

# Dynamics of Change in Chile: Explaining the Emergence of the 2006 *Pinguino* Movement

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*Abstract.* Focusing on the first large-scale protests in Chile after the reinstatement of democracy in 1990, this article examines the emergence of the 2006 *Pinguino* movement and shows how it succeeded in mobilising thousands of secondary school students against the neoliberal education model. It argues that several distinct but intertwined dimensions explain the movement's emergence. In 2006, secondary school student groups merged to form a single organisation and adopted a horizontal and participatory decision-making mechanism. At the same time, shortcomings in the education reforms of the 1980s and 1990s were revealed in terms of quality and equity, creating grievances that were fed into the movement's collective action frame. Finally, President Bachelet's rhetoric of a 'government of citizens' as an attempt to counteract the elitist nature of the Concertación's governance formula signified an opening of the structure of political opportunities that the students knew to take advantage of.

*Keywords:* Chile, social movements, students, education, contentious politics

Political and mobilisation opportunities are often created by cultural breaks and the surfacing of long dormant contradictions that reframe grievances and injustices and the possibilities of action.

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## *Introduction*

In late April 2006, only a few weeks after the initiation of the fourth consecutive administration of the Concertación – the centre-left coalition that governed Chile from the re-establishment of democracy in 1990 until March

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<sup>1</sup> Mayer N. Zald, 'Culture, Ideology, and Strategic Framing', in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 268.

2010 – a wave of protests promoted by secondary school students took the country by surprise.<sup>2</sup> Named after the students' penguin-like black and white school uniforms, the *Pingüino* movement was prompted initially by economic concerns. After several weeks of protests, however, the unswerving commitment of the *Pingüinos* forced a substantial discussion of the education system as a whole. Questioning its overall functioning and exposing the failure of the Concertación to reform it, the hundreds of thousands of students that mobilised in 2006 articulated a heartfelt discontent with the segregating effects of the education system. To vent the students' disgruntlement, the government decided to create a Presidential Advisory Commission on the Quality of Education (hereafter referred to as the Commission) and invited the main actors and experts of the education system to propose reforms. Three years later, in August 2009, a new General Law of Education was promulgated, although education reform was not part of President Bachelet's original policy agenda.<sup>3</sup>

One of the *Pingüinos*' recurrent slogans, 'enough postponing our future', seemed to have reached the government authorities. It had also resonated with public opinion – according to polls conducted at the time of the protests, 87 per cent of Chileans supported the students' demands.<sup>4</sup> Yet their criticism did not match the traditionally positive assessment of Chile's economic, social and political development since 1990. On the economic front, the country benefited from an average annual growth rate of 4.1 per cent between 1991 and 2005.<sup>5</sup> This allowed for the implementation of social programmes with significant results: between 1990 and 2006 poverty rates declined from 38.6 per cent to 13.7 per cent, and extreme poverty fell from 13 per cent to 3.2 per cent.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, among Latin American countries, Chile was top for most indicators of governance.<sup>7</sup> Finally, although the re-establishment of

<sup>2</sup> The Concertación is composed of the following political parties: Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party, PDC), Partido Socialista (Socialist Party, PS), Partido por la Democracia (Party for Democracy, PPD) and Partido Radical Socialdemócrata (Radical Social Democratic Party, PRSD).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Francisco Javier Díaz, senior policy adviser for President Michelle Bachelet, 11 Aug. 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and World Bank, *Revisión de políticas nacionales de educación: la educación superior en Chile* (Paris: OECD, 2009), p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Klaus Schmidt-Hebbel, 'Chile's Economic Growth', *Cuadernos de Economía*, 43 (May 2006), p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> MIDEPLAN, División Social, Encuesta CASEN 1990 and Encuesta CASEN 2006. Statistics available at [www.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/casen/Estadisticas/pobreza.html](http://www.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/casen/Estadisticas/pobreza.html).

<sup>7</sup> Chile outperforms any other Latin American country in the World Bank's governance indicators, which include dimensions such as voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption. See World Bank, *Governance Indicators for 1996–2002* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2002).

democracy had been accompanied by fears of an authoritarian reversal and considerable institutional constraints inherited from the military regime, Chile attracted attention for its political stability.<sup>8</sup> Given this apparently successful record, what motivated the Pingüinos to stage the largest protests since the return of democracy? How did secondary school students, a social group that in previous years had been regarded as disorganised and ineffectual, challenge the political order? And finally, in a context where civil society actors had commonly been excluded from defining the policy agenda, how did the Pingüino movement succeed in making education a top government priority?

The emergence of the Pingüino movement warrants examination. This article analyses the movement in light of the political and social challenges brought about by the double transition – from authoritarianism to democracy, and from a state-led economy to neoliberalism – that Chile has experienced during the last three decades. Constructing a more inclusive democracy, counteracting the most harmful effects of the neoliberal model and addressing social inequalities form part of this agenda. This set of challenges is shared by other Latin American countries and has been addressed by a variety of left-of-centre actors and parties.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the 1980s, when the challenge was to re-establish democracy in Chile and elsewhere in the region, the current contention lies much more in the domain of the *quality* of the existing democracies.<sup>10</sup> As Roberts asserts, since the late 1990s new actors have emerged that have ‘brought new voices into the public arena and revived seemingly dormant debates over development alternatives’.<sup>11</sup> So, while the 2006 Pingüino movement was a novelty in the Chilean context where prior mobilisations had been contained easily, similar phenomena have surfaced in the region as a whole.<sup>12</sup> These have been analysed in recent accounts in which

<sup>8</sup> Manuel Antonio Garretón, *Incomplete Democracy: Political Democratization in Chile and Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), p. 190.

<sup>9</sup> See Kurt Weyland, Raúl L. Madrid and Wendy Hunter (eds.), *Leftist Governments in Latin America: Successes and Shortcomings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Steven Levitsky and Kenneth M. Roberts (eds.), *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizens' Democracy* (New York: UNDP, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth M. Roberts, ‘The Mobilisation of Opposition to Economic Liberalization’, *Annual Review of Political Sciences*, 11 (2008), p. 328.

<sup>12</sup> There is a dearth of scholarly attention on the role played by Latin American student movements in democratisation. For the historical background of student movements in the region, see Jaime Pensado, ‘Student Activism: Utopian Dreams’, *ReVista – Harvard Review of Latin America* (autumn 2012). For the case of Brazil and the role of students in the impeachment on corruption charges of President Collor de Melo in 1992, see Ann Mische’s excellent work, *Partisan Publics: Communication and Contention across Brazilian Youth Activist Networks* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Chile is usually pointed out for its lack of social mobilisation.<sup>13</sup> Silva, who examines episodes of anti-neoliberal mobilisation in Latin America, argues that in the case of Chile, the combination of tempered market economics and policies that aimed at socio-economic and political inclusion is what ultimately explains the ‘conspicuous absence of contentious politics, let alone mass mobilisation’.<sup>14</sup> Through a detailed analysis of the Pingüino movement, this article sets out to depict the reconstruction of collective action in Chile and identify the limits of the Concertación’s governance formula.

From a theoretical point of view, this article attempts to surmount the false dichotomy between ‘new’ social movements, which are allegedly concerned with identity construction and symbolic demands, and ‘old’ social movements, which emerge around material demands and are based on class identities.<sup>15</sup> With this aim, the analysis takes its cue from the contentious politics framework proposed by Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, among others, which stresses the complementary nature of identity dimensions and material concerns involved in the emergence of social movements.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, this approach puts particular emphasis on the ways in which institutionalised political actors’ existence, action and structure are permeated by social movements.<sup>17</sup> Hence it seeks to explain the institutional framework in which social movement demands are negotiated and social and political actors develop differential capacities to produce change.<sup>18</sup> This diverges from the emphasis on subjectivity seen in the scholarship on ‘new’ social movements, which, as Silva rightly criticises, has exaggerated the importance of identity politics and overlooked the larger significance of mass mobilisation as such.<sup>19</sup>

Based on this theoretical perspective and on extensive interviews with the main actors involved in the unfolding of the Pingüino movement, the article is divided into five parts.<sup>20</sup> The first section revises the role played by the

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Eduardo Silva, *Challenging Neoliberalism in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of this debate, see Joe Foweraker, *Theorizing Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 1995); and Diane E. Davis, ‘The Power of Distance: Re-theorizing Social Movements in Latin America’, *Theory and Society*, 28 (1999), pp. 585–638.

<sup>16</sup> Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Doug McAdam, Sidney G. Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Jack Goldstone, ‘Introduction: Bridging Institutionalized and Noninstitutionalized Politics’, in Goldstone (ed.), *State, Parties, and Social Movements* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Peter P. Houtzager, ‘Introduction: From Polycentrism to the Polity’, in Peter P. Houtzager and Mick Moore (eds.), *Changing Paths: International Development and the New Politics of Inclusion* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Silva, *Challenging Neoliberalism*, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Interviews were conducted by the author between 2009 and 2011. All quotations from interviews are translated by the author.

students' mobilisation resources. This is followed by an analysis of the grievances created by the neoliberal education reforms that were introduced in the 1980s and continued throughout the 1990s and 2000s. This discontent, it is argued, formed the base for the movement's collective action frame. The third part links the emergence of the Pingüino movement to the opening of the structure of political opportunities involved in the 'bottom-up' discourse of the newly elected President Bachelet. The fourth section offers an integrated account of the processes that took place within the movement itself and of its interaction with the institutional terrain. The article concludes that several distinct but intertwined dimensions explain the emergence of the Pingüino movement. In 2006, a set of traditionally divided secondary school student organisations merged and adopted a more horizontal and participatory decision-making mechanism, which engaged many students. At the same time, the education reforms undertaken during the 1980s and 1990s were showing their limitations in terms of quality and equity, creating grievances that the well-prepared Pingüino leaders fed into the movement's collective action frame. Finally, President Bachelet's rhetoric about a 'government of citizens' as an attempt to counteract the elitist nature of the Concertación's governance formula signified an opening of the structure of political opportunities that the students managed to take advantage of. The implications of the case study are discussed briefly in the conclusion.

*'The More Democratic the Organisation Got Inside the Schools, the More People Joined': Mobilisation Resources and the Unfolding of the Pingüino Movement*

As Roberts points out, 'there is nothing automatic about the politicization of class cleavages or socioeconomic discontent, nor do common interests automatically engender class or social solidarity'.<sup>21</sup> Hence, a crucial question is *how* the 2006 Pingüinos organised in order to put forward their demands. To answer this, it is necessary to examine the movement's mobilisation resources, defined as the 'vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilise and engage in collective action'.<sup>22</sup> Such resources include the movements' leadership and their engagement with government officials and other political and social actors. A comprehensive analysis of this dimension also requires tracing the most important antecedents in these relations.

To be sure, annual protests, staged by both secondary school and university students, are a familiar feature of the Chilean political landscape.

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth M. Roberts, *Deepening Democracy? The Modern Left and Social Movements in Chile and Peru* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 3.

Starting in March, the academic year often begins with mobilisations, sometimes couched as a general criticism of the education system but mostly motivated by specific economic demands such as the costs of the university entry exam (Prueba de Selección Universitaria, PSU) and the school transport pass.

Until the beginning of the 2000s, two umbrella associations convened the secondary school students in the Chilean capital. A first group of students belonged to the Asamblea de Centros de Alumnos de Santiago (Assembly of Student Councils of Santiago, ACAS), which coordinated the school student councils based on a decree left over from the military regime. The authoritarian origin of the ACAS was highly criticised by the students.<sup>23</sup> For the most part, it was a second organisation, the Federación de Estudiantes Secundarios de Santiago (Federation of Secondary School Students of Santiago, FESES), that called for the demonstrations staged by the secondary school students when these took place. Yet, the hierarchical organisation of the FESES and its lack of an agenda on the students' everyday life issues resulted in a low capacity to convene.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in the opinion of many, the FESES was a mere expression of the official political parties' general guidelines.<sup>25</sup>

During 2000, the first year of Socialist President Ricardo Lagos' government, public transport fares rose considerably due to the introduction of automatic card readers. Students of different political factions organised in the so-called Frente Anti-Alzas (Anti-Increase Front), which paved the way for the creation of the Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios (Coordinating Assembly of Secondary School Students, ACES) in late 2000. The new organisation brought together diverse sectors that disapproved of both the ACAS and the FESES. Reacting against their hierarchic organisational form, a more horizontal methodology was proposed. This was expressed through the election of spokespersons instead of a president and the adoption of an assembly as a decision-making mechanism. Crucially, the ACES opened up to include representatives not only from the student councils but also from the *colectivos sociales* (social collectives). These were smaller groups of students that represented the 'inorganic' Left and that were characterised by their informal and loosely institutionalised organisation.<sup>26</sup> Many of these groups were present not only in the so-called 'emblematic schools', which spearheaded the new organisation, but also in the schools in

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Mochilazo leader Úrsula Schüler, 3 Nov. 2011.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Mochilazo leaders Daniela Moraga, 8 Nov. 2011; Víctor Orellana, 6 May 2011; and Julio Reyes, 15 Nov. 2011.

<sup>26</sup> 'Rebelión de las mochilas: quiénes son los escolares que sacuden Santiago', *La Segunda*, 12 April 2001.

the periphery.<sup>27</sup> In this way, the inclusion of the colectivos sociales in the ACES led to more students joining.<sup>28</sup>

In early April 2001, the more horizontal and participatory organisation proposed by the ACES proved effective in what became known as the *Mochilazo* protests.<sup>29</sup> The demand was to lower the price of the school transportation pass and to transfer its administration from the umbrella organisation of the private transport enterprises to the Ministry of Education.<sup>30</sup> After several weeks of demonstrations, some of which gathered up to 12,000 secondary school students, the Lagos administration gave into the movement's demands.<sup>31</sup> The Ministry of Education committed to administering and reducing the price of the school transportation pass.

In spite of its specific character, the students who spearheaded the *Mochilazo* considered it a significant accomplishment.<sup>32</sup> It certainly became an important reference point for the 2006 *Pingüino* movement.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the *Mochilazo* leaders admitted that mobilising more students for a broader agenda of education reforms was not a feasible goal at that time. Víctor Orellana, who played a prominent role in the 2001 protests, clarified: 'the idea was to have *one* victory and accumulate forces for future mobilisations'.<sup>34</sup> Besides, as Julio Reyes, the last president of the FESES before its dissolution, and later a member of the ACES, asserted:

In 2001, the reforms [of the Concertación] still had to show their merits. We did not criticise fundamental aspects of the system but rather the fact that we were not invited as an actor when the reforms were elaborated. We criticised the LOCE [Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza, Organic Constitutional Law on Teaching] for its authoritarian origin; not because we knew which aspects were contributing to inequality.<sup>35</sup>

As will be shown below, this was indeed a central difference to the 2006 *Pingüino* movement.

After 2001, the ACES became less active due to internal clashes. In the years ahead, however, it was common to see protests convened by secondary school

<sup>27</sup> The 'emblematic schools' are known for their demanding entry exams, their top education performance and for having instructed many prominent political leaders. A paradigmatic example is the Instituto Nacional in Santiago.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Úrsula Schüller.

<sup>29</sup> *Mochilazo* is derived from *mochila*, which means 'backpack'.

<sup>30</sup> Andrea Domedel and Macarena Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos* (Santiago: Ediciones Radio Universidad de Chile, 2008), p. 48.

<sup>31</sup> '¡Mochilazo! Qué hay detrás de las sorprendentes manifestaciones estudiantiles: sus líderes, el cambio de estrategia del gobierno y cómo lo ven sociólogos e historiador', *Revista Qué Pasa*, 1566 (April 2001), pp. 22–4.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Úrsula Schüller, Julio Reyes and Daniela Moraga.

<sup>33</sup> Interviews with *Pingüino* movement leaders César Valenzuela, 15 Aug. 2009; and Karina Delfino, 5 Aug. 2009.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Víctor Orellana.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Julio Reyes.

students against the deteriorating infrastructure of the schools, rising transport fees and other specific issues. The Secretaría Regional Ministerial de Educación (Regional Ministerial Secretariat of Education, SEREMI of Education) of the Santiago Metropolitan Region was in charge of resolving the annual clashes with the students.<sup>36</sup> For the most part, demonstrations were followed by internal divisions in the representative bodies of the secondary school students. As a result, the Ministry of Education officials ‘did not know with whom to negotiate’.<sup>37</sup> Any dialogue with the students had limited success due to the nature of the student organisation.<sup>38</sup>

Tired of ‘initiating a dialogue from scratch’ every year, the director of the SEREMI of Education set up a more permanent dialogue platform in 2005.<sup>39</sup> Conscious of the partial representation that the ACAS provided, the director also invited the ACES, which still included the *colectivos sociales*. Weekly meetings held between April and December 2005 culminated in a written proposal that defined a short-term and a long-term agenda for education reforms.<sup>40</sup> While the former included specific matters such as the cost of public transport and food allowances for the most vulnerable students, the latter centred on the need to reform the general institutional frame of the education system, i.e., the LOCE. The proposal, however, was soon forgotten by the government due to the presidential elections in late 2005 and the formation of a new Concertación government in March 2006. When it became evident that the new minister of education, Martín Zilic, ‘did not have a clue about the existence of the proposal’, secondary school students were infuriated.<sup>41</sup>

The dialogue set up by the SEREMI of Education in 2005 would turn out to have additional unintended consequences. It trained the leaders of the 2006 Pingüino movement in how to liaise with the government authorities. Additionally, it gave the students more expertise on the problems within the education system, and this, in contrast to the 2001 Mochilazo, made the Pingüino movement’s demands much more focused on the structural problems of the system as whole.<sup>42</sup> As one university student leader noted,

<sup>36</sup> With a few exceptions, all ministries have a SEREMI in each region to represent and implement the ministries’ policies at the regional level. As was the case with the SEREMI of Education for the Metropolitan Region, the SEREMIs also often fulfil the task of solving conflicts that emerge in the region for which they are responsible.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with 2005 sub-secretary of education Pedro Montt, 20 Aug. 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Interviews with Pedro Montt and César Valenzuela; interview with education adviser José Weinstein, 18 Aug. 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Alejandro Traverso, director of the SEREMI of Education, 27 Dec. 2011.

<sup>40</sup> This resulted in the document ‘Propuesta de trabajo de estudiantes e la Región Metropolitana’ (2005), available at [www.opech.cl/bibliografico/doc\\_movest/finalccaa.pdf](http://www.opech.cl/bibliografico/doc_movest/finalccaa.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> Interview with 2006 Pingüino leader María Jesús Sanhueza, 28 July 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Interviews with Marco Cuevas and Cristóbal Leiva, 2 and 3 Jan. 2011 respectively. Cuevas and Leiva worked at the SEREMI of Education in 2005 and were in charge of the dialogue platform.



while the secondary school students had traditionally been more reactive to the government's reforms than active in proposing changes, the experience gained in 2005 allowed them to proactively build an agenda that emphasised the quality of education.<sup>43</sup> Finally, the regular meetings at the Ministry of Education helped to organise the students and provided a forum for them to make each others' acquaintance. The dialogue platform thus contributed to the construction of social networks and a resonant collective action frame, which, following Tarrow's definition of a social movement, constitute the necessary elements for maintaining a sustained challenge against powerful opponents.<sup>44</sup>

In late December 2005, the *Coordinación Revolucionaria de Estudiantes Autónomos* (Revolutionary Coordination of Autonomous Students, CREA) – one of the most influential *colectivos sociales* within the ACES – convened an open assembly and invited leaders of the ACAS. As some interviewees note, the habitually opposing agendas of the ACAS and ACES were put aside at this key reunion.<sup>45</sup> There was a generalised sense of disappointment about the forgotten proposal that the students had worked on in 2005. Spurred by this, the students decided to join forces and create a single organisation, the *Asamblea de Estudiantes Secundarios de Santiago* (Assembly of Secondary School Students of Santiago, AES) – and the 'Pingüino revolution' began.

In terms of internal structure, the AES adopted the ACES' non-hierarchical decision-making mechanisms and model of leadership. In the words of one of the Pingüino leaders, the experience of the ACES had demonstrated that 'the more democratic the organisation got inside the schools, the more people joined', and that 'the assembly as a mechanism of participation was extremely valued by the average student'.<sup>46</sup> In view of this, and as a way of reflecting the power balances between the different sectors of the organisation, the assembly elected four spokespersons. Two of them, César Valenzuela and Karina Delfino, were linked to the ACAS and had strong ties to the Socialist Party. The other two, Juan Carlos Herrera and María Jesús Sanhueza, were associated with the ACES instead; the latter had previously been a member of the Communist Party. Other leading figures from the most famous 'emblematic schools' included sympathisers of the *Unión Demócrata Independiente* (Democratic Independent Union, UDI), Chile's strongest right-wing party. The most noticeable faces were all enrolled in municipal schools. With the exception of Sanhueza, the spokespersons were in their final

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Giorgio Boccardo, director of communications for the *Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Chile* (Student Union of the University of Chile) in 2006 and president of the federation in 2007, 17 Aug. 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Interviews with María Jesús Sanhueza and Karina Delfino.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

year and hence not more than 18 years old. Considering their young age, these leaders already had considerable political experience, which three of them had at least partly gained in the 2005 dialogue platform set up by the SEREMI of Education.

The resulting internal structure of the organisation had several implications for the evolution of the Pingüino movement. First, when the movement gained force, the many political interests represented by the spokespersons made it more difficult for a specific political party to attempt to co-opt it.<sup>47</sup> Secondly, the breadth of the political spectrum had a positive impact on public opinion, and thus helped to legitimise the movement. As one university student leader contends, 'the Pingüinos got rid of the stigma that characterises mobilisations merely as a left-wing thing. This protected them and contributed to gaining the support of public opinion.'<sup>48</sup> Thirdly, the weight that the ACES had in the AES meant that greater capacity for mobilisation was incorporated into the organisation. Much as in 2001, the sphere of influence of the *colectivos sociales* went beyond the 'emblematic schools', which traditionally mobilised secondary school students. Herrera, one of the four spokespersons, played a key role in giving a voice to the schools at the periphery of Santiago in the work of the assembly.<sup>49</sup>

The organisational features adopted in 2006 certainly played a central role as a vehicle for mobilising secondary school students in collective action. Equally important, however, was the strategic use of different forms of protest, through which more students engaged in the demands of the movement. It was only when the Pingüinos saw an increase in their numbers – and a consequent increase in their bargaining power – that more structural demands such as the abolition of the LOCE could be incorporated into their petition to the government.

What grew into the Pingüino movement started in late April 2006 with some scattered protests in Lota, a small ex-mining town next to Concepción in southern Chile.<sup>50</sup> The autumn had started with some major downpours, which caused the roof of one public school to collapse and triggered a demonstration. In Santiago, the AES convened a march to protest against the infrastructural problems faced by many public schools, gathering around 4,000 students.<sup>51</sup> More demonstrations followed over the subsequent days, which coincided with the delayed delivery of the school transport card. Later, the high cost of the PSU and problems related to the length of the school day were incorporated into the students' complaints. After several days

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Pedro Montt.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Giorgio Boccardo.

<sup>49</sup> Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, p. 79.

<sup>50</sup> 'Lota: Violenta protesta estudiantil', *El Mercurio*, 26 April 2006.

<sup>51</sup> 'Protesta estudiantil termina con 47 personas detenidas', *La Tercera*, 27 April 2006.

of mobilisation, a national strike was convened for 10 May. A march in Santiago started peacefully but concluded with violent clashes with the police and significant damage to public spaces: 930 people were detained in Santiago and another 357 in the rest of the country.<sup>52</sup> The students were markedly portrayed as vandals in the media.<sup>53</sup> In an editorial of *El Mercurio*, for example, the right-wing newspaper expressed that ‘it is inevitable to presume that, eventually, a strategy of ... anti-systemic agitation such as the ones observed in the 1960s and 1970s might be brewing or even being applied within the extreme Left’.<sup>54</sup>

The negative press coverage led to a change of strategy and the initiation of school sit-ins, starting with three of the most famous ‘emblematic schools’ in Santiago. On 21 May 2006, the annual presidential address to Parliament was due, and the students were eager to see if the president would refer to their demands. However, Bachelet brushed them aside, and this increased the Pingüinos’ discontent. As a result, school sit-ins multiplied throughout the country, ‘spreading like flames’.<sup>55</sup> In the words of one of Pingüino spokesperson, from this point onwards ‘everybody wanted to jump on the bandwagon of the movement’.<sup>56</sup>

The development of the mobilisations became a cause of concern at the Ministry of Education, which tried to reach an agreement with the students on several occasions. One of these attempts was made on 29 May, with over 130,000 students paralysing the country’s secondary schools.<sup>57</sup> This crucial day, however, began with the minister of education announcing that the sub-secretary would conduct the negotiation instead of him. This decision was poorly received by the Pingüinos. In their account, this was an attempt to return the discussion to a more technical domain, in which the arguments of the education experts would gain more weight than theirs. ‘We don’t want to speak with technocrats, because the solutions are political’, the student leaders declared.<sup>58</sup> The students abandoned negotiations with the authorities, and the biggest protest to that day took place on 30 May. Nearly one million students and sympathisers of the movement participated in demonstrations across the country, making this protest the largest of its kind since the re-establishment of democracy in Chile in 1990.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, p. 15. <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>54</sup> ‘¿Más que disturbios y protestas?’, *El Mercurio*, 12 May 2006, quoted in Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, p. 24. <sup>55</sup> Interview with Karina Delfino.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with César Valenzuela.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Negociación bajo presión’, *El Mercurio*, 30 May 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Karina Delfino, quoted in Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, p. 108.

<sup>59</sup> Mary Rose Kubal, ‘Challenging Consensus: The Politics of Protests and Policy Reform in Chile’s Education System’, in Silvia Borzutzky and Gregory B. Weeks (eds.), *The Bachelet Government: Conflict and Consensus in Post-Pinochet Chile* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010), p. 118.

This scenario forced the government to issue a firm response. On 1 June, through a TV broadcast, President Bachelet addressed the nation, declaring that the government would meet the *Pingüinos*' short-term demands such as extended hours for the school transportation card and scholarships to pay the PSU fees. As for the long-term demands, she announced that the Advisory Commission on the Quality of Education would be created to discuss reforms to the LOCE, the 'full school day' and the administration of the schools. In contrast to a previous commission on pension reform set up by the Bachelet government, which was entirely composed of experts on social security, the origins of the new Commission compelled the authorities to invite both members of the *Pingüino* movement and other actors from the sphere of education.<sup>60</sup>

Together with fatigue and previous tensions, the government's offer left the movement dispirited and in disarray. Facing the decision of how to respond, the internal factions and competing discourses within the AES that had been skilfully balanced throughout the mobilisations were unearthed. The broad spectrum of interests that had previously served to strengthen the movement now contributed to its division. This split impeded a common stand on the LOCE; while the students identified the LOCE as the source of the problems within the education system, they did not necessarily have a common agenda for reform. The slogan 'Sólo sé que no LOCE' – a rhyme that literally translates as 'I only know, no LOCE' – had been seen frequently on banners during the marches and school takeovers. As one of the movement spokespeople asserted, 'while there was an unspoken agreement between everyone about asking for the abolition of the LOCE, nobody ever said exactly *what* we wanted to change'.<sup>61</sup> There was a reason for this lack of discussion. As an experienced university student leader observed, 'ultimately, while material demands are transversal, political demands always divide'.<sup>62</sup> Other factors such as the fast pace of the movement's proliferation also explain the lack of debate on the law. With so many students mobilised, it did not seem to be the right time for internal negotiations and definitions of what to demand. Clearly, as one of the *Pingüino* spokespersons expressed, 'fervency is not a good space for reflection'.<sup>63</sup>

The divisions crystallised when the students that had decided to continue the mobilisations called for a general strike on 5 June, in which the extreme Left movement Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez participated. This was strongly disapproved of by the movement's Concertación-friendly sectors,

<sup>60</sup> Carolina Aguilera, 'Participación ciudadana en el gobierno de Bachelet: consejos asesores presidenciales', *América Latina Hoy*, 46 (2007), p. 128.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with César Valenzuela. <sup>62</sup> Interview with Giorgio Boccardo.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with 2006 *Pingüino* leader Juan Carlos Herrera, 20 July 2009.

causing the resignation of César Valenzuela and Karina Delfino, two of the spokespersons. After more than one month of school sit-ins, the split was further reinforced by tiredness and eagerness to return to normality. Moreover, the radicalisation of the protests and the government's efforts to channel the conflict through the creation of the Commission contributed to a gradual process of delegitimation of both the Pingüinos and the protests as a mechanism to vent their discontent. Yet, while the movement had lost momentum, education had become a central issue on the public agenda and a policy priority for the government.

*'Everything for Them, Nothing for Us': The Segregating Effects of the Education System and the Pingüino Movement's Construction of a Collective Action Frame*

As important as the organisational features and forms of claim-making may be to explain the rise of the Pingüino movement, it is also necessary to refer to the crucial role played by its collective action frame. Through this frame the students elaborated a shared understanding of the world and of themselves, thus legitimising and motivating collective action.<sup>64</sup> There are both agency and structural dimensions involved in the construction of collective action frames. As Gamson and Meyer cogently argue, they are 'on the one hand, part of the world, passive and structured; on the other, people are active in constructing them'.<sup>65</sup> Hence, a revision of the framing processes in the case of the Pingüino movement requires an analysis of both the structural elements that it reacted against and the strategic efforts made by the movement participants in outlining a common diagnosis.

So, which features of the Chilean education system created the grievances that became the rallying cry of the Pingüino movement in 2006? As mentioned, a recurrent criticism since the re-establishment of democracy was the education system's authoritarian origin. By promulgating the LOCE on its last day in office, the military regime had 'locked in' the sweeping education reforms of the 1980s. These reforms had been modelled closely on the neoliberal paradigm, which was embraced by key policy-makers of the military regime, famously referred to as the 'Chicago Boys'.<sup>66</sup> In 1981, Chile became the first country in the world to introduce the 'education voucher' – originally

<sup>64</sup> Here I am following the definition proposed in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 'Introduction', in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> William Gamson and David S. Meyer, 'Framing Political Opportunity', in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 276.

<sup>66</sup> Eduardo Silva, 'Capitalist Coalitions, the State, and Neoliberal Economic Restructuring: Chile, 1973–88', *World Politics*, 45: 4 (July 1993), pp. 526–59.

proposed by Milton Friedman – on a national scale.<sup>67</sup> The voucher, the value of which is calculated based on the monthly average student attendance, is paid for by the Ministry of Education. This scheme offered strong incentives for the creation of a private market in education because it paid the state subsidy to both public and privately administrated schools.<sup>68</sup> As one of the conditions put on payment of the subsidy by the Ministry of Education was that the school did not charge fees, some private schools stayed out of the voucher scheme.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, subsidised private schools started to proliferate. As a result, the education system's three main administrative categories became public schools, subsidised private schools and private schools without any state funding. The fact that the voucher system made no distinction between public and subsidised private schools, the neoliberal argument went, gave parents more choice on where to enrol their children.<sup>70</sup> The voucher system was also believed to provide a mechanism of accountability and guarantee for the quality of education, as schools that failed to show good results would see their students being enrolled elsewhere.<sup>71</sup>

Based on further prescriptions of the neoliberal devotees, the expansion of the private education market was coupled with a process of decentralisation.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, functions of the Ministry of Education such as the management of schools were delegated to municipal governments. The ministry was kept in charge of the curriculum and the assessment of students.<sup>73</sup>

Between 1981 and 1990, student enrolment in subsidised private schools increased from 15.1 per cent to 32.4 per cent.<sup>74</sup> This expansion was at the expense of public schools.<sup>75</sup> The percentage of students enrolled in municipal education declined from 78 per cent in 1981 to 57.8 per cent

<sup>67</sup> Cristián Cox, 'Las políticas educacionales de Chile en las últimas dos décadas del siglo XX', in Cox (ed.), *Políticas educacionales en el cambio de siglo: la reforma del sistema escolar de Chile* (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 2005), p. 25.

<sup>68</sup> Cristián Cox, 'Education Reform in Chile: Context, Content and Implementation', Paper No. 8, Programa de Promoción de la Reforma Educativa en la América Latina occasional paper series (Aug. 1997), p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> As will be explained later, this changed with the introduction of a co-financing scheme in 1993, through which subsidised private schools could start charging fees and still receive the voucher.

<sup>70</sup> Ann Matear, 'Equity in Education in Chile: The Tensions between Policy and Practice', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 27 (2007), p. 104.

<sup>71</sup> Martin Carnoy, 'National Voucher Plans in Chile and Sweden: Did Privatization Reforms Make for Better Education?', *Comparative Education Review*, 42: 3 (Aug. 1998), p. 309.

<sup>72</sup> Mary Rose Kubal, 'Contradictions and Constraints in Chile's Health Care and Education Decentralization', *Latin American Politics and Society*, 48: 4 (Dec. 2006), p. 113.

<sup>73</sup> Matear, 'Equity in Education', p. 104.

<sup>74</sup> Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 'Indicadores de la educación en Chile 2003–2004', p. 35, available at [www.mineduc.cl/usuarios/mineduc/doc/200603301234090.indc\\_nacionales.pdf](http://www.mineduc.cl/usuarios/mineduc/doc/200603301234090.indc_nacionales.pdf).

<sup>75</sup> Florencia Torche, 'Privatization and Inequality of Educational Opportunity: The Case of Chile', *Sociology of Education*, 78 (Oct. 2005), p. 322.

in 1990.<sup>76</sup> As the newly created subsidised private schools mostly spread in urban and highly populated areas, they attracted middle-income families that could not afford the private non-subsidised schools.<sup>77</sup> The economic crisis of the early 1980s and the drop in public expenditure on education further led parents to enrol their children in private subsidised schools.<sup>78</sup> The reduction in the number of students in public schools continued in the 1990s under the Concertación governments. In 2006, 46.8 per cent of the student population enrolled in public schools, 45 per cent in subsidised private schools and 6.7 per cent in private schools without state funding.<sup>79</sup>

Given the power constellation in Parliament when the Concertación took over in 1990, major changes to the education system described above were seen as unviable.<sup>80</sup> In the context of the tense political situation in which the first democratic government operated, the leaders of the centre-left coalition considered it necessary to apply a non-conflictive approach to policy-making in education.<sup>81</sup> Forced to rely on the education system bequeathed to it by the military regime, the Concertación's main objective became the introduction of equity- and quality-enhancing reforms.<sup>82</sup> Sidestepping complicated processes of negotiation, the Concertación often elaborated education reforms that could be implemented by executive order.<sup>83</sup> These changes frequently involved additional resources, an issue that brought together the interests of families, teachers, the executive and the legislature.<sup>84</sup> Public expenditure on education as a share of GDP increased from 2.4 per cent in 1990 to 3.4 per cent in 2006.<sup>85</sup> After 1993, private contributions to

<sup>76</sup> Ministerio de Educación, 'Indicadores 2003–2004', p. 35.

<sup>77</sup> Torche, 'Privatization and Inequality', p. 322.

<sup>78</sup> Matear, 'Equity in Education', p. 104.

<sup>79</sup> Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 'Indicadores de educación en Chile 2006', p. 29, available at [w3app.mineduc.cl/mineduc/ded/documentos/Indicadores\\_2006\\_Capitulos\\_1\\_a\\_III.pdf](http://w3app.mineduc.cl/mineduc/ded/documentos/Indicadores_2006_Capitulos_1_a_III.pdf).

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Cristián Cox, senior policy-maker at the Ministry of Education during the 1990s, 28 Aug. 2009.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* Arguably, the exception to this was the introduction of the Estatuto Docente (Teachers' Statute) in 1991, which sought to centralise and improve teachers' working conditions. See Guy Burton, 'Hegemony and Frustration: Education Policy Making in Chile Under the Concertación, 1990–2010', *Latin American Perspectives*, 39: 4 (2012), p. 39.

<sup>82</sup> Cox, 'Las políticas educacionales', pp. 33–6. A key policy in this regard was the Programa de Mejoramiento de la Calidad y Equidad de la Educación (Secondary Education Quality and Equity Improvement Programme, MECE), which aimed at upgrading the material basis for learning and supporting the teachers in their work. It is important to note that while this programme followed an incremental approach, eventually the whole intended school population was reached.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>84</sup> Alejandra Mizala, 'La economía política de la reforma educacional', Serie Estudios Socio/Económicos CIEPLAN (2007), p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 'Indicadores 2006', p. 39. Spending per student is still below the OECD average of 5.8 per cent as a share of GDP. Guy Burton, 'Social Democracy in Latin America: Policymakers and Education Reform in Brazil and Chile', unpubl. PhD diss., London School of Economics, 2009, p. 117.

education also increased. In exchange for passing a tax reform in Parliament, the Concertación conceded a proposal from the Right to integrate a co-financing scheme in state-subsidised schools through which parents could be charged.<sup>86</sup>

To be sure, there was significant progress in the development of the education system between 1990 and 2006. The working conditions of teachers and their professional development improved, as did school infrastructure and supplies. The curriculum reform in 1996 and the introduction of the 'full school day' in 1997 signified considerable changes to the content taught in schools and an increase in hours of learning per day. Crucially, the percentage of Chileans with secondary school education increased from 79.8 per cent in 1990 to 96.5 per cent in 2006, figures that are significantly above those of most other Latin American countries.<sup>87</sup> This increase took place in all income groups, but it was most marked in the two poorest quintiles.<sup>88</sup>

Yet, as the Pinguinos pointed out time and again in 2006, the Concertación had failed to deliver on what had constituted its most essential pledge: to improve equity in the education system. While more secondary school students than ever before were being educated, there were important differences in the quality of the education provided by the three main administrative categories of the education system. This variation is unveiled when examining each category's performance in the PSU. In 2006, more than 90 per cent of students from private schools got over 450 points.<sup>89</sup> The equivalent percentages were 69 per cent for subsidised private schools and 58.4 per cent for municipal schools.<sup>90</sup> In the words of María Huerta, who was enrolled at a public school and was one of the most visible faces of the 2006 mobilisations, 'we felt tired of confirming that we did worse than the students from private schools on the PSU'.<sup>91</sup> The disparity in the quality of education expressed in the PSU results is translated into differential access to higher education institutions. As there is a huge variance in the rate of return of higher education degrees, this has a great impact on income

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>87</sup> Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 'Indicadores 2006', p. 26. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Organización para Estados Iberoamericanos (OEI), *Metas educativas 2021: estudios de costo* (Santiago: ECLAC/OEI, 2009), pp. 39–42.

<sup>88</sup> Cristián Cox, 'Policy Formation and Implementation in Secondary Education Reform: The Case of Chile at the Turn of the Century', World Bank Education Working Paper no. 3 (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006), p. 81.

<sup>89</sup> Departamento de Evaluación, Medición, y Registro Educacional, 'Compendio estadístico proceso de admisión año académico 2006', available at [www.demre.cl/text/pdf/p2006/compendio2006.pdf](http://www.demre.cl/text/pdf/p2006/compendio2006.pdf).

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> María Huerta, quoted in Juan Eduardo García-Huidobro, '¿Qué nos dicen las movilizaciones estudiantiles del 2006 de la visión de los estudiantes sobre la educación secundaria?' (2007), unpubl. paper, p. 6.



inequality.<sup>92</sup> As one Pingüino leader put it: ‘you feel that you are almost ... I don’t want to be deterministic ... but that you are destined to something. That if you go to school A68 [a municipal school] you are destined to get 400 points in the university entry exam and then the rest is determined.’<sup>93</sup>

The education system and the differences between the quality of public and private education had laid the ground for polarised realities. ‘Everything for them, nothing for us’ was perhaps one of the Pingüino movement’s most succinct catchphrases, tellingly expressing clear notions of ‘us’ and ‘them’. The conviction of the students was that the LOCE needed to be replaced by an institutional frame that privileged public education. This would translate into better education for them and, consequently, into better chances to access higher education. Nonetheless, the abolition of the LOCE was not initially on the movement’s agenda.<sup>94</sup> Based on previous experiences, the 2006 leaders knew full well that more immediate demands mobilised secondary school students. So, the Pingüinos’ first petition included the reduction of the cost of the school transport pass and a free-of-charge PSU. The successful appeal of the first demonstrations in Santiago validated the Pingüino leaders’ strategy of engaging more people by demanding action on specific issues that influenced students’ everyday lives. Thus long-term demands such as the overhaul of the LOCE and the municipal-based education system could be incorporated.

Including the LOCE in the Pingüinos’ petition was part of what social movement scholars refer to as frame amplification.<sup>95</sup> This involves clarifying the relationship between the different concepts within an interpretative frame; in this case the LOCE, the quality of education, and inequality. In the words of a senior policy-maker of the Ministry of Education: ‘[The Pingüino movement] was a very peculiar movement because it called for *quality* education. And they managed to embody a very simple idea in a law’.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, the students were critical of the neoliberal logic of the voucher system, which signified that ‘anyone can open an educational institution and profit from the state subsidy’.<sup>97</sup> More generally, as illustrated by one of the movement’s most popular slogans – ‘We are students, not clients’ – the Pingüinos rejected the privatisation of the education system promoted by the LOCE. The common diagnosis was that the neoliberal principles that guided

<sup>92</sup> OECD and World Bank, *Revisión de políticas*, p. 47.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Karina Delfino.

<sup>94</sup> Interviews with Karina Delfino and María Jesús Sanhueza.

<sup>95</sup> David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford, Steven K. Worden and Robert D. Benford, ‘Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilisation, and Movement Participation’, *American Sociological Review*, 51: 4 (1986), p. 469.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Pedro Montt.

<sup>97</sup> María Huerta quoted in García-Huidobro, ‘¿Qué nos dicen las movilizaciones estudiantiles?’, p. 8.

the education system contributed to the segregation of the students according to their capacity to pay for private education.

*'We Knew that this Was the Moment': The 'Bottom-Up' Discourse of President Bachelet and the Emergence of the Pingüino Movement*

As noted in the introduction, the post-transition scenario in Chile was characterised by very limited input from social movements into the policy agenda. What made 2006 different in this regard? Answering this question requires that we examine the Concertación's governance formula and the ascension of Michelle Bachelet in an attempt to address its elite-centred nature. This development, it is argued, signified an opening of the structure of political opportunities. The latter is conceived of here as 'consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national – signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements'.<sup>98</sup> As will be stressed, the emphasis on signals implies a subjective notion of structure of political opportunities according to which no opportunity will induce mobilisation unless it is *perceived* to do so.<sup>99</sup> In other words, features of the political environment are only political opportunities if they change social movements' expectations for success or failure.<sup>100</sup>

In the case of Chile, the origins of the Concertación's governance formula that defined the impact of social movements on the policy-making process can be traced back to the institutional constraints that resulted from the country's negotiated transition to democracy.<sup>101</sup> In 1990, after 17 years of authoritarian rule, General Pinochet still benefited from considerable support.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, the 1980 Constitution defined a binominal electoral system that favoured the right-wing parties and forced coalition-building to the detriment of minority

<sup>98</sup> Sidney Tarrow, 'States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements', in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 54, emphasis added.

<sup>99</sup> McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, p. 43.

<sup>100</sup> Karl-Dieter Opp, *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique, and Synthesis* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 169.

<sup>101</sup> See Philip D. Oxhorn, *Organizing Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy in Chile* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), pp. 243–4; and Marcelo Cavarozzi, 'Patterns of Elite Negotiation and Confrontation in Argentina and Chile', in John Higley and Richard Gunther (eds.), *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 208–36. For an overview of the institutional constraints faced by the Concertación governments, see Alan Angell, *Democracy after Pinochet: Politics, Parties and Elections in Chile* (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2007).

<sup>102</sup> It is worth noting that 44 per cent of the population voted for General Pinochet to remain in power in the 1989 plebiscite that led Chile back to democracy.

parties.<sup>103</sup> It also included what has been referred to as 'authoritarian enclaves', which, amongst other things, established the appointment of nine designated senators from institutions that were strongly influenced by the military.<sup>104</sup>

These features convinced the Concertación leaders that moderation and consensus-seeking were necessary conditions for balancing power and avoiding an authoritarian reversal. Conflict and social mobilisation were considered counterproductive to democratic consolidation, and governability became one of the key pillars of their political project.<sup>105</sup> In this vein, the political parties of the Concertación discouraged grassroots participation as a strategic response to assure democracy.<sup>106</sup> In addition, the experiences of imprisonment and exile that many politicians had gone through after the military coup led to an important process of political learning and the construction of a moderate Left.<sup>107</sup> The Concertación parties no longer sought to base their constituency on political mobilisation.<sup>108</sup> Instead, the centre-left coalition embraced a liberal democratic governance approach in which the space for popular participation in the political process was restricted to the electoral arena.<sup>109</sup>

The Concertación also needed to allay the apprehensions of the economic elites and reassure them that there would not be any drastic change to the economic model.<sup>110</sup> While the party leaders did not subscribe fully to the neoliberal model that the military regime had introduced in the 1980s, they were wary of killing the goose that could lay the golden egg.<sup>111</sup> Hence, when

<sup>103</sup> Alan Angell and Cristóbal Reig, 'Change or Continuity? The Chilean Elections of 2005/2006', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 25: 4 (2006), p. 496.

<sup>104</sup> This was abolished in 2005 during the presidency of Ricardo Lagos. Additionally, the president regained the power to appoint and remove the authorities of the different branches of the armed forces.

<sup>105</sup> Patricio Silva, 'Doing Politics in a Depoliticised Society: Social Change and Political Deactivation in Chile', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 23: 1 (2004), p. 70; Oscar Muñoz, *El modelo económico de la Concertación 1990–2005* (Santiago: FLACSO, 2007).

<sup>106</sup> Patricia L. Hipsher, 'Democratization and the Decline of Urban Social Movements in Chile and Spain', *Comparative Politics*, 28: 3 (April 1996), p. 274; Roberts, *Deepening Democracy?*, p. 120.

<sup>107</sup> Nancy Bermeo, 'Democracy and the Lessons of Dictatorship', *Comparative Politics*, 24: 3 (1992), p. 278; Roberts, *Deepening Democracy?*, pp. 98–105.

<sup>108</sup> Silva, 'Doing Politics in a Depoliticised Society', p. 70.

<sup>109</sup> Kenneth M. Roberts, 'Chile: The Left after Neoliberalism', in Levitsky and Roberts (eds.), *The Resurgence*, p. 325.

<sup>110</sup> Peter M. Siavelis, 'Enclaves de la transición y democracia chilena', *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 29: 1 (2009), p. 16.

<sup>111</sup> Another reason why the Concertación did not seek to introduce major changes to the economic model is that there was a dearth of alternative options. The Socialist Party, the principal left-wing force within the Concertación, had reassessed the possibilities of democracy but put much less effort into elaborating an economic alternative to neoliberalism. Kenneth M. Roberts, 'Rethinking Economic Alternatives: Left Parties and the Articulation of Popular Demands in Chile and Peru', in Douglas Chalmers, Carlos M. Vilas, Katherine Hite, Scott B. Martin, Kerianne Piester and Monique Segarra (eds.),

it took over in 1990, the coalition decided to maintain the economic model and complement it with aggressive social welfare policies.<sup>112</sup> This resulted in the social liberal approach to policy which became the hallmark of the Concertación governments, continuing during the presidencies of Socialists Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet.<sup>113</sup>

As Roberts argues, the governance approach and policy orientation pursued by the Concertación contributed to Chile's political and economic stability, 'but at the price of abandoning commitments to more far-reaching change'.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, under the gloss of success, there were signs of citizen discontent with the development path undertaken by the country. In 2001, when Chileans were asked if they felt like 'losers' or 'winners' of the economic development of the country, 52 per cent stated that they felt like 'losers', compared with 38 per cent who thought of themselves as 'winners'.<sup>115</sup> Dissatisfaction with the functioning of the democratic regime was also apparent. In 2005, 47 per cent of Chileans were 'not very satisfied' or 'not satisfied at all' with the overall functioning of the democratic regime.<sup>116</sup> Only 21 per cent thought that the political parties were doing a 'very good' or 'good' job in 2006.<sup>117</sup> Electoral participation waned steadily from 85 per cent in the 1989 elections to 63 per cent in 2005.<sup>118</sup>

Michelle Bachelet's 2005 presidential campaign focused on addressing these signs of discontent. Given that her candidacy had been driven by the polls rather than the decisions of narrow party elites, her presidential campaign promoted her as a candidate of 'the people'. Her candidacy was explicitly conceived of as a departure from the elite-centred governance formula of the Concertación.<sup>119</sup> As one of her campaign advisers asserted, 'she embodied a strong demand for renewal of the governing elites ... people were tired of the traditional political class'.<sup>120</sup> Seeking to be coherent with this, her electoral

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*The New Politics of Inequality: Rethinking Participation and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 313.

<sup>112</sup> Angell, *Democracy after Pinochet*, p. 193.

<sup>113</sup> Kenneth M. Roberts, 'Chile: The Left after Neoliberalism', p. 325.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Desarrollo humano en Chile. Nosotros los chilenos: un desafío cultural* (Santiago: UNDP, 2002), p. 257.

<sup>116</sup> Latinobarómetro Report 2005, p. 53.

<sup>117</sup> Latinobarómetro Report 2006, p. 80.

<sup>118</sup> Rodrigo Márquez and Carolina Moreno, 'Desarrollo sin ciudadanos: el "modelo" chileno de los últimos veinte años', in Felipe Calderón (ed.), *Ciudadanía y desarrollo humano* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores, 2006), p. 279. It should be clarified that voting has been conditioned to prior inscription, which arguably constitutes a disincentive for voting. This changed in December 2011, when automatic inscription was approved in Parliament.

<sup>119</sup> For a useful discussion on the Chilean elite, see Alfredo Joignant, 'The Politics of Technopols: Resources, Political Competence and Collective Leadership in Chile, 1990–2010', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 43: 3 (2011), pp. 517–46.

<sup>120</sup> Interview with Francisco Javier Díaz.

promises included the appointment of ‘new faces’, i.e., politicians from outside the party elites that had not occupied key positions in the previous governments.<sup>121</sup> She also committed to addressing the difficulties posed by the Concertación’s governance formula by introducing a strong emphasis on participation and consultation.<sup>122</sup> In her own words, ‘a country’s vision is not constructed behind closed doors; it is constructed with everybody’s opinions’.<sup>123</sup>

Expectations of President Bachelet were high, and her ‘new’ political style undoubtedly had a series of consequences for the unfolding of the Pingüino movement. First, although the student uprising emerged too early after Bachelet’s ascension to benefit from any concrete initiative to foster citizen participation, at a discursive level the new government was signalling its willingness to open up spaces for citizen participation. From the perspective of the movement’s participants, there was a clear awareness of what the new administration’s political style might mean for any mobilisation effort. The rise of the Pingüinos provided an excellent opportunity to scrutinise whether the government would keep its promise and put Bachelet’s ‘bottom-up’ discourse into practice. As one of the student leaders explained, ‘we all said: “Bachelet can’t just throw the police on us, her whole citizen discourse would have been destroyed.” We knew that this was the moment ... thus the idea was to take advantage of it as much as possible.’<sup>124</sup> The quote illustrates that the Pingüinos were aware of the possibilities opened up by the new government’s rhetoric of citizen participation. It also shows clearly that, as Gamson and Meyer note, ‘opportunities sometimes present themselves with no movement provenance, but movements are active in structuring and creating political opportunity’.<sup>125</sup>

Second, in the context of the proposed ‘bottom-up agenda’, the student protests provided an opportunity for the media and the opposition to question the new administration. The extent to which the government could find a solution to the movement that was coherent with its ‘government of citizens’ formula was tested.<sup>126</sup> At the same time, right-wing media such as *El Mercurio*

<sup>121</sup> Arturo Valenzuela and Lucía Dammert, ‘A “Left Turn” in Latin America? Problems of Success in Chile’, *Journal of Democracy*, 17: 4 (2006), p. 75.

<sup>122</sup> Peter M. Siavelis, ‘What it Takes to Win and What it Takes to Govern: Michelle Bachelet and the Concertación’, in Borzutzky and Weeks (eds.), *The Bachelet Government*, pp. 27–49.

<sup>123</sup> Quoted in García-Huidobro, ‘¿Qué nos dicen las movilizaciones estudiantiles?’, p. 14.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Karina Delfino.

<sup>125</sup> William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, ‘Framing Political Opportunity’, in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 276.

<sup>126</sup> See, for example, ‘Protesta estudiantil: mientras los escolares aparecen como los grandes ganadores, el gobierno se vio obligado a ceder y buscar una salida consistente con su sello “ciudadano”’, *La Tercera*, 31 May 2006.

criticised the government, suggesting that it was failing to fulfil its most elemental function – that is, to guarantee public order.<sup>127</sup>

Third, the introduction of ‘new’ faces that did not necessarily come from the party elites but had less political experience signified that a series of mistakes were made in the government’s response to the movement. A critical example was the minister of education’s appeal to the students that were *not* taking part in the mobilisation on one occasion, which was interpreted as an attempt to split the movement. This aggrieved the Pingüinos, who escalated the conflict – and this, in turn, exposed the poor coordination between the ministries involved in handling the protests. Francisco Javier Díaz, adviser to President Bachelet, points out the lack of information about the Pingüinos that the Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno (Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency) received from the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>128</sup> This certainly affected the performance of the minister of education, who later stated that ‘if I have made any mistake it is to not have foreseen the magnitude of the issue’.<sup>129</sup> Not surprisingly, both he and the minister of the interior were replaced when President Bachelet reshuffled her cabinet in July 2006.

Last, the new administration also brought important political allies to the student movement. The Pingüinos were aware of the legitimacy that their demands had at the elite level. César Valenzuela, one of the spokespersons of the movement, has asserted that ‘for the most part, they [the students’ demands] were their own ideas; a great part of what we called for is what the Concertación wants today’.<sup>130</sup> It is important to note, however, that this support did not follow a clear-cut path of development. In her 21 May speech, President Bachelet not only omitted the students’ petition but also highlighted the violence in the protests.<sup>131</sup> When the school sit-ins began to proliferate and the first negotiation attempts with the education authorities took place, the government disapproved of the students’ forms of claim-making. Yet, as the mobilisations added participants, the discourse changed and the government publicly supported the call for improving the education system. Bachelet announced that ‘in this government we will need to undertake a reform to augment the quality of education’.<sup>132</sup> A senior policy adviser explained the shifting government response in the following way: ‘We realised

<sup>127</sup> ‘Fuerza pública y vandalismo’, *El Mercurio*, 2 June 2006.

<sup>128</sup> The Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency is the equivalent to a president’s chief of staff, i.e., it concentrates on advisory tasks and strategic planning. Interview with Francisco Javier Díaz.

<sup>129</sup> ‘Zilic: “Si he cometido algún error, es no haber previsto la magnitud del tema”’, [www.emol.cl](http://www.emol.cl), 13 June 2006, available at <http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2006/06/13/221921/zilic-si-he-cometido-algun-error-es-no-haber-previsto-la-magnitud-del-tema.html>.

<sup>130</sup> Interview with César Valenzuela.

<sup>131</sup> ‘Conflicto estudiantil: Bachelet rectifica rumbo en medio del paro’, *El Mercurio*, 31 May 2006.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

that the Pingüinos' demands had a certain level of legitimacy and that the issue of quality education was a heartfelt demand ... To abolish the LOCE became inevitable; how and how much we had to discuss ... The movement was the impulse that we did not have; the strength that we needed to pursue the reforms'.<sup>133</sup>

*Integrating Effects: The Rise and Fall of the Pingüino Movement*

As was suggested in the introduction to this article, a comprehensive understanding of the Pingüino movement requires an examination of the interacting effects between mobilisation resources, framing processes and the structure of political opportunities. As McAdam et al. note, social changes that render the established political order more vulnerable or receptive to challenge are not likely to be seized by a social movement if it is not sufficiently organised.<sup>134</sup> In the case of the Pingüinos, while the students were following the logic of the assembly and had spokespersons instead of a president, which would have been the case in a more hierarchical structure, leadership was still significant. The Pingüino spokespersons' capacity to gradually include structural demands into the movement's petition, linking together loose concepts such as the LOCE, unequal learning results and fewer opportunities to access higher education, was of central importance. The expertise of the four leaders made possible a common diagnosis and a shared understanding of reality: rich and poor students had access to different qualities of education. Moreover, the spokespersons' experience allowed for the articulation of a political discourse on the 'big topics', which further legitimised the demands of the movement in the eyes of the public and among the students who participated in the mobilisation.

Mobilisation resources also influence framing processes in other ways. As Clemens notes, models of organisation 'may also inform the development of collective identity. The answer to "Who are we?" need not be a quality or a noun; "We are people who do these sorts of things in this particular way" can be equally compelling.'<sup>135</sup> As previously stated, the internal restructuring process undertaken by the student organisation, which culminated in the creation of the AES in late 2005, contributed to an increase in student engagement. Not only was the distribution of interests between the spokespersons favourable to the unity of the movement, but the assembly as a participatory mechanism was also greatly appreciated by the students.

<sup>133</sup> Interview with Francisco Javier Díaz.

<sup>134</sup> McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 8.

<sup>135</sup> Elizabeth S. Clemens, 'Organizational Form as a Frame: Collective Identity and Political Strategy in the American Labor Movement, 1880–1920', in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 211.

Likewise, the shared meanings and definitions that compose a movement's collective action frame always mediate between the structural requirements of opportunity and organisation.<sup>136</sup> 'Bachelet – ¿estás con nosotros?' (Bachelet – are you with us?), the students asked, thus paraphrasing Bachelet's main presidential campaign slogan 'Estoy contigo' (I am with you). As has been argued, the emergence of the Pingüino movement must be analysed in light of the opening of the structure of political opportunities that the ascension of President Bachelet signified. But this involves a subjective notion of structure of political opportunities, where opportunities only became such because the Pingüinos were aware of the possibilities that the new government's 'bottom-up' rhetoric involved and incorporated this insight into their collective action frame.

Once the Pingüino movement had emerged, however, the same traits that had led to its rapid rise also contributed to its downfall. When compared with the more federative style of organisation that had typically characterised the ACAS, the logic of the assemblies meant that the internal decision-making process was slowed down. This created difficulties during the negotiations with the Ministry of Education; as one of the senior government officials involved commented, 'the spokespersons had to go back to the assembly and ask what it thought on each proposal made by the government'.<sup>137</sup> Likewise, as the movement unfolded and gained force, the complex decision-making process within it encountered increasing difficulties in processing the divergent stances on education.

Yet, President Bachelet's offer to meet some of the movement's demands on live television signified that the time had come for the students to start making decisions. The original decision-making structure contemplated that each school had one vote at the assembly, either through the president of the student council or the representative of the colectivo social. Nevertheless, after weeks of mobilisation and as more schools joined, the assembly had grown to more than 1,000 students, exceeding by far the logistic and organisational capacities of the movement.<sup>138</sup> In this context, the voting system became one of the main lines of division between the Concertación-friendly and the minority right-wing sectors on the one hand, and the left-leaning colectivos sociales on the other.<sup>139</sup> While the former defended a formal organisation where each school had one vote, the latter wanted to entitle each colectivo social to one vote, no matter how many of these groups were present in a school.

Voting systems aside, the diversity of political strands within the movement that had been fruitful in terms of broadening the constituency of the students

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*<sup>137</sup> Interview with Pedro Montt.<sup>138</sup> Interview with César Valenzuela.<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*



became problematic when the time came to decide on the government offer. Again, for the Concertación-friendly and the minority right-wing sectors, it represented a turning point beyond which it was hard to achieve anything, and thus the right moment to end the school sit-ins and demobilise. Another sector associated with the *colectivos sociales* wanted to bypass the debate in the Commission and continue with the mobilisations in order to put some additional pressure on the government to meet all of their demands. In the context of these contrary outlooks, 'agitation won'.<sup>140</sup> This is why it was decided to convene other social organisations and announce yet another national strike for 5 June.

These events signified a turning point in media coverage. After the first phase of street protests, in which the media had focused on the violent ending of many demonstrations, the school sit-ins had made the *Pingüinos* a 'story', attracting attention to the spokespersons' competence and the wide range of political tendencies represented. When the participation of the radical Left Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez in the national strike of 5 June became known, it was depicted as the cause of the divisions within the movement and of its radicalisation.<sup>141</sup> The *Pingüinos*' hesitant stance in relation to the government's offer also received disapproval in the media. This is perhaps best illustrated by the headline of *Las Últimas Noticias*, the most popular Chilean tabloid, the day after the president's announcement: 'No se suban por el chorro', an expression that makes reference to what was thought of as the *Pingüinos*' ingratitude to the government's proposal.<sup>142</sup>

For the government, Bachelet's announcement signified that the time for the *Pingüino* movement to abandon the protests had arrived. The establishment of the Commission was conceived of as a mechanism to 'decompress the mood'.<sup>143</sup> By inviting the main actors of the education system – a total of 81 individuals – to discuss possible education reforms for six months, the government sought to legitimise the Commission as a dialogue platform. Aware of the damage to the movement's reputation that an auto-marginalisation from the Commission would signify, the *Pingüinos* finally decided to participate.<sup>144</sup> As one *Pingüino* leader expressed, 'it is indispensable that the voice of the secondary students is heard through us and not intermediaries'.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Interview with Juan Carlos Herrera.

<sup>141</sup> See for example 'En jornada de violencia se transformó paro estudiantil: infiltrados ocasionaron desmanes y saqueos en el centro de Santiago', *Estrategia*, 6 June 2006.

<sup>142</sup> 'El paro estudiantil', *Las Últimas Noticias*, 6 June 2006.

<sup>143</sup> Interview with Francisco Javier Díaz.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with Pablo Orellana, 11 July 2009.

<sup>145</sup> María Huerta, quoted in García-Huidobro, '¿Qué nos dicen las movilizaciones estudiantiles?', p. 5.

Nevertheless, once the Pingüinos entered the institutional arena, their influence was constrained significantly. When participating in the Commission, the students felt that they were overlooked by many education experts who did not necessarily support their critical account.<sup>146</sup> The demands of the movement were partially reflected in President Bachelet's first education bill, which included some of the Commission's most controversial proposals such as the elimination of profit-making with state subsidies. Yet, this bill – which already seemed timid from the perspective of the Pingüinos – lacked political support in Parliament. In 2007, the Concertación and the opposition reached an agreement that paved the way for the replacement of the LOCE with the Ley General de Educación (General Education Law), which was finally promulgated in August 2009. Later policy outcomes such as the establishment of the Inspectorate for the Quality of Education and the Agency for the Quality of Education were approved as late as August 2011.

An exhaustive analysis of the policy-making process and education reforms that followed the protests staged by secondary school students in 2006 is outside the scope of this article.<sup>147</sup> It is, furthermore, too early to assess the effects of the reforms in terms of improving the equity and quality of education. Nonetheless, given the fact that the laws 'did not deal with the root of the problem' and the high political price paid by the Concertación, the 2007 agreement between the Concertación and the opposition is with hindsight considered to be a mistake by prominent left-wing leaders.<sup>148</sup> Finally, from the perspective of many Pingüinos, the negotiations and policy-making that led to the new legislation represented the usual 'politics behind closed doors'.<sup>149</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Focusing on the first large-scale protests in Chile after the reinstatement of democracy in 1990, this article has shown how and why the 2006 Pingüino movement mobilised hundreds of thousands of secondary school students against the shortcomings of the neoliberal education model, and succeeded in

<sup>146</sup> Interviews with Juan Carlos Herrera and Pablo Orellana. Both students represented the Pingüino movement in the Commission.

<sup>147</sup> For a discussion of the impact of the Pingüino movement on the education system, see Cristián Bellei, Dante Contreras and Juan Pablo Valenzuela (eds.), *Ecos de la revolución pingüina* (Santiago: Pehuén Editores, 2010).

<sup>148</sup> Camilo Escalona (Socialist Party), president of the Senate, interviewed in 'En la Concertación no comprendimos lo profundo de la crisis en el sistema educacional', *El Mercurio*, 28 Nov. 2011.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Juan Carlos Herrera.

placing education on the government's agenda. It has been argued that three interlinked processes explain the emergence of the movement. First, a non-hierarchical internal organisation and strong leadership that connected previously disunited groups of secondary school students enabled mobilisation for a common cause. Second, the maturing of education policies pursued during the previous two decades signified a dramatic increase in the rate of graduation of secondary school students. Although more students benefited from schooling, the daily experience of injustice with regard to the quality of the education provided by different types of schools created a shared diagnosis that the Pingüino leaders effectively incorporated into the movement's collective action frame. Third, the Pingüino movement faced a favourable structure of political opportunities due to President Bachelet's 'bottom-up' discourse – and knew how to take advantage of it.

From a theoretical point of view, this article's analysis of the Pingüinos underscores the relevance of both identity and material dimensions when explaining the emergence of social movements. As has been shown, the students' call for quality education was effective because many of them felt they were part of a group affected by the faults of the education system. The case study further points to the importance of the structural level when analysing the frame in which more relational and cognitive elements such as social movements' collective action frames are constructed. The grievances of the Pingüinos all stemmed from the shortcomings of the education system and the difficulties faced by the political system in processing reforms that have not been pursued 'from above'. Thus the analysis confirms the need to pay special attention to movements' interaction with the institutional arena. As suggested in this article, the examination of the structure of political opportunities as proposed by the contentious politics approach is particularly fruitful for identifying the possibilities available to, and the formal and informal institutional constraints faced by, social movements.

If anything, the Pingüinos showed that social movements can provide a significant impulse to advance – not determine – policy agendas. Repoliticising education policies and the politics behind them, the students became pioneers in countering the Concertación's insistence on consensus and gradual reform that had characterised Chilean politics in the post-transition setting and arguably made transformational change problematic.<sup>150</sup> The latter, as Roberts and Levitsky suggest, might have been the consequence of an 'overlearning' of the lessons of the democratic breakdown of the 1970s,

<sup>150</sup> Silvia Borzutzky and Gregory B. Weeks, 'Introduction', in Borzutzky and Weeks (eds.), *The Bachelet Government*, p. 1.

which led moderate Left governments such as the Concertación to eschew social mobilisation.<sup>151</sup>

The wariness of the centre-left coalition not only constrained the possibilities for alliances to pursue far-reaching reforms, but also resulted in a lost bond with social movements. The consequences could be seen in the 2011 student uprisings, this time staged by university students protesting against the high indebtedness provoked by a credit scheme introduced in 2006. In light of the frustration with the way in which the Pingüino movement's demands were channelled, the university leaders declared: 'we will not negotiate with anyone from the traditional political class. We have the example from 2006, when we were secondary school students and were betrayed though working meetings and negotiations'.<sup>152</sup> Hence, in 2011 the student movement demanded not only public, free and high-quality education, but also a new political constitution that allows for more citizen participation. The prospect of these protests is still open, and making predictions about Chile's political future is anything but simple. Nevertheless, both the Pingüino movement and the more recent mobilisations show that the Concertación and also the current right-wing government of Sebastián Piñera – arguably less responsive to social movement demands – have great difficulties channelling citizens' claims. To realign with social actors, and to interpret the dynamics of change set in motion by the introduction of neoliberalism and the re-establishment of democracy, will be part of the challenges that the Chilean political establishment will have to address in the coming years. Any effort to impinge on power balances in this new landscape will be strongly conditioned by the formal and informal institutional constraints facing Chile's democracy.

### *Spanish and Portuguese abstracts*

*Spanish abstract.* Centrándose en las protestas a gran escala en Chile tras el restablecimiento de la democracia en 1990, este artículo examina el surgimiento del movimiento Pingüino y muestra cómo logró movilizar a miles de estudiantes de secundaria en contra del modelo educativo neoliberal. El material señala que son varias dimensiones diferenciadas, aunque interconectadas, las que explican el surgimiento de dicho movimiento. En 2006 varias organizaciones estudiantiles de secundaria se fusionaron para formar un solo cuerpo y adoptaron un mecanismo participativo y horizontal de toma de decisiones. Al mismo tiempo, los problemas de las reformas educativas de los años 80 y 90 se hicieron evidentes en términos de calidad y equidad, lo que creó agravios que fueron enmarcados dentro de la acción colectiva del

<sup>151</sup> Steven Levitsky and Kenneth M. Roberts, 'Democracy, Development, and the Left', in Levitsky and Roberts (eds.), *The Resurgence*, p. 425.

<sup>152</sup> 'Mayoría de federaciones universitarias desconfía del Congreso para solucionar conflicto', *El Mercurio*, 12 Aug. 2011.

movimiento. Finalmente, la retórica de la presidente Bachelet sobre un 'gobierno de ciudadanos' como forma de contrarrestar el elitismo de la fórmula gubernamental de la Concertación, dio a los estudiantes la posibilidad de ampliar la estructura de las oportunidades políticas.

*Spanish keywords:* Chile, movimientos sociales, estudiantes, educación, políticas polémicas

*Portuguese abstract.* Centralizando nos primeiros protestos em grande escala no Chile após o restabelecimento da democracia em 1990, este artigo examina o surgimento do movimento *Pinguino* em 2006 e relata seu sucesso em mobilizar milhares de estudantes secundaristas contra o modelo de educação neo-liberal. Nele se argumenta como distintas porém inter-relacionadas dimensões explicam o surgimento do movimento. Em 2006 diferentes organizações de estudantes secundaristas fundiram-se para formar uma organização unificada, adotando assim um mecanismo participativo horizontal para a tomada de decisões. Ao mesmo tempo as deficiências em termos de qualidade e justiça nas reformas do sistema educacional dos anos oitenta e noventa vieram à tona, gerando insatisfações que alimentaram o modelo de atuação coletivo do movimento. Finalmente, a retórica da presidente Bachelet de um 'governo de cidadãos' como tentativa de contrapor a natureza elitista da fórmula de governança proposta pela *Concertación* permitiu aos estudantes a oportunidade de expandir a estrutura de possibilidades políticas.

*Portuguese keywords:* Chile, movimentos sociais, educação, políticas controversas