

La Sociedad avanza sin Partidos.

El papel emergente de Movimientos Sociales en las Políticas Públicas

Autor	Dra. Jeanne W. Simon, es cientista política, profesora asociada del Departamento de Administración Pública y Ciencia Política de la Universidad de Concepción. Actualmente, es Directora del Magister en Política y Gobierno ofrecido por la misma universidad. Recibió sus grados de magister y doctorado en Estudios Internacionales del Korbel Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver, USA.
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Resumen del trabajo La emergencia de un movimiento estudiantil con capacidad de movilizar ciudadanos desafía directamente la manera que se han definido las políticas públicas durante los últimos 20 años en Chile. Los eventos recientes parecen apoyar el argumento de Castells que la globalización ha debilitado la capacidad estatal para controlar la economía y la sociedad al mismo tiempo que ha aumentado la capacidad de actores globales y locales para obstaculizar el actuar estatal. Dicha debilidad del Estado se refleja en el aumento en la desconfianza ciudadana en el gobierno y otras instituciones políticas. No obstante, el estudio de las políticas públicas aún los conceptualiza como grupos de presión sin reconocer que su característica principal es su naturaleza pública y no institucional. Basado en estudios en países industrializados, muchos autores proponen que los movimientos tienen que institucionalizarse y/o influir en la política electoral para lograr influir en las políticas públicas.

Objetivos y propósitos El actual éxito y posición anti-partidista del movimiento, sugieren que ha emergido un nuevo actor político que opera bajo distintas reglas. El objetivo del presente paper es analizar el movimiento estudiantil de 2011, y especialmente las perspectivas y estrategias de los dirigentes anti-partidos, como también caracterizar el contexto político-económico que ha permitido su emergencia, cuestionando la manera “normal” de hacer las políticas públicas.

Enfoque metodológico Es un estudio de tipo Descriptivo – Explicativo, por cuanto no sólo se limita a caracterizar el movimiento desde un enfoque centrado en los actores, sino busca entender y analizar tanto el contexto político económico. Las fuentes primarias de datos son: entrevistas semi estructuradas con dirigentes estudiantiles y otros informantes. Se utilizarán fuentes secundarias para caracterizar el contexto político-económico.

Resultados Esperados o alcanzados El resultado principal es la caracterización de la racionalidad (ideas e intereses) del movimiento estudiantil como también su influencia en la política educacional entre abril y noviembre de 2011.

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Introduction

Globalization has weakened every State's capacity to control economic and social activity within its frontiers, while simultaneously it has increased the capacity of both local and global actors to influence, and even, block State action. As a result, the design and implementation of public policy has become an increasingly complex process, and the State's limited ability to address social problems, and especially the ever increasing insecurity, has resulted in reduced citizens' confidence in politics and democracy.

Even when every State faces the same globalized world, the specific challenges and the State's role and ability to govern will depend on each country's political economy. In Chile, a small developing country, the redefinition of the State's role has been a contradictory process shaped by historical forces, especially in the last 40 years. In political decision making, the importance of both instrumental economic and political logics has grown, generating important social tensions and protests.

In 2011, the university student movement has become an important actor, setting the agenda on higher education policies and even questioning the existing consensus on the Chilean economic and social model that have characterized the last 20 years of Chilean politics. Similar to the Penguin movement in 2006, this movement mobilized the latent dissatisfaction with politics and government performance—an undefined dissatisfaction that is generally expressed as apathy rather than active protest. As a result, this social movement has achieved important social support for its demands, while debilitating popular support for the President, the government, and the opposition.

To strengthen its popular support, the movement questions traditional politics and negotiations between the political parties of the opposition and the government as being the cause of the inequality and marginalization present in Chilean society. As a result, their political success seems to be based on their slogan “without political parties, society progresses.” The objective of the present paper is to analyze the emergence of the student movement as a new actor in the making of public policy in Chile.

The present study's starting point is that social movements and public policy are mutual constitutive: social policy contributes to the emergence of social movements and social movements affect the policy process and content.

In general, the literatures on social movements and public policy have developed separately. Most studies on social movements only focus on their

emergence and ability to transform the agenda, and then generally traditional actors, like political parties or interest groups, take over, where public policy studies allow us to understand the dynamics of public policy formation.

However, even when the political consequences¹ of social movements have been increasingly studied with respect to US policy, there is no consensus on their political impact (Amenta et al., 2010). Analyzing the relationship between Congressional attention to policy issues and social movements in the United States, Baumgartner and Mahoney (2005) show that social movements and interest groups affect the State and the State affects social groups, increasing the number of groups as the State increasingly addresses the issue of interest. In short, they argue that a social movement has political impact when it places its theme in the legislative agenda, and that its impact is with respect to the issue and not necessarily with respect to the movement's power.

Additionally, Baumgartner and Mahoney (2005) indicate that as the issue is increasingly addressed in the Congress, the movement is often institutionalized, often becoming an interest group, and protest activities decline; this conclusion is also supported in the social movement literature (see for example, Meyer and Tarrow, 1998). Indeed, Baumgartner and Mahoney (2005) argue that a social movement needs to formalize and combine insider (e.g. lobbying) activities with the more common outsider activities in order to have a long-term impact.

However, since the 2011 university movement perceives that party politics "betrayed" the goals of earlier movements, part of their demand involves being integrated into the policy making process as a non-institutionalized movement. Indeed, the movement is united around a criticism of political parties and consensus politics.

Our objective is to analyze the evolution of the political and social structures that allowed the emergence of the university movement in order to better understand the interactive relationships between social movements, public policy and the practice of democracy. Our case study sheds light on how past public policy shapes the political arena of the present, impacting in future public policy.

This case study is especially interesting because it cannot be easily reduced to a protest against Neoliberalism since most Chilean public policies have been market-oriented since the 1980s and the State's role has incrementally increased, especially in education since 1990. Indeed, Silva (2009) argues that the lack of anti-neoliberal protests in Chile is because of the government's "commitment to socioeconomic and political inclusion" (p. 274).

Thus, I present a multi-level analysis to better understand the mutually constitutive relation between social movements and public policy.

Explaining a Social Movement's Influence

The literature on social movements can help us better understand this actor and its influence in public policy. In general, successful movements emerge into public sphere when the perception of injustice is transformed into the decision to act collectively. Although a clear cause and effect cannot be established, a series of national and international events (Arab spring, Hidroaisen protests) contributed to the idea of public protests could produce important changes.

The analysis of social movements centers on the organizational characteristics that have favor its success, and many of these characteristics are related to their ability to “interpret” the structure and societal demands, including their ability to recognize the opportunities available within the “political context”. Consequently, explanations of social movement, implicitly or explicitly, involve the relation between agent (the movement) and structure, allowing the connection to public policies in a mutually constitutive relationship.

Most theories on social movements focus on the agent, the movement. These are generally associated with Charles Tilly (1978), where the mobilizing structures approach, developed by McAdams (1997), is often used to analyze social movements and their political impact. The term “mobilizing structure” refers to the formal and informal organizations that facilitate communication and coordination between groups of people. This approach seeks to incorporate the influence of shifting external elements (e.g., political regime, mobilization potential of elites, access to the media, sympathies of the electorate) on movement development and tactics. These external factors determine, for example, the type of protest that will strengthen the movement’s public impact as well as influence the way the movement frames these issues.

In the case of the university movement, the successful framing of their demands in terms of limited social mobility combined with an active communication strategy successfully influenced public opinion. Rather than being “irresponsible youth” who prefer to destroy rather than study, they became the “voices” of hard-working Chileans who feel trapped by financial pressures and the lack of social mobility. Their questioning of the educational

policies, and indeed of the Chilean economic model, has produced a serious legitimacy problem for the government.

The government, surprised by the protests, has not presented a convincing alternative interpretation for much of the public opinion. Instead, the government decided to wait it out, hoping that the movement would lose its momentum. Similar to previous administrations, the government maintained their position on controlled fiscal spending and characterized the students as being selfish and violent. The students maintained their position, and even began to increase their demands, while the government remained firm in its offer.

According to Amenta (2005), the mobilization of relatively large numbers of committed people sets the ground to win new collective benefits for a state-oriented movement. A movement will be more successful when institutional political actors see some benefit in aiding the group that the movement represents. In short, in order to achieve greater influence, movements need to alter the calculations of relevant institutional political actors, such as elected official and state bureaucrats. These benefits could include electoral support, gaining in public opinion, acting on political beliefs, increasing support for funding in that Ministry.

The public emergence of a movement, which was previously organizing with little public attention, can become attractive to citizens because the policy monopoly may appear to be permeable to new claims; the presence of an active movement can make long-simmering ideas suddenly appear viable (Meyer 2005). Indeed, institutional actors can utilize the discontent presented by social protests to push for institutional reform, resulting in a mutually beneficial relationship. In short, social movements can influence policy by altering the configuration of relevant policy actors and design by replacement, conversion, creation or reconfiguration.

Bringing in Public Policies

The analysis of social movements also involves a structural analysis of the political context, which is clearly influenced by the actions of both the government and the challenger within the country's institutional structure. Amenta (2005), in his study of Depression-era United States, shows that the context (political circumstances and political institutions), and not only the nature of the mobilization, influences the effectiveness of different challengers over time. Similarly, In the case of the United States, Meyer (2005) argues that

the separation of powers institutionalizes dissent: bringing dissent into the open to avoid the emergence of revolutionary movements. Additionally, the government may act to include and/or co-opt a movement, making it difficult for activists to mobilize.

These movements can also learn from history, or from their past experiences. For example, in the case of Poland, the Solidarity movements learned that violent action only resulted in violent repression, and they began to strategically implement nonviolent practices in order to strengthen their position with respect to the government (Ackerman, 1997).

From this perspective, the reasons that explain a movement's emergence are closely related to the possibilities of success. In short, some contexts are more favorable than others and the success of a movement depends on its ability to interpret the context. However, from a structural perspective, the "context" and even the "actors" are historical products, generally related to public policies and government action.

On the one hand, Jenkins and Schock (1992) argue that the level of national development citizens is related to the type of government response, where citizens in less developed countries are far more likely to face violent repression due to their external financial dependence. Additionally, the practices of states vis-à-vis their own citizens are increasingly defined in global terms (Sassen 1998). Global integration affects both the ways people engage in political participation and state responses to popular pressures due to increasing flows of information and ideas. They have helped produce a global emergence of a "movement society", where social movements are proving to be more permanent fixtures in all democratic political systems (Tarrow 1998). According to Norris (2002), we see an ongoing and fairly stable mobilization of people and resources away from more conventional modes of political participation and toward more protest-oriented forms, especially in democratic societies.

Jenness, Meyer and Ingram (2005) argue that changes in structural conditions result in shifts in the political landscape of democratic societies, which in turn provide the impetus for the development and implementation of public policies as well as social movements that challenge them. Thus, in short, social movements and the State cannot be considered as distinct entities that develop separately and only meet when the circumstances are correct. I argue that this is especially true in a State, like Chile with an important percentage of privatized social services, because both service users and providers are interested in increasing state funding. These mutual interests are clearly present in the debate on higher education, where university chancellors

support student mobilizations. Thus, the question is not whether a social movement will “emerge” and protest, but rather under what conditions will the different actors decide to protest rather than pursue more typical lobbying activities.

The demands of the University movement have produced public questioning of the Chilean social and economic model based principally on public distrust of elite party politics. Although studies show that structural inequalities persist and impact access to and participation in higher education and that those students educated in private schools are best placed to compete for places in the highly selective public universities, while students educated in the state-funded schools are least able to do so (Matear 2006). This, in turn, has been one of the major factors explaining the permanence of high levels of inequality and also negatively affected the overall growth potential of the economy and biased the structure of production of the economy against knowledge intensive activities (Lopez and Miller 2008).

Still, other studies show that the population accessing university education has increased dramatically over the past 20 years, with the proportion of 18-to 24-year-olds entering university rising from 15% to 38%, having increased more rapidly in the two lower quintiles of income distribution (Katz and Spence 2009). Additionally, in comparison with other Latin American countries, Chile has by far the most progressive distribution of social expenditures, while spending only a small portion of its revenues in unproductive subsidies directed to the elites preferring benefits through taxes (Lopez and Miller 2008).

During the Concertacion governments, concerns about persistent poverty, inequality and social exclusion were also expressed. Silva (2009) argues that the diverse government agencies that interfaced with virtually every social sector created a dense network that deflected tensions that might otherwise have propelled groups to contentious action (p.274). In general, this system connected social organizations to the State, isolating conflict and discouraging horizontal linkages (Oxhorn, 1995).

Bringing Social Movements Back In

During the second decade of the Concertacion governments, social protests that questioned the restrictive fiscal policies designed to avoid inflation became more frequent. Although the Concertacion government continued to defend restrictive fiscal policies, increasingly more politicians and

citizens began to question and pressure the government for increased social spending. Social movements, acting principally as interest groups increasingly appeared, demanding State assistance. Still, few movements held anti-neoliberal / anti-globalization positions with the important exception of the Mapuche movement (Simon, Gonzalez, and Fenelon 2009).

The greater number of social protests can also be associated to changes in Chilean society, and especially the globalization of the Chilean middle and lower classes, which began to occur in the mid-1990s. Important public investments in infrastructure, technology, health and education transformed the Chilean economy and society. From 1990 to 2009, Chile presented stable growth, tripling its GNP per capita in the period; poverty levels were reduced from 51.6% in 1990 to 13.7% in 2008 (ECLAC 2009). Average and many of the poorer Chileans now could easily access global culture through television and even internet, transforming the values of the inward-looking, often conservative lower middle class (Latinobarometro 2006).

Following Suzanne Mettler (2005), who uses the policy feedback approach developed by Pierson (1993), the resources bestowed on citizens through policy (resource effects) can be understood to affect individual material well-being and life opportunities as well as their capacity and psychological predisposition to participate in public life. She specifically mentions that education promotes attitudes of civic duty. In her application of this framework to analyze veteran benefits, she indicates that the perception that they are mistreated contributed to the emergence of contentious politics: they perceive that they received less resources in comparison with earlier generations, and consequently do not have the rights of most citizens. In contrast, policies that offer services to individuals that enhance their social opportunity should favor conventional civic participation.

Mettler (2004), seeking to understand the impact of policy on citizen behavior, shows that citizens in the United States who receive more education have a greater advantage in the political arena because public policies distribute educational opportunities and shape their quality of education. This conclusion is supported by data from Chile, where wealthier, more educated youth participate more than their counterparts (PNUD, 2005). Additionally, Mettler (2004) cites Andrea Campbell's book *How Policies Make Citizens*, which combines historical and individual-level analyses to demonstrate how Social Security and Medicare have enhanced seniors' political participation, such that seniors now influence policy outcomes more than they otherwise would.

In addition to contributing to greater voice, distinct public policies can also diffuse conflict. For example, school choice policies in the United States

have the unintended result of prompting the most involved parents to exit their original schools and to take their children and their activism elsewhere--presumably to schools that already function more effectively--and thus deprive struggling schools of an important source of information and civic involvement (Abernathy 2001).

Methodology

This is a preliminary study that seeks to identify the central ideological elements of the student movement from the perception of student leaders. We do not intend to generalize our results, and thus we use a descriptive explicative based in qualitative methodology.

The systematization presented is based on the content analysis results of the interviews held with 10 student leaders from the University of Concepción (Chile). The interviews were held in June 2011. The interviews are complemented with a general description of the development of the movement.

Characterization of the University Movement and their demands

The leaders of the university movement, like the Penguin Movement of 2006, grew up in a democratic context and a growing economy. They were born around 1990, and did not experience the military dictatorship. More than any other generation, the students living in Santiago (and to a lesser extent outside) grew up within a global economy and society, first through television and later with internet. Thanks to government programs, like Enlaces, they had access to internet at an early age, especially if they attended public schools.

Similar to the Penguin movement in 2006, the leaders of the university movement cannot be considered marginalized youth: they attend elite universities. Their middle class background and meritocratic orientation seem to have contributed to the development of a collective project that clearly forms part of the idea of a modern, developed country. The protection of the traditional university system and their questioning of profits seem to be based on the desire to associate merit (rather than financial resources) with access to quality education. In the interviews, their demand for public education and questioning of the educational market are based on the equal rights of citizens rather than a desire for a greater role of the State in the educational process.

They extensively and transparently use a variety of communication technologies, publishing daily and even hourly reports. They are organized in

horizontal networks that contrast with the verticality of traditional party political organizing. Decision-making takes place in assemblies, and the spokespersons only inform the decisions made in the assembly and cannot represent the movement in negotiations. Each member's opinion was just that, and only the Assembly could determine (by majority vote) the Movement's position. This form of democracy favored student participation even when many were not interested in party politics.

They began the movement seeking short-term benefits (free bus pass) that would give them greater freedom and reduce the costs that their education generated on their families. However, once they began to phrase their demands in terms of equal rights, they quickly arrived to the great inequality perceived in the Chilean society. According to the leaders interviewed, education should be public so that its objectives contribute to the common good.

Definiremos como educación pública asegurada para todos los ciudadanos que deseen obtenerla y que mediante su formación propenda al desarrollo del bien común. Así tendremos que la educación pública debe tener como enfoque primordial una visión integral de la sociedad existente generando una crítica y la entrega de herramientas para la propuesta. Así también la educación pública debe fundar los pilares necesarios para que una sociedad en vías de desarrollo alcance los niveles óptimos de democracia que fortalezcan su crecimiento, así la educación pública deberá desarrollar la participación conjunta de los actores que la componen para articularse desde una perspectiva realmente democrática. La educación pública también debe ser capaz de responder a las necesidades de los más pobres para que de ese modo se logre la equidad necesaria para un país en vías de desarrollo.

Interestingly, it is considered to an equal right guaranteed by State, but based on merit. No student directly relates public education con State provision, although they do with a State guarantee.

Entiendo por educación pública aquel derecho que otorga el Estado a sus ciudadanos de acceder de forma igualitaria y en base al mérito a la educación en todos sus niveles, pero también asegurando la permanencia en estas instituciones de los estudiantes de más bajos ingresos cuyo financiamiento público debe asegurar el derecho a la educación superior y no transformarse en el endeudamiento de las familias.

Even when they argue that public education is required to create greater unity and social mobility, territorial segregation is not perceived as an issue. Indeed, even when there is inequality between education opportunities in different boroughs of Metropolitan Santiago, the students do not criticize freedom of choice.

Es importante debatir sobre educación pública, pero también sobre la calidad, porque una buena educación brinda oportunidades a los jóvenes, generando redistribución del ingreso, como principio para la igualdad de oportunidades, que sólo es posible a través de una buena educación, como también es importante impulsar universidades públicas, ya que desarrollan un rol estratégico de formación en el campo de la investigación y capital humano, permitiendo entregar verdaderas herramientas para la movilidad social de los sectores de menores ingresos.

No considero negativo el tema de lucro, cuando sea reinvertido en mayor infraestructura y mayor calidad de sus docentes. Además el establecimiento de un sistema mixto permite establecer la libertad de elegir de cada individuo en que institución, ya sea pública o privada desee estudiar.

As can be observed, the students criticize the reduction of education to simple profit-making. The criticism against profit-making (lucro) is based on the idea that education is zero-sum game, where one's profit is directly related to less investment and lower educational quality. In general, even when these students attend a traditional private university, they clearly express distrust of the private sector. They criticize the idea that higher education is a privilege due to its importance in addressing social inequality.

Se sigue lucrando con la educación haciendo de esta una empresa, un privilegio y no cumpliendo su rol fundamental que es el de combatir la desigualdad y crear movilidad social para romper el ciclo de la pobreza.

Cuando hablamos de educación pública, se habla de cambiar el eje de la situación actual, donde se asegure el acceso, pero también regular la calidad de los planteles evitando que el lucro se priorice por sobre una enseñanza de calidad.

As can be seen in the systematization of the responses, the students' positions do not strongly question the neoliberal economic model, although

they do demand a greater role of the State in the guarantee of a higher education.

Are social movements going to replace political parties in Chile?

A large part of Chilean society and a part of the student movement strongly question the motivations of politicians and political parties. Consequently, they propose that political parties, even parties like the Communist Party, are part of the problem rather than the solution. These groups express a disdain for compromises and consensus politics as selling out the movement and society as a whole for person interests of power or money.

Students who participate in the university movement question the position that electoral participation is a “true democracy”, because

No somos escuchados cuando salimos a la calle, allí en esta instancia también se esta ejerciendo democracia pues tenemos libertad de opinión y si vemos que las cosas no se están haciendo bien y que las promesas no se están cumpliendo la única forma viable es salir a la calle y pelear por las demandas, por las injusticias, como por ejemplo por el tema de las políticas medioambientales, y por la reforma de la Educación. Nosotros no votamos por políticas públicas, votamos por candidatos que “supuestamente” representan los intereses de los ciudadanos pero por lo visto lo único que hacen es velar por sus intereses personales o más bien de sus partidos políticos. Entonces no veo lo legítimo de esta instancia.

They criticize both present and past governments for the lack of responsiveness to citizen demands. They argue that the problem with democratic politics is that the politicians only want citizens to vote but not to actively participate, while many students prefer an active participation in groups and social movements.

Los problemas del actual sistema democrático tengan mayor relación con un problema de la clase política, a quienes se les da el voto, que con el hecho de ir a una junta inscriptora. Este discurso (de 21 de mayo), al igual que los que realizaron los antiguos presidents, sienta sus bases en que el problema de participación o de la democracia pasa por las elecciones y no por un problema entre la clase política y la población.

This tendency, present in many but not all the students, argues for the creation of a nationwide social movement whose objectives will probably be the transformation of market-based social policies, suggesting an increasing role of social movements in the design of social policies in the next several years.

Conclusions

In the 21st Century, societies have become more diverse and demanding, especially with respect to the State. The introduction of economic logic into public action, and especially the creation of education and health care markets, has transformed citizens into consumers that demand more participation and even the right to define public service providers (Tomassini 2005). At the same time, the discipline and flexibility associated with the market has produced a greater sensation of insecurity, strengthening demands for a greater state role in protection and social integration. Furthermore, the increasing insertion of Latin American countries into the global economy and polity has introduced new dynamics, strengthening the demands of diverse social groups. As a result, the society is increasingly critical of governments, where electoral success, and even governability, depends on state responsiveness de citizen demands that goes beyond winning elections.

The student movement's success, in terms of putting their issue on the agenda, seems to be principally associated to the framing of their demands en general terms as the right to a quality education combined with their organizational abilities. The inability of the government and traditional party politics to establish a dialogue with the movement seems to have radicalized student demands for a change in the system. They have been able to maintain support for the movement due to the general frustration with unresponsive governments and politicians as well as structural inequality and generalized sense of insecurity.

The social movement's success depends more on its ability to maintain public support with respect to its demands than on active support of students. Considering that they still maintain public and university support but have been unable to produce concrete results, it seems likely that the students will continue to mobilize in 2012 although they will probably develop new strategies and could even expand to other social policies, like health.

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ⁱ The reasons explaining the emergence of social movements is also a very interesting, closely related topic. However, our discussion will look principally at the political consequences.