).

Repression

Pinochet's administration was marked by neoliberal thought as well as repression. Under the United States' tacit approval, South America's Southern Cone—including Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil—implemented Plan Condor to eliminate the "subversives," or those of left-wing persuasion that could have proven to be in opposition of the conservative governments. Furthermore, this repression was necessary as the neoliberal prescriptions of "the Chicago boys" "were so wrenching...that they could not 'be imposed or carried out without the twin elements that underlie them all: military force and political terror'" (Klein 84). As noted by Secretary-General Insulza at the book launching, neoliberalism need not always be accompanied by harsh repression; however, in the case of Chile, the restructuring was so extreme that it may not have been completed successfully had the opposition not been repressed (Harvey 39). Throughout the nation's history, neoliberalism and repression have had a complex

relationship that is still not fully understood. In this paper, I lay no claim to either side (the repression as a part of neoliberalism's implementation versus repression as a separate entity). Regardless, the two are related as markers of Pinochet's rule of Chile.

The markedly violent repression of Chile's participation in Plan Condor resulted in the disappearance or execution of more than 3,200 people, the imprisonment of at least 800,000 and the exile of 200,000 for political reasons (Klein 77). According to the Comisión Valech in November 2004, close to 30,000 Chileans were "unjustly imprisoned and tortured" (Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva "Part I" 6). As will become evident in the political institutions, culture, and education system, repression to this extent has had long-lasting impacts as fear and passivity became necessary for everyday survival in Pinochet's Chile. The lens of education will allow a fuller comprehension of the impact of neoliberalism and the violent repression upon Chilean society in both the past and present.

Fear

As mentioned earlier, the element of fear is pervasive throughout Chilean life. To discuss Pinochet and his legacy and not address the fear resulting from his repression would be absurd. Although there were no survey questions that directly asked about fear, it was a recurrent theme in the surveys.

For those that lived in Chile as Pinochet used repression as a political instrument, the 1973 coup caused a loss of Chile's innocence. As noted at the book opening, when a journalist asked if it was necessary to bring out the army to repress the riots in 1973 (before he was in power), Pinochet responded, "When the army comes out, it comes out to kill." From this statement, one can only imagine the terror and accompanying fear that pervaded Chile.

Furthermore, the Chileans experienced an extreme amount of uncertainty as they wondered who would disappear next or if it could be them; this kind of fear does not disappear with the end of power. When the government exercises this kind of power over citizens' mindsets, mistrust and doubt in all areas of life develop quickly and are long-lasting. One participant agrees, "the fear in the population still exists today and not only fear, but also the lack of dignity is very noticeable. In addition, the police repression and the public forces have not ceased since the beginning of 'democratic' governments" #1.

One participant pointedly stated, "the legacy is deadly, it affected me because it traumatized me by the fact that I had no liberty and to this day I ask permission and approval in order to organize any activity" #2. Furthermore, "the most harmful was the system of changes, without possibilities for discussion. Those who did not agree and expressed it suffered the consequences. Consequences that were many times very grave...[so that] Nobody wants to discuss the fact that Pinochet implemented policies without asking or giving space for opinion, some of his policies are working and are been used, but the way they were implemented are very questionable" #12. These grave consequences have signified a complete change in the society, especially in terms of the culture and democratic functioning of the government.

Pinochet's Education Policies

Two broad phases of educational reforms took place under the direction of Pinochet with the first occurring between 1973 and 1979 in which the educational policy was "based upon a blend of repression, exclusion and demobilization, on the one hand, and ideologisation and control on the other" (Aedo-Richmond and Richmond). This signified the removal of all sources of opposition within the educational structure as

institutions were placed under the rule of military forces as well as an overt ideologization that excluded certain topics and added others to the curriculum. In line with the neoliberal policies, a new concept of the nation was developed, and still exists, "in which 'the social' pillar of the previous vision [under past governments, including Allende], [was] made invisible" through the weakening of the central state's role (Aedo-Richmond and Richmond). Furthermore, the regime added weekly programs to promote patriotic values as well as several weeklong units in elementary schools "fram[ing] education within national security" (Castiglioni 52). Interestingly, while weakening the power of the central state through the implementation of neoliberal thought, Pinochet also included programs intended to strengthen the people's support and belief in the state.

Evidence of these first reforms was especially relevant at the university level where 7,000 faculty members and the same number of non-academic employees were purged for political reasons (Frasca "Academic Victims" A34). These professors represented a "kind of political thought that was [subversive and thus necessary to] eliminate from the universities" (A34). Hence, at all levels, these reforms were felt as teachers disappeared and the curriculum was diluted for Chilean nationalism

Lasting through the regime's end in 1990, the second phase of reforms arrived in 1980 when Pinochet's technocrats and economists privatized and decentralized the educational system as well as introduced curricular flexibility to further neoliberal norms (Aedo-Richmond and Richmond). The free market took hold within education under Decree 3.476 so that "the government started directly subsidizing public and private educational centers based on effective monthly student attendance" (Castiglioni 44). This subsidy was not given to the parents but directly to the educational center, inducing

competition among institutions for students' enrollments (44). Furthermore, it effectively terminated free university education. In line with this, the 1981 General Law of Universities, creating the private university system, was intended to reduce public expenditures and state involvement at the university level. Since these reforms did not address pedagogy, but the system's organization and administration, Chile had "an economic policy of education. Economists said a lot of very accurate things that did not affect what was going to be taught and what was going to be learned" (43).

Interestingly, before 1980, in spite of the repression, teachers maintained a small amount of agency and could still impede the regime's indoctrination of their students through the curriculum; however, the decentralization of the system effectively put the management of the system under Pinochet's supporters and provided for the "local regulation of teachers and the monitoring of their educational practices" (Aedo-Richmond and Richmond). Through the disempowerment of teachers, the Pinochet regime effectively controlled almost every aspect of education. Oddly, this flies in the face of free market principles where the greatest contradiction lay

between educational decentralization and curricular flexibility, on the one hand, and the authoritarian, undemocratic and anti-participatory context affecting the educational system and the country as a whole. (Aedo-Richmond and Richmond)

Public education took one of the heaviest hits in terms of public spending since Pinochet favored private schools as having a kind of experimental value (Klein 82). For instance, between 1973 and 1974, education composed forty percent of total fiscal expenditure; in contrast, by the late 1980s, it was a mere seventeen percent (Hojman 41). In 1980, state funding for the university system fell to 1.05% of the GDP (Tomic and Trumper 101). Obviously, such decrease in expenditures on public schools served as an

impetus for the growth of private schools. Under such policies, a three strata system developed involving municipal, private-but-subsidized, and private wholly-paid-by-users schools (Tomic and Trumper 101).

Immediate Effects of Pinochet's Policies

By first examining the initial implications of this policy, we can better understand the long-lasting impacts upon youth today. It should be noted that the restructuring of the institutions, i.e. privatization, had a larger impact than curricular reforms. The first major implication of the privatization reforms was the flight of an estimated twenty percent of Chile's students from the public to the private sector (Keller). For instance, in 1981, a year after the introduction of school privatization, 2,215,973 students were enrolled in public schools and 430,232 in private subsidized schools; a decade later, these figures shifted completely as 1,717,222 students were in public schools and 960,460 in private subsidized (Castiglioni 46). Even more shocking is the transfer between 1981 and 1986 when enrollment in public schools shrunk from 2,434,000 to 2,039,000 while private school attendance skyrocketed from 680,000 to 1,236,000 (Hojman 39). By 1986, the private sector had become considerably more important than the state sector as a provider of higher education (39). Although not necessarily reflected in these figures, this transference of students from public to private was largely divided along economic lines, a dramatic impact that will be discussed further as it continues to affect today's youth (Keller).

The dictatorship's repression also powerfully reduced the quality of educational institutions. As one former professor acknowledges, "My intellectual growth has been nil since 1973" (Frasca "Academic Victims" A33). The purge signified the violation of the

universities' autonomy as well as its loss of agency, subject to the regime's political ideology (Frasca "Chile Creates Funds"). The focus upon national security within the curriculum evidences this repression and its detrimental effects: "curricula were purged, academic standards eroded and the university infrastructure deteriorated dramatically" (Tomic and Trumper 100).

Accompanying the repression as well as a direct result of it, educational institutions lost the sense of importance due to social policy. Restructuring and privatization, the epitome of neoliberalism, signified the expansion and acceptance of neoliberal policies and a wider attack "upon the central apparatus of the state" (Aedo-Richmond and Richmond). As noted by Aedo-Richmond and Richmond,

Particularly noteworthy in Chile, for example, is the important role accorded to educational policy in the attempt to overcome the adverse social legacy of prolonged authoritarian rule and the strong influence of extreme neoliberalism on the determination of policy.

Thus, Pinochet's complete restructuring facilitated the acceptance of neoliberal policies as the norm. The current structure of education is based upon a neoliberal model; however, the democratic government is trying to overcome this same neoliberal thought and its strong influence through a system based upon it. As will be seen, "trying to foster equity within the current structures is not easy" since it was formed under the authoritarian government (Reviews 253).

Helpful or Harmful Legacy?

In the survey, participants were asked to evaluate Pinochet's policies and accompanying legacy. From the academic examination of Pinochet and his policies, one may think that the responses would overwhelmingly be similar to this, "disastrous, negative and one who left bad memories" or "the damage of Pinochet is too large" #2.

One elaborated upon this: "Pinochet's legacies have translated into fear, censorship, and a civil society that does not intend to have a big voice or struggles to manifest freely. We grew up with an inferiority complex, and a conformist character. We grew up 'con la sangre hasta los tobillos,' but kept drinking coca-cola and watching Venezuelan soap operas. The dictatorship did not permit us to learn and stimulate the brain (to create critical personalities and took us to a stagnant intellectual state that still has consequences in the newer generations)" #9. An underlying theme of many of the responses was voiced most succinctly by the interviewee, "Pinochet broke the country apart socially and educationally and politically."

However, the responses were much more tempered than expected. For instance, one participant conveyed the negativity of Pinochet's rule as well as hope: "The government of Pinochet created a lot of harm in the country, the worst, which has not been repaired. We could get something good out of all this I'm sure, but without justice and correction of those measures that affect us socially it will not be possible. Without change we only have negative consequences and very little to recover" #14. Interestingly, the interviewee expressed a similar hope in the fact that "the country has come a long way. Pinochet died [in 2006] and the country went on, which was unthinkable ten years earlier." It should be acknowledged that we should not discount the fact that Pinochet did, and still does, have supporters; they simply may not have received and/or responded to the survey.

Some felt such a question was irrelevant, "Fortunately, I don't feel affected by the regime. I was born in 1983 when things were changing. In my family I don't feel we were affected but as I am told, my mom and dad had to stand in food lines. But this topic

is not a big deal in my house and has left no resentment" #4. Others agree, "For the 'chileno medio' [middle class Chilean], Pinochet is not a topic anymore, and very little is remembered of him and his policies...Today I am doing well and so is Chile. It represents 13 years of life in which he was president" #7.

Most participants would agree, whether perceived positively or negatively, with the interviewee that "the major success of Pinochet was to convince people that the neoliberal economy works, privatization works, [and] the state should play a minimal role." Another participant agreed, "The legacy of Pinochet I believe is the fact that he favored the implementation of an economic model of free market and, in general, favored the implementation of neoliberal politics. In my life, I don't think it has economically affected me, since I have had luck. However, I am not happy with the country I live in today, and I am worried that my family will settle and develop here" #8.

Although little discussed in the surveys, the book opening participants made the critical point that Pinochet greatly impacted international human rights. Cynthia Arnson, the opening speaker, stated, "Pinochet changed the rules of justice for human rights violations." As noted at the book opening, Pinochet has served as a symbol outside of Chile by setting the precedent of being the first head of state arrested internationally for crimes being committed in his own country. Internationally, his violent acts served as an impetus for the human rights movement, moving a generation internationally. According to the speakers, although there were harsher dictators throughout the world during Pinochet's rule, he is the most remembered and notorious internationally, especially since, in spite of the repression, he was able to develop a successful economy.

What did Pinochet want his legacy to be? According to Muñoz and Insulza, he wanted respect from the left. Although he didn't want to go down in history as the internationally renowned dictator he was, he refused to repent of his crimes. In spite of the success of his economy, he will always be remembered as a dictator first. Perhaps his legacy would have remained ambiguous, but he lost much respect from the Chilean masses when it was discovered that he had embezzled money from the nation. Chileans always thought that Pinochet was honest, although terrible, but with the United States government's discovery of the scandal with the Riggs bank in 2004, they found out that he was corrupt too: "When I found out about the stealing incident and the discovery of the [Riggs] accounts, my opinion about him became more negative" #10. For many, Pinochet's legacy has become that "he abused powers in all senses of the word."

Transition to Democracy and Pinochet's Legacy of Impunity

It is pertinent to make a complete examination of Chile's transition to democracy and the role of Pinochet's legacy in order to understand the political environment youth are experiencing today. The democratic transition to the *Concertación* coalition led by Patricio Aylwin in 1990 was forced to contend with the fact that Pinochet did not simply "disappear" from the face of Chilean politics. When Pinochet left office in 1990, he boasted, "nobody will touch me, the day they touch one of my men, the rule of law is ended" (Ensalaco 120). Pinochet continued to serve as Commander-in-Chief of the army and upon retirement in 1998, became Senator for Life as designated in the 1980 Constitution. Thus, the ruthless dictator faced no repercussions for his actions. Upon his death in December 2006, he still had over three hundred charges pending against him;

however, he died without being convicted of any of them as both Spain and Chile were unable to bring him to trial for various reasons.

As noted by Fernando Leiva, "To ensure the success of the negotiated transition, the *Concertación* had to provide ample evidence of its commitment to both the neoliberal economic model as well as Pinochet's 1980 Constitution" (75). The transition was made according to Pinochet's terms, not those necessary for the rebuilding of a strong democracy, with a continued preference towards the military elite that weakened the government's autonomy and strength (Volk 27). Thus, the "persistence of 'authoritarian enclaves'" as well as a political system submissive to the demands of neoliberalism that were written into the 1980 Constitution continued during and after the transition (27). Today's "passive political system" is partly due to the fact that the military was never truly weakened and maintains an important status, allowing the ever present sense of fear to continue to exist within Chilean society (27). Unlike Argentina where the military's credibility was destroyed by its loss of the Falklands-Malvinas War to Great Britain, the Chilean military has maintained prestige throughout the political transition.

As mentioned above, for a "successful" transition to democracy, the *Concertación* government remained committed to maintaining many of the Pinochet-era policies:

The achievement of what may be regarded as a peaceful transition to democracy was possible because of basic continuity in economic policies and a willingness to compromise on the part of the *Concertación* parties in those conditions required by the military class to abide by the plebiscite results. (Avalos)

As a result, "the essential features of the economic model or strategy inherited from the Pinochet regime were not abandoned" (Aedo-Richmond and Richmond). However, it should be noted that many institutions are not just leftover vestiges of the Pinochet

regime, but that "such continuities have also been facilitated and actively endorsed by the political choices and development strategy embraced by the governing *Concertación* coalition" (Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva "Part II" 58). This is partly due to the fact that any opposition to the transitional government, such as that from the center right, was not opposed to the neoliberal model. In Chile, a consensus of political parties developed that

believed in maintaining the structure of the economy as inherited from the military government, extensive use of the market and private sector as a means to economic growth, and a recognition that it is the role of the state to correct social inequities by ensuring that there is a framework of macroeconomic stability that stimulates savings and investment. (Avalos)

Thus, although the individuals within the government changed, the fundamental characteristics of the economic and social paradigm resulting from the Pinochet era was maintained and continues to thrive under the civilian democracy in Chile as opposition to such a paradigm is essentially nonexistent (Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva "Part I" 3).

Chile's Schizophrenia

Before proceeding forward, there is an essential element within the Chilean culture that has come to affect all aspects of society and which must be kept in mind. As a nation, Chile faces a troubling schizophrenia: it has acquired a successful economy at the cost of treacherous human rights violations. Most participants expressed this sentiment as they struggled to acknowledge their economic success that came at the price of many human lives. One participants expressed it clearly: "I think that he did a good job economically, but the price we paid for that was too high. The atrocities committed during his regime were the worst thing that happened to Chile. The biggest legacy of Pinochet is the division of our society; the ones who support him versus the ones who hate him. Pinochet divided Chile in two and this division is now starting to change. His

death was the first step and new generations are those who will be able to make a big difference" #4.

Another notes that, "[While I am] not pro-Pinochet and totally against his human rights violations and the excessive time he remained in power, the group of economists that created public policies in his government did a great job for the economy" #10. This ambiguity is found throughout the surveys as participants state, "I did not like him because of his human rights violations, but he is admirable because he was able to understand that the economists could change the country" #10. The manner in which Pinochet implemented his economic policies is considered "questionable" by several.

This kind of atmosphere puts Chileans in an extremely difficult and ambiguous situation. The human rights advocates paint a horrible picture of Chile while the economists think it is going wonderfully; both are true, but there is a huge disconnect that has led to "a country that's still completely divided." The interviewee believes, "Chile lives in a permanent state of normalcy until something comes to the surface [such as Pinochet's death] and reminds them that this is a country with a history, a not-long-ago history, of terrible breakdown and terrible turmoil and terrible suffering." When such events as Pinochet's imprisonment occur, it is like someone is saying, "Hey, let me remind me that you are not normal as a country. That you are a country completely divided so that people start taking sides again." The country is schizophrenic and has yet to heal its wounds, yet many feel it is absolutely necessary that Chile moves forward and doesn't look back: "I think that the important thing is to keep on with life and look into the future instead of the past" #4.

Political Environment and the State of Democracy

Oftentimes, Chile is considered one of the most stable democratic states in Latin America. Chileans even elected Michelle Bachelet, a former torture victim of Pinochet and a female socialist, as their President. However, the inability to step outside of Pinochet's neoliberal paradigm has perpetuated its influence in Chilean social life for over thirty years. The attitudes, such as consumerism, that developed under neoliberalism have overflowed into all spheres of Chilean life. Pinochet introduced the structural reforms and now these reforms have influenced public behavior, developing a new culture. This is crucial for the youth as they have grown up under these neoliberal attitudes their entire lives (unlike their parents who knew socialism and other ways of life). The products of neoliberalism in Chile, i.e. consumerism and commodification, individualism, and an allowance of impunity, have translated into the public's political apathy as well as weak democratic institutions.

The consumerism of neoliberalism can easily be seen in the privatization of education as it has become an object to obtain and citizens are given a choice in determining which is best for them; as noted by Flavio Cortes, a professor, "These kids are consumers of education, and I am providing a service to help their careers" (Constable). This commodification has weakened democratic establishments, such as the institution of elections, as they are simply perceived as facilitators of these free market forces.

The campaign techniques utilized in the millennial election in Chile demonstrate that "competition [has] filter[ed] through all aspects of life in Chile," making it "seem more and more like a 'natural law' rather than a social construct," so that a new generation has grown up with the perception that, "competition among private individuals is normative behavior" (Oppenheim 65). The millennium elections in Chile were "a direct

competition between two men, each of whom...was commodified and marketed. Simple ideas and jingles replaced what had been a more substantive politics," weakening the political environment as an arena for substantive political discourse (69).

As noted above, a central tenet of neoliberalism is the importance of the individual, as one seeks to fulfill one's personal needs through the choices of the free market. As noted by Steven Volk, under Pinochet,

The military violently uprooted the collective structures and communal identities that sustained Chilean political culture for generations, leaving in their place a neo-liberal economy and a model of the citizen as consumer, both of which worked to privatize social relations. (29)

In order for the neoliberal model to succeed, collective identities had to be destroyed first; Pinochet did so through his reforms, such as educational, where it was not about educating Chilean youth as a whole, but obtaining the best education for one's child. Thus, the political environment has become an arena in which the consumer has replaced the citizen, leading to "total disregard of any notion of a social good" (29). Political institutions have been weakened through this as "consumers' weapons of choice" is no longer politics, but economics (Leiva 78). Although this is a worldwide trend, and not unique to Chile, it is critical to recognize this element in Chilean life as it does impact the manner in which the youth are socialized into the political system; it might just be that this is not only happening within this nation but affecting youth around the globe.

Impunity for the crimes under Pinochet continues to be present in many aspects of daily Chilean life. As noted earlier, the political elite and authoritarian enclaves of Pinochet still have political power, allowing Pinochet loyalists to "manipulate the political process contribut[ing] to impunity" (Ensalaco 125). Moreover, many would argue that Chilean citizens do not want to question the impunity because although many

suffered under the Pinochet regime, its neoliberalism has been credited with Chile's development and prosperity: "Chile's growth...is bittersweet: free market reforms inherited from a dictator" ("A Dictator's Legacy").

Furthermore, the administrations of the past eighteen years have not taken many steps to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. For instance, President Lagos acted "as though impunity was the price Chilean democracy would have to pay for political normality" (Ensalaco 124). Thus, it appears that Chileans prefer the impunity of Pinochet's violent repressors to the instability and the economic decline that may occur if crimes are prosecuted, exacerbating the nation's schizophrenia. The military's power is so potent that the military forces did not formally acknowledge that torture was an official policy under Pinochet until November 2004, fifteen years after the transition to democracy. Furthermore, Chilean citizens may perceive the condemnation of the Pinochet era as a condemnation of the prosperity that accompanies neoliberalism. On top of all of this, the repression itself has played a role since "so many Chileans experienced the personal consequences of repression, fear and paralysis [fostering] the political reality that sustained impunity" (120).

Some, such as the interviewee, believe that although Chile may not have the perfect democratic society, there is "no reason to think that there will be a coup again in next ten years." Of course, this is critical because if citizens have at least this kind of security and do not have to fear the upheaval associated with Pinochet, then perhaps the desire to participate politically diminishes. Interestingly, before the 1973 coup, Chileans were extremely active in politics; they believed in the legal system and due process. They have always prided themselves on this fact. With the coup, suddenly their beliefs in the political system were completely destroyed as one man was able to completely

disregard the law and human life. Hence, this political consciousness must be rebuilt and reestablished and in order to do so, the people must invest in democracy and its system.

Thus, a combination of consumerism, individualism, and impunity have created a political atmosphere that is dramatically different from that of the early 1970s, so that "social institutions central to political debate and decision making prior to 1973 have struggled to remain consequential since the return to civilian government in 1990" (Volk 28). Furthermore, politics, political parties and institutions no longer provoke the people; they have lost their prestige and value to the free market, suffering a dramatic decline "in the eyes of the public, particularly the young" (28). In May 2001, the United Nations Development Programme learned that 32% of Chileans "did not care if the political system was democratic or authoritarian" (28). Only 35% were "very" or "fairly" satisfied with the democracy's functioning in their country (28). Moreover, almost a million Chileans under the age of thirty did not register to vote in the 1997 elections (Oppenheim 68). Education plays a critical role in democratic stability since "the legitimacy of democracy rests on the extent to which it provides people with equal opportunities, among which the opportunity to receive a quality education is paramount" (Reviews 231).

Chile's Political Environment According to the Citizens

An important tool for evaluation of a political government is the perception of the citizens that live within such a society. Without directly being asked any question about the state of democracy, many participants inserted their opinions about the present-day government. Their opinions also included elements of how the youth relate to democracy as well. Hence, this is crucial to understand so as to have a better understanding of youth within the political context.

Unfortunately, this belief in democracy is still hindered by Pinochet and the remnants of fear that many of the participants speak to. For instance, "In general

[Pinochet's rule] was a sad period, with excessive oppression of different opinions. All of those who were young in that period were left with a sour sensation that 'it is never convenient to discuss or contradict.' Unfortunately, that sensation has lasted in those that lived during those times (especially the young generation during that period)" #12. Thus, the middle age cohort of Chileans were raised in this culture of fear and discredit of governments in such a manner that they still do not see the government as a source of change: "because everybody fears, nobody argues or criticizes [against the government's policies]; that same fear that was created by Pinochet" #16.

Conversely, one participant that grew up in the military system found that "It was clear that solutions were set by the strongest. It was normal to not talk about what was discussed at home. It was normal and smart not to discuss or talk, especially if you were against what was happening. After democracy began, it was like re-discovering a country. That, adding to the entrance of teenage years, made me the political person I am today" #5. One participant notes, "There is no real political conscience and this happens because we don't investigate and go to the bottom of the situations. The regime's ghost still influences decisions and even votes. I suppose that there should be a modification in the education in terms of history and its consequences" #9.

Alongside of this sense of fear and how it affected the development of conscience among certain generations is a disillusionment with the transition to democracy. Several participants felt that there have been no true changes since the end of Pinochet's rule: "With the beginning of democracy there was not a big change in life. The sensation of a change arrived only to the politicians, producing discontent to the general population" #12. One respondent that did not live under the regime has found that "I feel it does affect me for how I think and view things. The contradictions and violations committed against the opposition during the regime did not end with the beginning of democracy.

On the contrary, with democracy this crime was institutionalized. What was imposed during the dictatorship is now reaffirmed by 'democracy', while people assume this as the natural order of things. Even when justice is been made, politically we follow and respect the same constitution, made in non-democratic times. Thus, we live in the same institutions and with the same elements of state from the dictatorship period, only to add a few changes and reforms that makes this imposition look like a democracy" #15.

One important element addressed by a participant that is only mentioned in passing in the literature is the fact that the military power in Chile was not diminished by the end of Pinochet's reign. This has been and still is an impediment to the democratic transition because it means that the people that committed many of the atrocities under Pinochet were not necessarily brought to trial. Those that were brought to trial were only brought because of human rights violations, not because they were supporters of Pinochet. One respondent replies, "the police repression and the public forces have not ceased since the beginning of 'democratic' governments. This 'democratic' government sat down against the Chilean struggle for democracy, sold the country to foreign transnational from the North that take all profits out of the country while paying little taxes. This democracy left the majority out of having an opinion on decisions that concern everybody. But because everybody fears, nobody argues or criticizes; that same fear that was created by Pinochet" #16. Another disillusioned participant wrote, "I feel that there was a struggle that diminished when democracy began because the people thought their demands were being satisfied. But as time passed, the demands were never truly satisfied. Pinochet is still in the constitution. This means that he still is the backbone of our country, that he still mandates what has to be done and still enforces the neo-liberal model, excluding and privatizing" #16.

Several participants believed that the politicians were at issue within the current context and they caused the disillusionment that has pervaded Chilean culture. One participant finds, "For those Chileans that are skeptical towards politics, I believe that is mainly the cause of the poor job done by politicians (rather than the effects of public education). These politicians have a reputation of never doing their job, self-interested, focused in destroying opposition projects and leave little space to address the community interests and needs. Those political parties are the ones that have to change" #4. Another agrees, "I believe that there is no existence of apathy, but rather discredit of current politicians in the current political system and institutions" #14. Many Chileans still distrust politicians and the system in which they function. In spite of the fact that the current governments are perceived as ineffectual, they continue to be reelected because the Chilean people "can't bear having a right-wing government." Rather than vote on the issues, the people are voting based upon fear of the right which still represents Pinochet and his repression.

A source of hope for the interviewee, however, is that because of this disillusionment with the "big politics" in Santiago, more political action is occurring at a local level. It seems that it has become more important to vote for the mayor than the President because the people are seeing change at that municipal level. Perhaps this is also an indication of the fact that many social institutions, such as education, have been decentralized and much control has been put at the local level.

Present-day Education

In order to fully comprehend the environment in which Chilean youth are living, it is necessary to understand the state of education today. As noted above, the educational system is one of the most influential structures upon youth's lives. Education

is an important socialization tool as students spend a majority of their time within school buildings' walls. Pinochet understood this since his "last official act was to release free-market forces on education, which has effectively created a two-tiered [or, depending upon how one looks at it, three-tiered] system" ("A Dictator's Legacy").

During his administration (1990-1994), Alwyin, whose campaign focused upon a "renewed commitment to education," recognized education's importance to rise above the adverse effects Pinochet and neoliberalism had on social policy and attempted "to turn the socio-cultural construct known as the curriculum into an expression of and instrument for socio-cultural reconstruction" (Frasca "Chile Creates Fund" A33; Aedo-Richmond and Richmond). Thus, the transitional governments did not overlook the importance of education in the transition and the manner in which it could be used to facilitate reconciliation and the creation of a new nation with the "social goal of redressing the military government's lack of attention to the poor" (Avalos).

Under Alwyin, the state became more active and served a larger supporting and catalytic role than it had under Pinochet. For instance, in the 1980s, education spending decreased by 30% but has more than doubled since Pinochet's departure (Keller). However, as noted earlier, Pinochet intended for his changes to be maintained and respected, forcing the democratic transitional government to maintain a fragile balance. This manifested itself in the arena of education as the democratic government maintained private schools because

trying to restructure school financing in Chile would fracture the fragile balance between left and right that was an implicit part of the accord that restored democratic rule. This balance has been a major factor in the reform accomplishments of the past decade. (Reviews 100)

Although this factor can not serve as an excuse for the problems in education and Chilean society as a whole, it must be kept in mind as the democratic government's latitude for introducing reforms was restricted and this is the reason radical reforms are not seen during this era.

Of course, the transition government did perceive some of Pinochet's reforms as positive and maintained them for other reasons. For instance, decentralization was maintained by the democratic government because it was thought to allow the school system to have more connection with the population and be more accountable to citizens; however, this decentralization has led to difficulties because a school's functioning is almost completely reliant upon the municipality's size and wealth (Reviews). Although the reforms have been a disappointment for many of those opposed to Pinochet, many teachers responded positively to Alwyin's reforms.

Unfortunately, this restructuring has not necessarily been effective as the government does not seek alternatives outside the neoliberal paradigm due to a lack of sufficient public demand to do so and the fact that many international organizations, such as the World Bank, continue to support and fund such a framework. As explained above extensively, Pinochet's education policies turned the Chilean educational system upside down, making the private schools system more influential in Chile than any other Latin American country (Reviews). Neoliberal privatization reigned as repression and purges altered the educational landscape. Similar to the political atmosphere and state of democracy in Chile, changes that fly directly in the face of Pinochet's policies have not taken hold within the civilian governments. Therefore,

the organization and institutional structuring of the school system in post-Pinochet Chile were not under serious review: the decentralization

reforms of the early 1980s, involving processes of regionalization, municipalisation and privatization, were not dismantled [by the civilian governments]. (Aedo-Richmond and Richmond)

Privatization continues to play a vital role in the educational system, which may be part of the cause for the continued development and widening of socioeconomic inequalities. First and foremost it must be noted that "By 1988, when the economy had stabilized and was growing rapidly, 45% of the population had fallen below the poverty line. The richest 10% of Chileans, however, had seen their incomes increase by 83%" (Klein 86). In spite of these striking inequalities, "the mass of high-school graduates sees in post-secondary education the means for social mobility, as it used to be the case prior to the 1973 coup" (Tomic and Trumper 107). Unfortunately, due to privatization and the poor quality of schools, it has been well documented that education has not served as an effective tool for social change in the post-Pinochet era as social mobility has decreased and students do not seem to be breaking out of the job market which their parents are a part of. As will be seen, education is both a reflection as well as a creator of socioeconomic divisions.

At the primary, secondary and post-secondary levels, privatization has created a three-tiered system, leading to "a streaming process funneling students into pre-set categories from primary school to university education" (Tomic and Trumper 107). Thus, even at the primary school level, poor students suffer a significant disadvantage in comparison with their middle class peers (Hojman 34). Education-facilitated class divisions began to be evident in the national tests of the 1980s where "significant variation [existed] according to the location and socio-economic background, variation which pointed to a widening of educational inequalities" and are still present today

(Aedo-Richmond and Richmond). Based upon observations of the 1990s, the Reviews of National Policies for Education agrees, "the social distribution of learning reveals a highly stratified, inequitable structure, similar to that of 1990" (37). They also found that although there was improvement in national achievement averages in the first part of the 1990s, these achievements have stagnated (37). Keller agrees, "Chile's national tests indicate that students in private schools do better than those in public schools" meaning that although, "overall school enrollment has made dramatic gains since 1990...disadvantaged children do not receive the same quality of education enjoyed by [the] middle-income and wealthy children" who can afford private schooling (Keller; UNICEF, "Chile: Background"). Since these private schools are too expensive for the poor students' families, there exists a "tendency for schools to segregate along economic and social lines" at all levels, but especially at the post-secondary, evidencing the fact that education reflects the socioeconomic gaps (Keller).

Furthermore, it has been found that although the subsidized private schools appear to be more effective and efficient than municipal schools because they have "a different management system and greater productivity," a closer look "reveals that the characteristics associated with students' origin are more responsible for the differences observed than the different management systems" (Reviews 42). Clearly the education system is not transforming and closing the socioeconomic gap, but rather reflecting it, as students' backgrounds are more important in determining their educational success than the schools they attend. Thus, although it is true that students with a poor socioeconomic background are not succeeding because of the municipal schools they attend (which lack resources as a result of their location in a poor neighborhood), it can be seen that not even

those of the same background that attend the private-subsidized schools are succeeding within this system.

Discrepancies between Public and Private Education and Their Implications upon the Growing Socioeconomic Gap

The participants of the survey seem to agree with the idea that socioeconomic inequalities are continuing to grow in Chile and that this gap continues to widen, with education not serving the transformative purpose that many participants and the interviewee claimed is its sole purpose. Three major themes arose out of both the academic literature as well as the primary research which are intertwined and difficult, if not impossible to separate: the growing socioeconomic gap, fostered by discrepancies among the private and public schools, so that education does not serve as a transformative tool, but rather funnels students back into the same socioeconomic class. Since these themes can not truly be pulled apart from each other, each will be addressed in different manners as found in the survey's respondents.

First of all, one participant recognizes that Chile has “one of the worst income distributions in the world.” Blaming Pinochet, one respondent felt strongly in regards to the conflict that has arisen out of such unequal distribution: "The young people today are surrounded by inequality and conflict between class standards that should not even exist but that Pinochet created, dividing us, and that is awful. This fact creates an obstacle for development and improvement" #14. Since one's income determines the schools to which one can send their children, then there becomes a divide between the private and public school systems as those that can afford it move to the private schools and the public schools are unable to keep up for various reasons, as noted above. One participant

even went so far as to say that "Poor people are segregated because they don't have the money to get an education" #15.

One participant notes that, "The problem is that education is defined by the economic status families have, rather than by the effort that the students put into learning. The biggest obstacle for middle and poor class students is to compete with inequalities of opportunities and resources." (13) Thus, students are funneled back into the socioeconomic classes that they began in because "Only those with money have the opportunity to be well-educated and go to college" #1. All the participants agreed with the fact that poorer children attended public schools and those that could afford it attended private.

The difference in quality can be found in the sheer fact that "There are good professors who are paid the minimum wage, so they go to private schools because they get paid better. The professors left in public school are those that don't have the necessary preparation and knowledge (some that don't even have titles, and that didn't finish basic education)" #4. Some believe that in the attempt to close the gap between private and public schooling, rather than improving public education, the government "tries to harm the private" #4. It is perceived that "The private is far better than the public education and it is not the fault of the privatization but rather of an inefficient work of the public educational authorities. The budget for education has grown in the last years and that doesn't reflect a change in measures done to the system" #10. The privatization permits "one to demand for better quality through competition;" unfortunately, it seems that the government is not up for such competition. Thus, some of those surveyed do not blame the privatization of the school system but the fact that the government is unable to

provide adequate education in the public schools. It can be seen that students can succeed in Chilean education, as proven by the private schools, but that the government is incapable of providing such education.

Interestingly, the interviewee felt that one of the critical aspects of public education is the mixture of the classes: "The diversity creates this idea that you can become anything." She notes that through the privatization and the resulting division of education along socioeconomic lines, it is difficult for students to envision a different lifestyle than their parents or neighbors. If all your classmates' parents are maids or plumbers rather than doctors or lawyers, the expectations you set for yourself may be much lower. If you have classmates whose parents are having success in academics and other "prestigious" areas (even if your parents are not), at least you are exposed to these possibilities. Through privatization, this diversity occurs infrequently as "social segmentation has deepened such that increasingly, students from the same or similar socioeconomic backgrounds are schooled together" (Reviews 57).

When those that were surveyed were asked whether they would put their children in private or public school, their response was unanimously "private." This simple fact reflects just how wide the gap is between the private and public sectors of education. Intriguingly, the interviewee had difficulty answering this question because she grew up at a time (before and at the beginning of Pinochet's rule) in which public schooling was better and private schools were looked down upon, especially in the realm of higher education. She struggled with this question because she "still believes that diversity is so important and [she] ha[s] a social responsibility to send my kids to middle class [public] schools" but the municipal schools provide such poor quality education that she believes

her children would be put at a disadvantage academically. She strongly believes in the power of public education, but feels that she can not simply use her children as a "policy instrument" to support a system that would not benefit them. She noted that many of her friends who live in Chile struggle with this question as they were socialized into believing in the power of public education, but this system is no longer effective.

However, there are others that would disagree with the idea of students being put at a disadvantage in a privatized system simply because of their socioeconomic status. One participant adamantly states that, "I studied in private school and the difference in education is none, what really changes is the attitude of the students towards their education. Those who want to learn pay for better education, while those who don't want to learn don't pay for education because it is not important to them" #3. Furthermore, "I believe families put their kids where they can pay and instead of where it is better for their kids. There are few parents who sacrifice to give their children the best they can have" #3. Thus, this participant finds that the issue lies not in the system but in the parents of these students. Oddly, this response may reflect the thinking of the neoliberal model, but it does not reflect the individualism that often accompanies it. Here, the student's parents are responsible for their education, a circumstance that many students have no control over. Rather than perceiving the system as a hindrance, the family is a barrier as an autonomous being outside of society. This is a complex mix of perceptions that reflect Chile's schizophrenia that was discussed earlier in the paper: the reality of the human condition in Chile versus the highly exalted economic model.

Not only does the education system reflect the growing socioeconomic inequalities, it also continues and exacerbates them. It can easily be seen that "education

reproduces class" in the preparation for post-secondary entrance examinations: in 2002, 83.5% of the students that attended private schools attained the score necessary to enter a traditional university, 51.4% of subsidized and 38% of municipal (Tomic and Trumper 106-7). Due to the differences in enrollment, in 2000, 40% of university students came from the 20% of population with the highest income while only 14% came from the poorest 40% of the population (107). Furthermore, 60% of the wealthiest youth attend university while only 14% of the poorest do, demonstrating that the best indicator of performance on the entrance exams for higher education is "the socio-economic group of origin of the students" which has allowed them to obtain a better education (Reviews 245).

A troubling result of such statistics is summarized best by the OECD's Reviews of National Policies for Education:

Unless the government finds effective and substantial means to alter the social distribution of access to tertiary education to increase the chances of students whose families are not among the wealthiest 20% of the population, high school graduates in Chile and their families will soon realize that they have been excluded from the opportunity to learn at the level which matters most for economic and social advancement and for political leadership. This realization, if widespread, can undermine the legitimacy of a democratic State (246)

Thus, this socioeconomic discrepancy in higher education not only impacts Chile's youth but also the stability of its entire society.

As such, education is not serving as a transformative tool, touted throughout the world as necessary for the development and bettering of a country, but as maintenance of the status quo. Discrepancies in funding have meant that "schools in wealthy areas [have] spent twice as much as those in poor neighborhoods" (Hojman 40). This funding towards textbooks, school facilities, teacher training and reducing class size has meant that these

tools are more pertinent than years of schooling in "determining occupational destinations" (40). This is troubling as a success of the democratic governments, a 17.1% increase in student enrollment between 1990 and 2001, may not be such a blessing as more students enter an educational system that is not necessarily transformative (Reviews 33). Thus, Chilean schools' high attendance rates have not translated to schooling serving as tools for social mobility and the reduction of class inequalities because insufficient attention has been paid to their quality at all levels, primary, secondary, and post-secondary (Hojman 40).

In addition to funding differences and poor quality, private schools are also taking the cream off the top of the student population so that municipal schools must manage difficult social, behavioral and learning problems (Reviews 73). Thus, in spite of the fact that municipal schools have more difficult tasks and responsibilities than private schools, they are still receiving the same (or less) resources. This is not to insinuate that the children that must attend the municipal schools are somehow not as intelligent or capable as their counterparts attending private schools, but that private schools are able to be selective of their student population while the municipal schools must educate every student that walks through their doors.

Moreover, privatization is continuing to increase as the private sector presently maintains a share of over half of both primary and secondary schools (World Bank, "Summary Education Profile"). At the university level, 2,708 students attended private universities in 1983; in 2003, this number skyrocketed to 148,662 (Tomic and Trumper 107). According to the Chilean Ministry of Education, private post-secondary enrollments grew at a compound annual growth rate of 11% between 1993 and 2003

(Laureate Education). Remarkably, as a result of market incentives, "Chile's students, on average, have not become academically worse off"; but these reforms also haven't produced the achievement gains nor cost savings that it should have (Reviews 176).

Private universities flourished and expanded under the *Concertación* government as it encouraged "the commodification of higher education and the growth of a system that lacks resources and qualified faculty," so that quality has not accompanied the increased quantity of post-secondary institutions (Tomic and Trumper 103). Hojman agrees: "The supply of private education has become a good business, and education conglomerates have flourished, especially in poor areas, where quality control, either by the Ministry or by parents, is weakest" (39).

Evidence of this is the Institutos Profesionales and Centros de Formación Técnica, Chilean institutions of higher learning that are third-tier beneath the public and private universities are intended to prepare students for "lower class" jobs. These institutes focus upon a market of students that can not afford higher education at the university level: essentially, "in the pursuit of profits, [these institutions] exploit low income students through the provision of devalued skills [as they] are as good a market as higher income students preparing for more prestigious positions" (Tomic and Trumper 107). Evidence of the usefulness of these third-tiered schools is that "unemployment among graduates from universities is significantly lower than for graduates from technical institutions" (Reviews 216). Thus, from primary school to the Instituto Profesional, poorer students receive a lower quality education than those of the upper class.

A press release of Laureate Education, Inc. (formerly Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc.) demonstrates the perceptions of the private educational conglomerates that are

playing a role in the privatization and neoliberalization of the Chilean education system.

Laureate Education, Inc. declares Chile to be "one of the world's most attractive higher education markets." "Brand recognition" and targeting certain markets reflects the role of competition within the realm of post-secondary education. By 2003, Sylvan maintained institutions at the three tiers of education: Universidad Nacional Andres Bello, the prestigious private university, Universidad de Las Americas, a middle-market institution, and Academia de Idiomas y Estudios Profesionales, a technical/vocational institute.

Douglas Becker, the CEO and Chairman of Laureate Education, recognizes the distinctions among these universities:

Now we will serve the full range of student needs, from vocational training all the way to the most demanding and prestigious university education... With three distinct brands and a market leading presence in each segment in Chile, we look forward to expanding academic opportunities for our students, and broadening access to quality programs in the future. (Laureate Education)

He also states that Sylvan will expand its existing enrollments as well as build new campuses, develop new programs, and introduce "more sophisticated marketing"; nowhere does he speak to the quality of the education or the future of the students that attend these institutions (Laureate Education).

This educational privatization also represents a change in core values of the education system. As noted by Andrés Bernasconi,

knowledge for economic advantage may represent an impoverishment of the mission of the university, considering that it leaves behind goals so dear to the Latin American idea of the university as fostering new power structures, performing the role of society's critical consciousness, deepening democracy, extending high culture to the masses, and the like.
(20)

Thus, although it has been a focus of this paper of the importance of education for economic advancement, perhaps a larger examination, which is not within the scope of this paper, should be undertaken as to the effects of privatization on the values of the social systems as a whole.

Education as Transformative Tool

Most of the respondents indicated, in some form or another, that education is not a transformative tool that can effect change in youth's lives that many believe it to be. The interviewee states this best, "education is the basic social mobility instrument you have. Best way of getting out of poverty. Best of way of being middle class." The disillusionment and discrepancies in the public and private education systems which are divided along socioeconomic lines have not allowed for this education to play this transformative role. One respondent writes, "when our current educational system was implemented, it destroyed the program that focused on social progress of the poor and the intellectual and technical development of the entire country" #15.

A huge obstacle for youth is "More than anything else, the lack of expectations. There is no academic system that guarantees employment at the end of your studies, or a solution to those that could not afford school any longer. The model to follow is more of a technocratic orientation in activities related to education" #5. The participants overwhelmingly agree with the interviewee that the socioeconomic inequalities and their association with public and private schooling have meant that education is not transformative as "[Poor] kids don't have any expectations...just getting out of that neighborhood will be difficult."

However, the expansion of access to education has meant that more Chileans are going to school now than ever before. This has meant that many universities have been created for the middle class, allowing "students to achieve something their parents had not: they have a higher education degree." Another respondent agrees, "The private education made it possible for more people to have access to education. There are statistics that say that 80% of college students are the children of parents that did not go to college. In other words, more people were given the opportunity to develop their intellects and grow socially" #10.

Furthermore, some do believe that there is true social mobility in these private institutions, while others believe that, yes, more of population is "educated" but that does not mean that their lives have changed significantly. Now the maid and plumber are more literate, but not able to move out of their class. Both sides were represented in the surveys. One participant believes, "[Changes were] beneficial in the sense that it gave access to education to more people, but harmful because public education lost its quality relative to the private" #10. In contrast, one participant felt, "The education is of such bad quality that it does not motivate students and does not give satisfaction. It's an obligated process. Instead of school being a part of one's development, there is no value on knowledge. This makes young people less motivated to study. In addition, those who actually study become, in the majority of times, mediocre professionals. Everything forming part of a cultural problem that has been imposed for lucrative purposes" #14. Another respondent agrees, "Today, professionals are educated with relation to the necessities of the market, without even looking to the overproduction before they graduate," meaning that the higher education system is providing education for careers in

which the job market is open, but does not take into account that all the universities are graduating students with the same skills #15. Through privatization, the diversity of careers for which students are prepared has diminished.

Moreover, the continuing impunity still affects the educational system. For instance, at the university level, extensive spying took place under Plan Condor to eliminate those that threatened the Pinochet regime. The "lack of investigation of, or sanctions on, those responsible for the repression at the university" has meant their continued presence in teaching or administrative posts (Frasca "Chile Creates Funds" A34). Troublingly, this has not only occurred at the university level but throughout the entire system, since "the vast majority of the teachers in active service in Chilean schools today worked within the system shaped by the authoritarian regime. The formative influence of that experience is not always easily or comprehensively cast aside" (Reviews 108). Furthermore, the purges stripped the teaching profession of its credibility and fostered a distrustful feeling towards teachers as a whole (Reviews).

Also, the redresses for those that were purged are insufficient, if existent at all. On the whole, universities would like to handle this question on their own as their autonomy had previously been invaded by the purge, but the government is providing funds to universities to rehire purged professors. Nevertheless, there is no true value that can be placed on the thought and ideas that were exterminated. The only certain thing is that such educational tools as the curriculum would most likely not be what they are today if the purged professors had been able to participate in their formation.

The Educators

Before continuing, it is critical to take a look at the professors that are within the system, the educators of the youth, and Chileans' perspectives of them. Many agree that the purges of the professors have meant a loss in quality of education. Combining the element of fear with such a massive loss of critical thought, one participant pessimistically states, "The fact that Pinochet fired and sent into exile hundreds of professors had a powerful effect because those professors left did not have the capacity of those sent to exile. The fact that the government had cancelled and eliminated certain professional courses, like for example philosophy, created a society subdued without opinion and today we are suffering the consequences" #2. A fellow respondent agrees that, "Public universities, the oldest and most important for Chilean history, have been greatly punished for having been in the past the foundation for critical knowledge and autonomous characteristics (typical of the era)" #15. Many found that the primary victim of Pinochet's actions was the public universities and the purging of their professors and critical thought.

When so many teachers were purged, they were replaced with teachers that were much less qualified; not only was the critical thought eliminated, but it was replaced by the indoctrination of an entire generation. This must be kept in mind while thinking about the element of fear in the society and the apathy felt towards the government. One participant noted, "My professors were militaries with no academic preparation. I went to school to receive military instructions. The result of this is that I have hardly any reading comprehension skills" #2. Another respondent informs, "When I got to college I realized for the first time the weight that the dictatorship has on the educational system. I lived isolated [from the rest of the country as she was from the North and her parents

were pro-Pinochet] and in school we never talked about the dictatorship but instead we talked about government. The schools were not privatized and would generally force the students to sign the national anthem and learn patriotic military poems" #9. With this kind of socialization, one can only expect that there would be an undertone of fear within this generation's life.

The privatization and opening of many new institutions has also meant, "There are many professors in the market as a consequence of the ease of opening many universities and private schools, creating a lack of good quality professors" #8. Also, the fact that anybody can open a school if they have the resources has "provoked grave problems in our society, because school owners have no experience in education, or were never professors, creating policies and rules that affected students, their values, perspectives and education" #2. Pinochet's policies "opened up the possibility of private institutions to create and administer higher education institutions."

Significance for Chile's Youth Today

Firstly, in the realm of education, the structure is just as important as the curriculum and content that is taught (Avalos). The neoliberal structures, i.e. privatization and free market principles, have become "part of the philosophy and the operational structures of the system" (Avalos). The fundamental goal of educational change has been for the improvement of the economy, not the "furthering [of] social values such as justice and human rights" (Avalos). Furthermore, "the philosophy of improving performance through competition and incentives" within the Chilean educational system is unavoidable evidence of the neoliberal policies' effects on youth. Thus, the structure of the system socializes students into competition and individualism.

Moreover, the widening economic gap between the wealthy and the poor that continues to be reproduced by the privatization of the educational system will have long-lasting effects on the youth of today. Somehow students, who evidently are funneled through the education system with students of the same class, must bridge across the economic gaps in order to participate politically and socially as a cohesive age cohort with one voice. As noted by UNDP, "school segregation on racial, religious, linguistic or other grounds can be a factor in furthering group isolation and exacerbating tensions in society" (23). In the future, youth will be forced to cope with these tensions and their implications as they are reproduced through the present education system.

In addition, "the large majority of the private university 'market' is in the hands of right-wing institutions where people associated w/ the Pinochet regime proliferate. Their academic connection is even used to legitimize the regime and vice versa" (Tomic and Trumper 108). Hence, just as the purging of universities has never truly been reconciled, the proponents of the regime maintain leadership roles in a crucial area of youth development: post-secondary education. The purges led to "a constant deterioration of academic standards...[because] when you fire 20-year veterans, it leaves a gap," eliminating an important discourse of thought that has yet to be fully regained (Frasca "Academic Victims" A34). As a result, the students of today may be receiving a one-sided perspective, especially when higher education is often perceived as an opportunity for students to question their beliefs and coherently develop their worldviews and values.

Furthermore, many students are unaware of the purges and the impunity of their professors who "spied" because, as one professor notes, "People want to forget" (Frasca "Chile Creates Funds" A34). The people will continue to try to forget so long as

reconciliation is not achieved. Therefore, an open public discourse must take place within Chilean life in order to begin to regain these perspectives and help students understand what happened under Pinochet. This does not necessarily signify a reconciliation or complete healing, but would allow for today's youth to better understand their nation's past and how it has impacted their parents, society, and own lives. It also can begin to alter the undercurrent of fear within Chilean life and as such, allow for a strengthening of the democratic institutions and political participation.

Unfortunately, the political environment does not make up for the absence of voices within the post-secondary institutions. The return to civilian rule has been "marked by a greater adherence to the formal rules of democracy than to a vibrant democratic culture" (Volk 28). Thus, this generation has come to age under "the expansion of consumerist behavior in Chile [that] has generated a kind of passive conformism among the population" as well as a democratic culture that "has become anemic, occupied by 'dormant' citizens, depoliticized or politically apathetic" (29-30). This weak democratic culture has meant that: "While polls show most students do not favor military rule, it has made them apathetic, suspicious of ideology, disinclined to take risks and not entirely sure what democracy means" (Constable). In turn: "Today's average students, exposed to the world of foreign imports and shut off from the world of democratic debate, are far more interested in clothes and careers than politics" (Constable). In a 1994 report, it was found that economic development, order, and security were youth's utmost important concerns with liberty and a democratic system falling at the bottom with less than 10%, reflecting youth's apathy (López). If the youth

do not see political action as a means of achieving social equality and a better livelihood, then they are forced to seek other channels, such as violence, to meet their needs.

However, contrary to this pessimistic outlook, the student protests on May 30, 2006 are evidence of growing unrest among youth as almost every student "over the age of 11 walked out of their classrooms in protest of the country's patently unequal, Pinochet-era educational system" (Hatfield). A compromise was reached with President Bachelet through the provision of funding to meet their demands. Thus, education serves not only to reflect and exacerbate current socioeconomic inequalities, but also serves as an impetus for youth involvement in democracy.

Although I do not claim to capture the voices of the youth, perhaps their actions can be taken to stand in as their voices as they organize and rally for change in education and the political structure as a whole. Through the protests, this generation demonstrates a "significant development of political consciousness" as they first recognized the inequalities and then used their voices to fight back (Saunois). In their call for the repeal of the law that privatized and decentralized schools, a remnant of Pinochet, the youth are recognizing the impact of the dictatorship upon their personal lives. By uniting in a cohesive demonstration, the students were able to break through the individualism of the market forces and "a constructed collective will to ignore the past" as well as potentially divisive economic gaps (Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva "Part I" 5). Unfortunately, these protests were met with violent police repression, including 700 arrests, impeding the right to free speech and the growth of democracy as well as perpetuating the culture of fear. In the future, it would be interesting to take a look at the sources of changes in political outlook and views among the different generations (especially today's youth) in Chile.

Perceptions of Youth

The final important element to draw from the surveys is the perception of youth within society as a whole. How do the survey participants perceive this generation, many of whom are part of it? This is not to claim that these are the voices of the youth, but rather the average citizen's perception of this cohort, which is not only a response to but also a determining factor upon the youth's space in society. The responses were diverse and widespread. From their apathy to their social movements, the participants overwhelmingly agreed that Pinochet's legacy and policies still affected the youth.

First, this youth is growing up in an economic state that "has created envy and general discontent. This is due to the lack of human, not economic, satisfaction" #8. Others agree that the culture has change from "the 60's and 70's you could see that Chile was an intellectual country that worked while still being Latin. Today, we have lost many of the Latin values mainly because of an exploitive economic system and an education system focused on consumption" #11. The fact that Pinochet's policies changed education "into a product of consumption instead of a project of and for the country," which it wasn't before. There is a general belief among participants that because of the neoliberalization and "the tendencies moving towards individualism and competition as a way of subsistence," the purpose of education has changed dramatically #8. From these types of statements, a kind of nostalgia can be pulled out. It is recognized that today's youth is not growing up in the same atmosphere that existed before Pinochet. Although not addressed in the surveys, this may lead one to believe that there is a painful generation gap.

A worry and concern grew out of the surveys as the youth were perceived as apathetic, "The youth are ignorant. They don't read, they criticize without information or without reading anything. We have a generation that likes and adores TV even when our TV is purely ignorant" #11. In the past, "Schools of Journalism were places where the Chilean society was constructed, they were spaces where the youth expressed themselves and where people with critical visions of the world were born. Today, that has changed. To talk about politics and society in schools of journalism is an irrelevant topic, almost 'nerdy like.' Young people go to school interested in television and soccer, while less and less students are interested in representing a spirit of change for the world" #1. There has been a societal transformation that has meant "the ignorance of the need for and the power of social organizing" #8. But what about the protests and youth activism? Is that not in a spirit of change?

Participants felt that there was a difference between simply protesting and understanding the reasons behind the protests; the participants assumed motivations behind the youth's social movement. For instance, one noted, "only a small group of people is really interested in solving this problem [of education]. This group is the one that creates peaceful protests and knows why they are protesting. The majority of the students that protest don't even know why they are protesting, they have no arguments to say why their education is bad and they don't even know what LOCE [Pinochet's law] means. They go to the protests because it is entertaining and fun" #4. Some believe that this current generation of youth does not understand the past as one of its own describes, "I wasn't very aware of what was happening and that has had a bigger effect on me. Even when I have tried to learn more history and have fought against the conformist

seduction that characterizes my generation, I feel guilty for not having reacted nor been interested when I was younger. With this, I don't want to say that I don't have a conscience or a political preference, but that those politics did affect me and my generation (especially those who like me where not aware of the factors affecting our development of opinions and character)" #9.

Some believe that a change in education is difficult to bring about because there is a disillusionment of the government. The interviewee notes that "the major problem of change in the educational system is that it can't be individually done, but must be done from the state." If this is true, then what kind of power can the youth have? One participant believes that the youth have been disenfranchised as political actors, "the current generation of secondary students don't have the minimum age to vote and the older generations (up to 25 years of age) are not registered to vote" #16.

Nevertheless there were strands of hope for this generation to throw off the chains of Pinochet's era: "This 'penguin' generation, which we call [the current generation], is much more political than any other that has come before. They have been able to put in public discussion the problem of education and the inequalities that exists in the "liceos" [municipal schools], "subvencionados" [privately subsidized schools], and private schools. To organize, march, and get the government to present a law to the Senate of the Republic, is to create a pure political and social act. The fact that they can't vote doesn't mean that they are not political, especially when considering that they are so young (younger than 18 years of age)" #16. Many agreed that the youth do not have a space in the political arena, but they are actively creating one now. Those youth in which the

society invests much hope and aspiration are those that are active, but also understand why they are, so that perhaps it can spread to their fellow youth.

Conclusion

Through the course of this paper, from Pinochet's changes in Chile to the youth of today, a path has been traced. Along the way, Pinochet's educational policies were examined while the immediate effects of Pinochet's policies came to light in the transition to democracy. The impunity of Pinochet still exists today, even after his death, weakening the political environment and putting the state of democracy in disarray. Finally we arrived at how present-day education is still run under the tenets put in place by Pinochet, such as the divided schooling system, and saw how that has played out in the space of the youth. Throughout, the voices of Chileans were heard on the topics of the fear and Pinochet's legacy as well as Chile's schizophrenia, the political environment, discrepancies among public and private education, the educators, education as a transformative tool, and their perception of their nation's youth.

Pinochet's neoliberal policies survive today and have meant that

Even in 2007, Chile remained one of the most unequal societies in the world—out of 123 countries in which the United Nations tracks inequality, Chile ranked 116th, making it the 8th most unequal country on the list. (Klein 86)

If the older generation of Chile and we, as citizens of a nation with a close relationship with Chile, are not careful, violent conflict could rise again in Chile as the socioeconomic inequalities resulting from the violent past continue to be unaddressed. Unfortunately, the civilian government has not had the ability to transform the weak democratic environment to one that fosters change. Furthermore, the education system, which could serve as a site for social change, has not moved out of the neoliberal paradigm that has

led to powerful discrepancies of wealth. Not only has it not changed, but it also facilitates the widening socioeconomic gap as students are funneled through the system back into their class of their parents. The educational system could serve to partially correct these discrepancies, but is unable to do so presently.

To address the issues of Chilean youth today, first a political culture must develop that is truly democratic and addresses the continued impunity that perpetuates a culture of fear and repression. In addition, Chileans must begin to think outside the neoliberal paradigm to discover solutions to the socioeconomic divide that continues to widen. Fortunately, the youth are taking the situation into their hands and are using their voices to force the Chilean public to rethink the environment that has been allowed to develop along Pinochet's terms. They are asking for something different. Lamentably, the structural changes that they ask for seem to only be able to come from the ruling adults. Thus, Chileans must provide the means to allow the youth to voice their concerns while also providing them with the necessary support to take the changes upon themselves, which may mean the reversal of the trends set in motion by Pinochet or a rethinking of how Pinochet's legacy will play out in the nation's culture, economy, and society.

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