



Language

An impressive student movement erupted in Chile in 2011 and maintained its activism for months, employing a wide range of tactics (including not only mass marches and temporary occupations of educational and political buildings, but also hunger strikes, 'kiss-ins' in public squares, bicycle rides and performances of pop songs). They also organized an informal referendum against the profit motive in which many thousands took part to show their opposition to higher education policy. The students challenged the neoliberal nature of higher education, where total privatization had linked high quality to high fees and state investment was very low. But they also criticized the impact of this ideology on society and the economy as a whole. So – after police violently attacked a student march through the centre of Santiago – the wider public began to join the protests. Students began to receive major support from trade unionists and workers, who went on strike, built barricades and took part in 'carcerolazos' (organized banging of pots and pans). A public opinion poll suggested three quarters of the population supported the students, and their demands received major media coverage for months. This challenge to the regime had been preceded in 2006 by the 'penguin revolution' of secondary school pupils (named for the colours of their school uniforms), which did manage to get the Pinochet law on education repealed, but the new law failed to promote real educational reform. The demonstrations of 2006 also failed to ignite wider social unrest.

The students in 2011 did manage to wring a series of concessions from the government, and leaders of the Student Federation negotiated with President Pinera; but the students rejected several attempts by the government between June and August 2011 to find solutions as superficial. Student protesters in April 2012 were still rejecting the government concessions. When elections took place in December 2013, against a background of widespread public activism, student leader Camila Vallejo stood for Congress and the socialist Michelle Bachelet became President, promising educational, constitutional and tax changes to promote greater equality. But the coalition government was then divided on reforms in 2014, and the debate took place primarily at the parliamentary level.

The developments in Chile were quite widely reported, but much of the literature is in Spanish. We list below a number of commentaries and analyses, mostly available online.

Cabalin, Cristian, [Neoliberal Education and Student Movements in Chile: Inequalities and Malaise](#) [1], Policy Futures in Education, Vol. 10, issue 2, 2012, pp. 219-228

Looks at 2006 and 2011 protests.

Contreras, Dan, [Chile's Educational and Social Movement: Quality Education for Everyone...Now!](#) [2], The Broken Rifle, issue 90 (December), 2011

Briefly explains problem in higher education and how privatization promotes gap between rich and poor. Describes wide range of nonviolent direct action used by the students, but notes wider support and activism.

Cummings, Peter, [Democracy and Student Discontent: Chilean Student Protest in the Post-Pinochet Era](#) [3], Journal of Politics in Latin America, 2015

Cummings notes that despite a significant reduction in poverty levels, and the establishment of political democracy since the end of the Pinochet regime in 1990, there were widespread high school and student protests in 2006 and 2011. These were supported by most of the population and indicated serious discontent. He suggests three main reasons: a gap between student expectations and ability to realize them; their collective sense of identity as a fearless new generation; and the specific interactions between the government and the students.

Figuerola-Clark, Victor, [The Meaning behind Protests in Chile](#) [4], International Affairs at LSE, 10/08/2011,



Discusses context of protest, the school and university education system, extent of inequality in Chilean society, and implications if movement successful.

McIntyre, Jody, [How to Grow a Student Movement. Chilean Style](#) [5], New Internationalist, issue October, 2012, pp. 26-27

Stresses challenge to Pinochet legacy and links with workers' unions. Includes timeline of protests from May 2011 – August 2012.

Muñoz-Lamartine, Ernesto, [Chile: Student Leaders Reinvent the Movement](#) [6], Berkeley Review of Latin American Studies, issue Fall, 2011

Account of talk by Giorgio Jackson, President of the Catholic University's Student Association in Chile.

Salinas, Daniel ; Fraser, Pablo, [Educational Opportunity and Contentious Politics: The 2011 Chilean Student Movement](#) [7], Berkeley Review of Education, Vol. 3, issue 1, 2012, pp. 17-47

Considers the reasons for emergence of movement and its challenge to free market provision of education. Argues experience of this education provides both mobilizing grievances and resources for political mobilization.

Somma, Nicolas M., [The Chilean Student Movement of 2011-2012: Challenging the Marketization of Education](#) [8], Interface: a journal about social movements, Vol. 4, issue 2 (Nov), 2012, pp. 296-309

The author is assistant professor of sociology at the Catholic University of Chile. Examines causes of protests and educational system, 'horizontalism' of student organization, tactics, use of media and maintenance of internal unity.

Source URL (retrieved on 18/04/2024 - 11:25):<https://civilresistance.info/section/h-campaigns-against-government/h1-challenging-authoritarianism-neoliberalism-corruption-0>

Links

[1] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2012/neoliberal-education-and-student-movements-chile-inequalities-and-malaise> [2] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2011/chiles-educational-and-social-movement-quality-education-everyonenow> [3] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2015/democracy-and-student-discontent-chilean-student-protest-post-pinochet-era> [4] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2011/meaning-behind-protests-chile> [5] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2012/how-grow-student-movement-chilean-style> [6] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2011/chile-student-leaders-reinvent-movement> [7] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2012/educational-opportunity-and-contentious-politics-2011-chilean-student-movement> [8] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2012/chilean-student-movement-2011-2012-challenging-marketization-education>